The Human Place in the Cosmos

MAX SCHELER
1874–1928

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Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos

Translated from the German with AI (Claude) and edited



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Translated from the German with AI (Claude) and edited. Reading edition, Forage, October 2026. forage.com/scheler/human-place-in-the-cosmos

German text: the first edition, *Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos* (Darmstadt: Otto Reichl Verlag, 1928), transcribed from the Internet Archive scan (archive.org/details/die-stellung-des-menschen-im-kosmos) of a Google-digitized library copy (public domain: Scheler died in 1928; in the US the 1928 edition is public domain since 2024). The text was read by two OCR engines, collated and corrected by script and by hand against the page images; no later edition was used. Scheler's letter-spaced emphasis is shown in italics and was recovered from the scan automatically, so some emphases may be missing or misplaced; his footnotes are kept, numbered within each paragraph. The index of names and the publisher's advertisements are left out. English: translated from the German with AI (Claude), then edited for accuracy and consistency. Not reviewed by a human specialist. Free to reuse under CC BY-SA 4.0. The small numbers set in the text are section and paragraph ("4.3" is section IV, paragraph 3; "P" is the preface and "E" the unnumbered opening pages before section I).

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CONTENTS

Introduction vii

Preface 1

Introduction 5

Two concepts of the human being 6

I 9

Instinct 15

Associative memory 20

Practical intelligence 25

II 31

Spirit and openness to the world 33

Thing, space and time 37

III 43

IV 49

The negative theory 50

The powerlessness of spirit 56

V 63

Body and soul 64

Naturalistic theories 71

Klages 75

VI 79

Metaphysics and religion 81

The becoming deity 83

INTRODUCTION

Max Scheler (1874–1928) was one of the most influential German philosophers of the 1910s and 1920s, a phenomenologist who wrote on ethics, sympathy, religion and the sociology of knowledge. *The Human Place in the Cosmos* began as a lecture he gave at Darmstadt in 1927 and appeared as a short book in 1928, the year of his sudden death. It was meant as a sketch of a larger *Philosophical Anthropology* that he never finished.

Scheler asks what sets human beings apart from animals. He builds up the stages of life—the blind "feeling-urge" that even plants have, instinct, associative memory, practical intelligence—and grants that apes have intelligence and choice. What makes us human is something of another order, which he calls spirit (*Geist*): the capacity to treat things as objects, to be open to the world rather than bound to an environment, to grasp essences, and to say "no" to reality. Spirit by itself, he argues, is powerless; it gains force only by steering the energies of life. The book ends with a metaphysics in which the ground of being becomes God in and through the human being.

The essay set the program of twentieth-century philosophical anthropology, taken up by Helmuth Plessner and Arnold Gehlen, and its picture of the human being as "world-open" remains much discussed.

Preface

Vorrede
The lecture of 1927 and its place in Scheler's work; the human being has never been so problematic to himself.

P.1 This work is a short and highly condensed summary of my views on some of the main points of the *Philosophical Anthropology* that I have been working on for years and that will appear at the beginning of 1929. The questions "What is the human being, and what is its place in being?" have occupied me, ever since my philosophical consciousness first awoke, more essentially and more centrally than any other philosophical question. For many years I approached the problem from every possible side. Since 1922 these efforts have come together in the writing of a larger work devoted to this question, and I have had the growing good fortune to see that most of the philosophical problems I had already dealt with converged more and more in this one question.

P.2 Many people have expressed the wish that my lecture "The Special Place of the Human Being," delivered in Darmstadt in April 1927 at the conference of the School of Wisdom (see also *Der Leuchter* VIII, 1927), should appear as an offprint. This wish is now granted. If readers want to follow the stages in the development of my views on this great subject, I recommend reading the following in order: 1. The essay "On the Idea of the Human Being," first published in the journal *Summa* in 1918, later included in my collected essays and treatises *On the Overthrow of Values*, vol. 1, 3rd edition 1927, Leipzig, Verlag "Neuer Geist." Further, my essay "Ressentiment in the Construction of Moralities"

(in the same volume). 2.[1] The relevant sections in my work *Formalism in Ethics and the Material Ethics of Values* (1913), 3rd edition, Niemeyer, Halle, page 92[2]. Further, the relevant sections on the specific character of human emotional life in my book *Essence and Forms of Sympathy*, 3rd edition, Cohen, Bonn. 3. On the relation of the human being to the theory of history and of society, see my essay "The Human Being and History" in *Neue Rundschau*, November 1926, which is expected to appear as a separate booklet in autumn 1928 with the publishing house of the Neue Schweizer Rundschau, Zurich; and my work *The Forms of Knowledge and Society*, Verlag "Neuer Geist," 1926. On the relation between the human being, knowledge and education, compare *The Forms of Knowledge and Education*, Cohen, Bonn, 1925. 4. I spoke about the human being's possibilities of development in my lecture "The Human Being in the Coming Age of Equalization," printed in the forthcoming collection *Equalization as Task and Destiny*, edited by the Hochschule für Politik in the series "Political Science," Berlin, Verlag W. Rothschild, 1928.

P.3 In my *lectures* at the University of Cologne between 1922 and 1928 on the "Foundations of Biology," on "Philosophical Anthropology," "Theory of Knowledge" and "Metaphysics," I have several times presented the results of my research in detail —going far beyond the foundation laid here.

P.4 I may note with some satisfaction that the problems of a philosophical anthropology have today moved to the very center of all philosophical inquiry in Germany, and that, far beyond professional philosophical circles, biologists, physicians, psychologists and sociologists are also working on a new picture of the essential structure of the human being.

1 The School of Wisdom was founded in Darmstadt in 1920 by Count Hermann Keyserling and held regular conferences there.

2 SCHELER'S NOTE. Of particular note here, among others, are the sections on the theory of the experience of reality and of perception, pp. 109 ff.; on the rejection of naturalistic theories of the human being, pp. 278 ff.; on the stratification of emotional life, pp. 340 ff.; and on the person, pp. 384 ff. See also, in the detailed subject index to the 3rd edition, the entries under "Mensch" (human being), "physisch" (physical), "psychisch" (psychic), etc., etc.

P.5 Yet in spite of this, the human being's problematic character for itself has reached a maximum in the present, greater than at any point in history known to us. The human being has admitted that it has less strict knowledge than ever of what it is, and no possible answer to this question frightens it any longer. At this very moment a new courage *of truthfulness* also seems to have entered into it. It is the courage to raise this question of its essence in a new way, free of the fully, half or quarter conscious attachment to a theological, philosophical and scientific tradition that has been customary until now. And it is the courage—at the same time, on the basis of the enormous treasures of specialized knowledge that the various sciences of the human being have gathered—to develop a new form of its self-consciousness and its view of itself.

P.6 *Frankfurt* am Main, end of April 1928.

P.7 MAX SCHELER

Introduction

[ohne Zählung]
Three unreconciled ideas of the human being; the two senses of the word "human": a zoological class and an essence.

E.1 Ask an educated European what he has in mind at the word "human being," and almost always three circles of ideas, wholly irreconcilable with one another, begin to come into tension in his head. The first is the circle of thought of the Jewish-Christian tradition: Adam and Eve, creation, paradise and the fall. The second is the circle of thought of Greek antiquity, in which, for the first time in the world, the self-consciousness of the human being rose to a concept of its special place. It did so in the thesis that the human being is human by possessing "reason": logos, phronesis, ratio, mens [reason, practical wisdom, reason, mind], and so on—logos here means both speech and the capacity to grasp the "what" of all things. Closely bound up with this view is the doctrine that a superhuman "reason" also underlies the whole universe, a reason in which the human being, and the human being alone of all beings, participates. The third circle of thought is that of modern natural science and genetic psychology, itself long since become traditional. According to it, the human being is a very late end-product of the evolution of the planet Earth, a being that differs from its precursors in the animal world only in the degree of complexity with which it combines energies and capacities that in themselves already occur in subhuman nature. These three circles of ideas lack *any* unity among themselves. And so we have a scientific, a philosophical and a theological anthropology that take no notice of

one another. *But a unified idea of the human being we do not have*. Moreover, the ever-growing multitude of special sciences that deal with the human being, however valuable they may be, *conceal* the *essence* of the human being far more than they *illuminate* it. If we further consider that the three traditional circles of ideas just named have today been widely shaken—and that the Darwinist solution of the problem of human origins in particular has been shaken completely—we can say that at no time in history *has the human being become so problematic to itself* as in the present. That is why I have undertaken to offer a new attempt at a philosophical anthropology on the broadest foundation[1]. In what follows I would like to discuss only a few points concerning the *essence of the human being in relation* to *animal and plant*, and further the *metaphysical special place of the human being*, and to indicate a small part of the results I have reached.

TWO CONCEPTS OF THE HUMAN BEING

The word "human" names both a small corner of the animal kingdom and an essence opposed to all animals.

E.2 The very word and *concept* "human being" already contains a treacherous ambiguity, and unless we see through it we cannot even begin to tackle the question of the special place of the human being. On the one hand, the word is meant to indicate the special features that the human being possesses morphologically, as a subgroup of the vertebrates and mammals. It goes without saying that, whatever the result of this concept-formation looks like, the living being called human not only remains *subordinate* to the concept of the animal but also makes up a relatively very small corner of the *animal* kingdom. This remains the case even if, with Linnaeus, one calls the human being the "summit of the vertebrate-mammal series," so to speak—which, incidentally, is highly disputable both in substance and conceptually—since this summit, like the summit of anything, still belongs to the thing whose summit it is. Such a concept gathers

1 SCHELER'S NOTE. The comprehensive work will appear within a year.

into the unity of the human being upright gait, the reshaping of the spinal column, the balancing of the skull, the powerful development of the human brain, and the transformations of organs that followed from upright gait (such as the grasping hand with opposable thumb, the recession of the jaw and teeth, and so on). But quite independently of such a concept, the *same* word "human being" designates in everyday language—and among *all* civilized peoples—something so totally different that one will hardly find a second word in human language with an analogous double meaning. For the word "human being" is also meant to designate a sum of things that is set in the sharpest *opposition* to the concept of "animal in general," and so also to all mammals and vertebrates—and opposed to them in the *same* sense as, say, to the infusorian Stentor, although it can hardly be disputed that the living being called human is incomparably more similar to a chimpanzee, morphologically, physiologically and psychologically, than human and chimpanzee are to an infusorian. It is clear that this second concept of the human being must have a completely different meaning and a quite different origin from the first[2]. I will call this second concept the *essential concept* of the human being, in contrast to that first, *natural-systematic* concept. Whether this *second concept*, which grants the human being as such a *special place* incomparable with the special place of any other living species, has any *justification* at all—that is the *theme* of our lecture.

2 SCHELER'S NOTE. See on this my essay "On the Idea of the Human Being" in the book *On the Overthrow of Values*, vol. II. There it is shown that the traditional concept of the human being is constituted by its being made in the image of God, and that it therefore already presupposes the idea of God as its center of reference.

I

The stages of psychic life: the feeling-urge of plants, instinct, associative memory, practical intelligence and choice.

1.1 The special place of the human being can only become clear to us once we survey the whole structure of the biopsychic world. I start from a *sequence of levels* of psychic powers and capacities as science has slowly brought them to light. As for the boundary of the psychic, it coincides with the boundary of the living as such[1]. Things we call *living* have objective properties given as essential phenomena (which I cannot go into more closely here: for example *self-movement, self-formation, self-differentiation, self-limitation* in space and time). Besides these, it is an essential feature of living beings that they are not merely objects for external observers *but also possess a being-for-itself* and *inwardness*, in which they *become* inwardly aware of themselves. It is a feature that can be shown to share, in structure and in the form of its course, the most intimate community of being with those objective phenomena of life.

1.2 The *lowest* level of the psychic is the unconscious "*feeling-urge*," without sensation or representation. This psychic level presents itself objectively (outwardly) as a "living being" and subjectively (inwardly) as "soul." At the same time it is the steam that drives *everything*, up into the most luminous heights of spiritual activity, and that supplies the energy of activity even to the purest acts of thought and the most delicate acts of radiant

1 SCHELER'S NOTE. The doctrine that the psychic begins only with "associative memory," or only in the animal—or even only in the human being (Descartes)—has proved mistaken. But it is arbitrary to ascribe the psychic to the inorganic.

goodness. As the word "urge" already says, "feeling" and "drive" are not yet separated in it—drive, which as such always has a specific direction and goal "toward" something, for example food or sexual satisfaction. A mere "toward," for example toward the light, and an "away from," an objectless pleasure and an objectless suffering, are its only two states.[2] But the feeling-urge is already sharply distinct from the centers and fields of force that underlie the transconscious images we call *inorganic* bodies; to these, inwardness cannot be ascribed in any sense.

1.3 This first level of psychic being-in-becoming, as it presents itself in the feeling-urge, we must and may already assign to *plants*[3]. But it will by no means do to attribute sensation and consciousness to plants as well, as Fechner did. Anyone who, like Fechner, regards "sensation" and "consciousness" as the *most elementary* basic components of the psychic—and this is a mistake—would have to deny that plants have a soul.[4] The plant's feeling-urge is indeed already directed toward its medium, toward growing into its medium in the final directions "up" and "down," toward the light and the earth. But it is directed only toward the unspecified whole of these directions in the medium—toward possible *resistances and actualities* in them (important for the life of the organism)—and not toward particular components of the environment and particular stimuli to which *specific* sensory qualities and image-elements would correspond. The plant, for example, reacts specifically to the intensity of light rays, but does not react differently to colors or to the direction of the rays. According to detailed recent studies by the Dutch botanist Blaauw, we can ascribe to plants *no* specific tropisms, no sensation, not even the smallest beginnings of a reflex arc, no associations or conditioned reflexes, and for that

2 "Feeling-urge" (Gefühlsdrang): the blind, objectless striving of the lowest level of life.

3 SCHELER'S NOTE. The impression that the plant lacks an inner state stems only from the slowness of its life processes. In time-lapse film this impression vanishes completely.

4 Gustav Theodor Fechner (1801–1887), physicist and founder of psychophysics, ascribed a soul and sensation to plants in his book *Nanna* (1848).

very reason no "sense organs" of any kind, such as Haberlandt sought to delimit in a detailed study.[5] The movements triggered by stimuli, which were formerly attributed to such things, turned out to be components of the plant's general *growth movements*.

1.4 Let us ask what the most general concept of sensation is. (In higher animals, the stimuli that the endocrine glands exert on the brain are probably the most primitive "sensations," underlying both the sensations of the organs and the sensations that come from external processes.) It is the concept of a specific reporting back of a momentary state of the living being's organs and movement to a *center*, and of a modifiability of the movements that follow in each next moment *by virtue of* this report. In the sense of this definition the plant has *no sensation*. Nor does it have any specific "memory" going beyond the dependence of its life-states on the whole of its previous history, nor any real capacity to learn, of the kind that even the simplest infusoria already display. Studies that claimed to find conditioned reflexes and a certain trainability in plants have probably gone astray. Of what we call the *life of the drives* in animals, only the general *urge* toward growth and reproduction is included in the plant's "feeling-urge." That life is *not* essentially will to power (Nietzsche) is therefore proved most clearly by the plant, since it has no spontaneous search for food whatever, and no active choice of partner in reproduction either. It neither chooses its food spontaneously nor behaves actively in fertilization. It is fertilized passively by wind, birds and insects; and since it generally prepares the food it needs itself, from inorganic material that is present everywhere to some degree, it has no need, as the animal does, to go to particular places to find food. The plant, then, lacks the animal's scope for spontaneous movement from place to place; it has no specific sensation, no specific drive, no association, no conditioned reflex and no real

5 A. H. Blaauw (1882–1942), Dutch plant physiologist who studied phototropism; Gottlieb Haberlandt (1854–1945), Austrian botanist who described "sense organs" in plants.

power system and nervous system. This is a *whole* of deficiencies that can be understood completely, clearly and unambiguously from the structure of its being. It can be shown that if the plant had just one of these things, it would also have to have the other, and indeed *all* the others. Since there is no sensation without a drive impulse and without the incipient start of a motor action, wherever the power system (active seizing of prey, spontaneous choice of mate) is lacking, a system of sensations must be lacking too. The variety of sensory qualities that an animal organism possesses is never greater than the variety of its spontaneous mobility—and is a function of the latter.

1.5 The *essential* direction of *life* designated by the words "*plant-like*," "*vegetative*"—that we are not dealing here with empirical concepts is shown by the many transitional phenomena between plant and animal, already known to Aristotle—is an urge directed entirely *outward*. In the case of the plant I therefore speak of an "*ecstatic*" *feeling-urge*. I mean by this the total absence of the reporting back of organ-states to a center that is proper to animal life: the complete absence of any turning back of life into itself, of any reflexio [turning back, reflection], however primitive, of an inner state, however faintly "conscious." For consciousness *comes to be* only in the primitive reflexio of sensation, and always on the occasion of *resistances* arising against the original spontaneous movement[6].[7] The plant can do without sensations only because—the greatest chemist among living beings—it prepares its organic building material itself from inorganic substances. So its existence is absorbed in nourishment, growth, reproduction and death (without a species-specific life span). Yet already in the existence of plants we find the primal phenomenon of *expression*: a certain physiognomy of its inner states—languid, vigorous, luxuriant, meager, and so on. "Expression" is indeed a *primal phenomenon* of life, and by no

6 SCHELER'S NOTE. *All* consciousness is grounded in *suffering*, and all higher levels of consciousness in *increasing* suffering.

7 "Ecstatic" in the literal sense: standing outside itself, living wholly outward into its medium.

means, as Darwin thought, a set of atavistic purposive actions. What the plant again lacks entirely, by contrast, are the *signaling functions* that we find in all animals. They govern all the animals' dealings with one another, and they already make the animal largely independent of the immediate *presence* of the things that are vital to it. Only in the human being, however, as we shall see, is the *representational* and naming function of signs built on top of the functions of expression and signaling. Along with the consciousness of sensation, the plant further lacks all vital "wakefulness," which grows out of the watchman function of sensation. Its individualization, too—the degree of its spatial and temporal self-containment—is far lower than in the animal. One *may* say that the plant vouches, to a higher degree than the animal, for the unity of life in the metaphysical sense, and for the gradual, becoming character of all the kinds of form that life builds in self-contained complexes of matter and energy. The principle of utility, so immeasurably overrated by Darwinists and theists alike, fails completely here, both for its forms and for its ways of behaving; Lamarckism fails completely too. The forms of its leafy parts point even more insistently than the wealth of forms and colors among animals to a principle at the unknown root of life that plays imaginatively and regulates only aesthetically. The *dual principle* of pioneer and followers, of showing and imitating, essential for all animals that live in groups, is not found here. Because plant life lacks centralization, and above all because it lacks a nervous system, the interdependence of organs and their functions is inherently *closer* precisely in the plant than in animals. Because of its stimulus-conducting tissue system, every stimulus changes its *whole* life-state to a higher degree than is the case in the animal. The plant is therefore *harder*, not easier, to explain mechanically than the animal (in general). For only as the centralization of the nervous system increases along the animal series does the independence of its partial reactions increase as well—and with it a certain approximate machine structure of the animal body.

1.6 This first level of the inner side of life, the feeling-urge, is still present in the *human being* as well. The human being—we shall see this—gathers into itself *all* the essential levels of existence as such, and in particular of *life*; and in it, at least as regards the essential regions, *all* of nature comes to the most concentrated *unity* of its being. There is no sensation, no perception however simple, no representation, behind which the dark urge does not stand, and which it does not feed with its fire, burning continuously through the times of sleep and waking. Even the simplest sensation is always also a function of a *drive-governed* attention, never merely the consequence of the stimulus. At the same time the urge constitutes the *unity* of all the richly articulated drives and affects of the human being. According to recent researchers it is probably localized in the human brain stem, which is probably also the central station for the endocrine gland functions that mediate between bodily and psychic processes. Further, it is the feeling-urge that, in the human being too, is the subject of that primary lived experience of resistance which, as I have shown in detail elsewhere, is the root of all having of "reality" and "actuality"—and in particular of the *unity* of actuality and of the *impression* of actuality that precedes all representing functions[8]. Representations and mediated thinking can never indicate to us anything but the essence (so-being) and other-being of this actuality. But actuality itself, as the "being-actual" of the actual, is given to us in a general resistance bound up with anxiety, or rather in a lived experience of resistance.[9] In terms of the organs, the plant nature still present in the human being is represented by the "vegetative" nervous system, which, as its very name says, above all regulates the distribution of nourishment. A periodic withdrawal of energy from the animal system, which regulates outward behavior of power, in favor of the vegetative system is probably the basic condition

8 SCHELER'S NOTE. See my essays "Work and Knowledge" in *The Forms of Knowledge and Society*, Leipzig 1926, and "The Problem of Reality," Cohen, Bonn 1928.
9 "So-being" (Sosein): what a thing is, its essence, as distinct from its existence (Dasein), that it is.

of the rhythm of sleep and waking. In this respect sleep is a relatively plant-like state of the human being.

INSTINCT

Instinct is defined by behavior that is meaningful, rhythmic, innate, ready-made and serves the species.

1.7 The *second* essential form of the psyche, which follows the ecstatic feeling-urge in the objective order of levels of life, is *instinct*—an obscure word, much disputed in its interpretation and meaning. We escape this obscurity by refraining, for the time being, from any definition in psychological concepts and defining instinct solely in terms of the so-called "behavior" of the living being. The behavior of a living being is, *for one thing*, an object of external observation and possible description. This behavior, as the components of the surroundings change, can moreover be established independently of the physiological units of movement that carry it; and it can be established without introducing physical or chemical concepts of the stimulus in characterizing it. Independently of, and prior to, any causal explanation, we are able to establish unities and changes of behavior as the components of the surroundings vary. In this way we obtain lawful relations that are already meaningful in so far as they have a holistic and teleoclinic character. It is an error of the "behaviorists" to build the physiological process by which behavior comes about into the very concept of behavior. What is valuable about the concept of behavior is precisely that it is psychophysically neutral. That is, all behavior is therefore always *also* the expression of inner states. It can and must therefore always be explained *in two ways*, physiologically and psychologically at once; it is equally wrong to prefer the psychological explanation to the physiological or the latter to the former.[10] In this sense we call *instinctive* a *behavior* that has the following features. First, it must be *meaning-directed*, whether positively

10 "Teleoclinic": tending toward an end or goal, without implying conscious purpose.

meaningful, mistaken or stupid; that is, it must be teleoclinic for the whole of the living being that carries it or for the whole of other living beings (serving either itself or others). Second, it must run its course according to a *rhythm*. Movements *acquired* through association, practice and habituation—according to the principle that Jennings called that of "trial and error"—are likewise meaningful, but they do *not* possess such a rhythm, such a temporal form whose parts call for one another. Reducing instinctive modes of behavior to combined single reflexes and chain reflexes and to tropisms has proved impossible (Jennings, Alverdes, and others).[11] The relation to meaning need not concern present situations; it can also aim at situations far removed in time and space. An animal, for example, makes meaningful preparations for winter or for laying its eggs, although it can be shown that as an individual it has never experienced similar situations, and that signaling, tradition, imitation and copying on the part of other members of its species are ruled out as well. It behaves—as, according to quantum theory, even electrons behave—"as if" it foresaw a future state. A further, third feature of instinctive behavior is that it responds only to typically recurring situations that are significant for the life of the *species* as such, not for the particular experience of the individual. Instinct always serves the species—whether its own species, another species, or one with which its own species stands in an important vital relation (ants and their guests; gall formation in plants; insects and birds that fertilize plants, and so on). This feature sharply separates instinctive behavior, first, from "self-training" by trial and error and from all "learning," and second, from the use of understanding; both of these primarily serve the individual and *not* the species. Instinctive behavior is therefore never a reaction to the *particular contents* of the environment, which vary from individual to individual, but only ever to a quite particular structure, a *species-typical* arrangement of the

11 Herbert Spencer Jennings (1868–1947), American zoologist known for his studies of the behavior of lower organisms; Friedrich Alverdes (1889–1952), German zoologist and animal psychologist.

possible parts of the environment. While the particular contents can be exchanged to a very great extent without confusing the instinct and leading to mistaken actions, the smallest change in the *structure* will cause confusion. In his monumental work *Souvenirs entomologiques* [Entomological Memories], Fabre has presented an overwhelming variety of such behavior with the greatest precision. Corresponding to this service to the species is (fourth) the fact that instinct is, in its basic features, *innate* and *hereditary*. It is so as a *specified* capacity for behavior itself, and not merely as a general capacity for acquiring modes of behavior, as are, of course, habituation, trainability and understanding. Being innate does not mean here that the behavior to be called instinctive must take place immediately after birth. It means only that it is tied to particular periods of growth and maturation, and possibly even to different *forms* of the animal (in cases of polymorphism).[12] Finally, a very important feature of instinct is that it represents a behavior independent of the *number* of attempts an animal makes to meet a situation; in this sense it can be called "*ready-made*" from the outset. Just as the actual organization of animals cannot be thought of as having arisen through small differential steps of variation, so too "instinct" cannot be thought of as arising through the addition of successful partial movements. Instinct can indeed be *specialized* through experience and learning, as can be seen, for example, in the instincts of predatory animals: hunting a particular prey is innate in them ready-made, but the skill of hunting it successfully is not. What practice and experience accomplish here, however, always corresponds only to variations on a melody, never to the acquisition of a new one. What an animal can represent and sense is in general governed and determined *a priori* by the relation of its *instincts to the structure of its environment*. The same holds for its reproductions from memory: they always occur in the sense and within the *framework* of its predominant "instinctual tasks," and only secondarily does the *fre-*

12 Jean-Henri Fabre (1823–1915), French naturalist; his *Souvenirs entomologiques* appeared in ten volumes between 1879 and 1907.

quency of associative links, conditioned reflexes and practice matter. All afferent nerve pathways, in evolutionary history too, were formed only *after* the efferent nerve pathways and effector organs had been laid down.

1.8 Instinct is without doubt a *more primitive* form of psychic being and happening than the psychic complexes determined by *associations*. It cannot, therefore, be traced back—as Spencer thought—to the inheritance of modes of behavior based on habit and self-training. We are in a position to show that the psychic processes that follow the laws of association are also localized considerably *higher* in the nervous system than instinctive modes of behavior. The cerebral cortex seems essentially to be an *organ of dissociation* with respect to the biologically more unified and more deeply localized modes of behavior, and *not* an *organ of association*. But neither can instinctive behavior be traced back to the automatization of intelligent behavior. Rather, we may say the following. On the one hand there is the emergence of relatively discrete sensations and representations from diffuse complexes (and the associative linking of these discrete formations), and likewise the emergence of a particular *drive*, "craving satisfaction," from an *instinctive context of meaning* in behavior. On the other hand there are the *beginnings* of intelligence, which seeks to make the automatism, only now emptied of meaning, "artificially" meaningful again. Both, genetically considered, are *equiprimordial* products of the development of instinctive behavior. In general they *keep* strictly in step, both with each other and with the *individuation* of living beings—the single being's falling out of its bondage to the species. They also keep pace with the variety of particular individual situations into which the living being can come. *Creative dissociation*, not association or the synthesis of single pieces, is the basic process of the *development of life*. And the same holds physiologically. Physiologically, too, the organism resembles a mechanism *less* the more simply it is organized; but up to the onset of death and the cytomorphosis of the organs it produces of itself a formation that is—phenomenally—ever more like a

mechanism. It should also be possible to show that intelligence by no means joins associative psychic life only at a higher level of life, as Karl Bühler, for example, thinks. Rather, it develops strictly evenly and in parallel with associative psychic life, and, as Alverdes and Buytendijk have recently shown, it is present not only in the highest mammals but already in the infusorian.[13] It is as if what is rigid and bound to the species in instinct became mobile and related to the individual in intelligence, while what is automatic in instinct only *became* mechanical, and so relatively meaningless, in association and the conditioned reflex—but at the same time far more variously combinable. This also makes it understandable that the arthropods, which morphologically too have a quite different and far more rigid basis to their organization, possess instincts most perfectly but give hardly any sign of intelligent behavior; whereas the human being, a plastic mammalian type in which intelligence is most highly developed, and no less associative memory, has strongly *regressed* instincts. If we try to interpret instinctive behavior psychically, it represents an inseparable *unity of* foreknowledge *and action*, so that no *more* knowledge is ever given than enters at the same time into the next step of the action. Further, the knowledge contained in instinct seems to be not a knowledge through representations and images, let alone through thoughts, but only a *feeling* of attracting and repelling *resistances*, charged with value and differentiated according to impressions of value. Compared with the feeling-urge, instinct is already directed toward components of the environment that, though they *recur frequently* for the species, are nonetheless *specific*. It represents an increasing *specialization* of the feeling-urge and its qualities. To speak of "innate representations" in instincts, as Reimarus did, therefore makes no sense.[14]

13 Karl Bühler (1879–1963), German psychologist; F. J. J. Buytendijk (1887–1974), Dutch physiologist and animal psychologist.

14 Hermann Samuel Reimarus (1694–1768), German philosopher, author of a treatise on the drives of animals (1760).

ASSOCIATIVE MEMORY

Habit and memory grow through trial and success, bring tradition, and free the drives from instinct.

1.9 Of the two modes of behavior that both originally arise from instinctive behavior—"habitual" and "intelligent" behavior—the habitual, which is thus the *third* psychic form we distinguish, represents the capacity we call *associative memory* (Mneme [memory]). This capacity by no means belongs to *all* living beings, as Hering and Semon thought. It is *lacking* in plants, as Aristotle already rightly saw. We must ascribe it to every living being whose behavior changes *slowly* and *steadily*, on the basis of earlier behavior of the same kind, in a way that serves life and is therefore *meaningful*—that is, in such a way that the degree to which its behavior becomes more meaningful depends strictly on the *number* of attempts, or so-called trial movements.[15] That an animal makes trial movements spontaneously at all (spontaneous play movements can also be counted among them), and further that it tends to repeat movements whether they bring pleasure or displeasure, does *not* rest on memory. It is the precondition of all reproduction—itself an innate drive (the drive to repeat). But that it later tries to repeat more often those movements that brought *success* for some positive satisfaction of a drive, so that they become "fixed" in it, than those that met with failure—this is precisely the basic fact we designate by the *principle of "success and error"*. Where we find such facts we speak, depending on the case, of *practice* (where only the quantitative is involved), of the *acquisition* of habits, of *self-training*, or, when the human being intervenes, of *training by others*. All plant life, as we have shown, has *none* of these facts, and indeed cannot have them, since it lacks that reporting back of organ-states to a center = sensation. The basis of all memory

15 Ewald Hering (1834–1918), physiologist, and Richard Semon (1859–1918), zoologist who coined the term "Mneme"; both treated memory as a general property of organic matter.

is what Pavlov called the "*conditioned reflex*." A dog, for example, secretes certain gastric juices not only when food reaches its stomach but already when it *sees* the food—or *hears* the footsteps of the man who usually brings it its food. Human beings even secrete digestive juices when it is suggested to them in sleep that they are eating the food in question. If a signal is sounded several times at the same moment as a behavior is triggered by a stimulus, the behavior can then occur when the signal is given, even without the adequate stimulus. Such facts are called "conditioned reflexes." Their psychic analogue is simply the so-called *law of association*, according to which a whole complex of representations tends to restore itself and to supply its missing members when one part of this complex is experienced again, sensorily or motorically. Completely strict associations of single representations, subject only to this law of contiguity and similarity—that is, of partial identity of the initial representations with earlier complexes—probably *never* occur, any more than a completely isolated, ever-identical reflex of a locally determined organ, and any more than a sensation strictly proportional to the stimulus, independent of all changing attitudes of the drives and all material of memory. All the laws of association are therefore probably, just like the natural laws of physics that concern aggregate processes, merely *statistical* regularities. All these concepts (sensation, associative reflex) therefore have the character of limiting concepts that only indicate the direction of a certain kind of psychic or physiological change. Approximately pure associations are probably found only where quite specific higher determinants of thought have dropped out—for example in external sound associations between words in states of flight of ideas. Further, it can be shown that in *aging* the course of representations in the psyche comes ever *closer* to the model of association, as the changes in handwriting, drawing, painting and language in old age seem to attest: all of them take on an increasingly additive, non-holistic character. Similarly, in aging, sensation comes closer to proportionality with the stimulus. Just as the bodily organism produces more and more of a relat-

ive mechanism in the course of life—until in death it sinks wholly into one—so our psychic life too produces more and more purely *habitual* connections of representations and modes of behavior: in aging the human being *becomes* more and more the slave of habit. Further, associations of *single representations* follow *genetically* upon associations of complexes, which in their turn stand somewhat closer to the instinctive course of behavior. Just as the sober perception of facts, without a surplus of imagination or mythical elaboration, is a *late phenomenon* of psychic development, for the individual as for whole peoples, so too the associative connection is such a late phenomenon[16]. It has further been shown that there is almost no association entirely *without* intellectual influence. Never do we find the transition from chance associative reaction to meaningful reaction increasing *strictly steadily* with the number of attempts. The curves almost always show discontinuities, in the sense that the turn from chance to meaning occurs somewhat earlier than the *pure* principle of trial and error would lead us to expect according to the rules of probability.

1.10 The principle of memory is already at work to some degree in all animals, and it appears as the direct consequence of the emergence of the reflex arc, a separation of the sensory from the motor system. In its extent, however, there are enormous differences. The typical animals of instinct, with their chain-like, closed structure, show it least; animals of plastic, less rigid organization, with a great and broad capacity to combine ever new movements out of partial movements, show it most sharply (mammals and vertebrates). From the first moment it appears, the principle is closely bound up with the imitation of actions and movements on the basis of the expressions of affect and the signals of other members of the species. "*Imitation*" and "*copying*" are only specializations of that *drive to repeat* which is first active with respect to an animal's *own* modes of behavior and lived experiences and which represents, so to speak, the

16 SCHELER'S NOTE. See on this my essays "Sociology of Knowledge" and "Work and Knowledge" in *The Forms of Knowledge and Society* (Leipzig 1926).

steam of all reproductive memory. Only through the linking of these two phenomena does the important fact of "tradition" arise. Tradition adds to biological heredity a wholly new *dimension* in which animal behavior is determined by the past life of other members of the species. On the other hand, it must be distinguished *most sharply* from all *freely conscious recollection* of the past (anamnesis [recollection]) and from all transmission on the basis of signs, sources and documents. While these latter forms of transmission are peculiar to the *human being* alone, tradition already appears in the hordes, packs and other social forms of animals. Here too the herd "learns" what the pioneers demonstrate, and can pass it on to coming generations. A certain "progress" is already possible through tradition. Yet all *genuine* human development rests essentially on a progressive *dismantling* of tradition. Conscious "*recollection*" of individual events experienced once, together with the steady identification of a number of acts of recollection with one another as directed toward one and the same past—which is probably peculiar to the human being—always means the *dissolution*, indeed the actual *killing*, of living tradition. For the contents handed down by tradition are always given to us as "*present*"; they are undated in time, and they prove to be *effective* on our present doings *without* themselves becoming *objects* at a definite distance in time. In "tradition" the *past* works on us *by suggestion* more than we *know* about it. Suggestion, and probably, according to P. Schilder, hypnosis too, is a phenomenon already widespread in the animal world.[17] Hypnosis probably arose as an auxiliary function of mating and served at first, no doubt, to put the female into a state of lethargy. Suggestion is a primary phenomenon compared with "communication," for example of a judgment whose state of affairs is itself grasped in "understanding." This latter "understanding" of intended states of affairs that are judged in a sentence is found only in the human being. The dismantling of the power of tradition advances steadily in human history. It is

17 Paul Schilder (1886–1940), Austrian psychiatrist and psychoanalyst who wrote on hypnosis.

an achievement of ratio, which in one and the same act objectifies a traditional content and thereby at once *throws it back* into the past where it belongs—thus clearing the ground for ever new inventions and discoveries. In history, the pressure that tradition exerts on our behavior *unconsciously* steadily decreases in an analogous way through the advance of *historical scholarship*. In the structure of the psychic world, the working of the associative principle means at the same time the *decline* of instinct and of its kind of "meaning," as well as the advance of centralization and of the simultaneous mechanization of organic life. It further means the increasing *release* of the organic *individual* from bondage to the species and from the unadaptable *rigidity* of instinct. For only through the advance of this principle can the individual adapt to ever new situations, that is, to situations not typical of the species; it thereby ceases to be nothing more than a point of passage for processes of reproduction.

1.11 If, then, the principle of association is, in relation to technical intelligence, a relative principle of rigidity and habit—a "conservative" principle—it is nonetheless, in relation to instinct, already a powerful instrument of *liberation*. It creates a wholly new *dimension* of possibilities for life to grow richer. This also holds for the *drives*. The drive released from instinct appears, relatively, already in the higher animals, and with it, to be sure, the horizon of *excess*: already here the drive becomes a possible source of pleasure, *independent* of the whole of life's requirements. Only so long as the sexual impulse, for example, is embedded in the deep *rhythm* of the mating seasons that go with the changes of nature is it an incorruptible *servant* of life. Released from the instinctive rhythm, it becomes more and more an independent source of *pleasure*, and already in higher animals, especially tame ones, it can far outgrow the *biological meaning* of its existence (for example masturbation in apes, dogs, and so on). The life of the drives is originally directed entirely toward modes of behavior and *goods*, and by no means toward pleasure as a feeling. When it is used on principle as a source of pleasure, as in all hedonism, we are dealing with a late

phenomenon of the decadence of life. An attitude to life aimed purely at pleasure is a distinct phenomenon of old age in the life of individuals as of peoples, as the old drinker who "savors the drop," and analogous phenomena in the erotic sphere, attest. Likewise, the separation of the higher and lower psychic joys of functioning from the state-pleasure of drive satisfaction, and the overgrowth of state-pleasure over the vital and spiritual joys of functioning, is a phenomenon of old age. But only in the human being does this isolability of the drive from instinctive behavior, and this separability of functional joy from state-pleasure, take on the most monstrous forms—so that it has rightly been said that the human being can only ever be more *or* less than an animal, but never—an animal.

PRACTICAL INTELLIGENCE

Intelligence is sudden insight into a new situation, still in the service of a drive.

1.12 However nature brought forth this new psychic form of associative memory, it has always, as I indicated above, also placed the corrective for its dangers into the very first rudiments of this capacity. This corrective is nothing other than the *fourth* essential form of psychic life: *practical intelligence*, as we shall call it, which is in principle still organically bound. Closely bound up with it are the capacity for choice and the act of choice, as well as the capacity to prefer among goods, or among members of the species in the process of reproduction (the beginnings of eros).

1.13 Intelligent behavior, too, can first be defined without regard to psychic processes. A living being "behaves" *intelligently* when it carries out meaningful behavior in *new* situations, typical neither of the species nor of the individual, without trial-and-error attempts or without adding fresh ones each time. Such behavior may be "clever," or it may be "foolish," missing its goal yet noticeably striving toward it. It occurs *suddenly*, and above all independently of the *number* of attempts previously

made to solve a task set by a drive. *We speak* of *organically* bound intelligence as long as the inner and outer procedure the living being adopts serves an impulse of drive and the satisfaction of a need. We further call this intelligence practical, since its final sense is always an *action* by which the organism either reaches or misses its drive-goal[18]. If we turn to the psychic side, however, we can define intelligence as a suddenly springing-up *insight* into a connected *state of affairs* and state of values within the environment. This state of affairs is neither directly given to perception nor was it ever perceived before, so that it would be available for reproduction. Put positively, intelligence is *insight* into a state of affairs on the basis of a structure of relations whose foundations are given *partly* in experience and are partly supplied *anticipatorily* in representation, for example at a certain level of visual intuition. What characterizes this thinking, which is not reproductive but *productive*, is therefore always *anticipation*, the *having-in-advance* of a *new* state of affairs never before experienced (prudentia [prudence], providentia [foresight], cleverness, cunning). The difference from associative memory is plain here. The situation to be grasped, which behavior must take into account practically, is not only new to the species and atypical, but above all "new" to the *individual*. Such objectively meaningful behavior, moreover, occurs *suddenly*, before any new trial attempts, and independently of the *number* of earlier attempts. This suddenness also shows itself in expression, especially of the eye: for instance in the lighting-up of the eye, which W. Köhler very vividly interprets as the expression of an "aha" experience.[19] Further: it is not connections between lived experiences that were merely given at the same time that call up the new representation containing the solution to the task. Nor is intelligent behavior set off by fixed, typical,

18 SCHELER'S NOTE. In the human being, the same intelligence can also be placed in the service of specifically *spiritual* goals; only then does it rise above *cleverness* and cunning.

19 Wolfgang Köhler (1887–1967), Gestalt psychologist, whose *Intelligenzprüfungen an Anthropoiden* (1917; English *The Mentality of Apes*) reported his experiments with chimpanzees on Tenerife.

recurring gestalt structures of the environment. Rather, the new representation follows from *relations of things* among parts of the environment *to one another*, relations *selected*, as it were, by the drive-goal: relations such as same as, similar to, analogous to x, serving as a means for reaching something, cause of something, and so on.

1.14 Whether animals, especially the highest of the great apes, the chimpanzees, have reached the level of psychic life described here is today the subject of a tangled and unresolved scientific dispute, which I can touch on here only superficially. Wolfgang Köhler carried out experiments with chimpanzees over many years, with astonishing patience and ingenuity, at the German research station on Tenerife, and published them in the Treatises of the Prussian Academy of Sciences. Since then the dispute, in which almost all psychologists have taken part, has not died down. In my view Köhler is entirely right to credit his experimental animals with the simplest acts of intelligence. Other researchers deny them this. Almost each of them, with different arguments, seeks to prop up the old doctrine that animals possess nothing beyond memory and instinct, and that intelligence, even as elementary inference (without signs), is a monopoly, indeed the monopoly, of the human being. Köhler's experiments consisted in placing increasingly complicated detours or obstacles between the drive-goal (a fruit, say a banana) and the animal, or objects that could serve as possible "tools": boxes, sticks, ropes, several sticks that could be fitted into one another, sticks that first had to be fetched or made into usable sticks. He then observed whether, how, and with what presumable psychic functions the animal managed to reach its drive-goal, and where the definite *limits* of its capacities lay. In my view the experiments showed clearly that the animals' achievements *cannot* all be derived from instincts plus associative processes, and that in some cases *genuine acts of intelligence* are present. Let me briefly sketch what such practical, organically bound intelligence seems to consist in. When the drive-goal, a fruit for instance, lights up visually for the animal and stands

out sharply and independently against the visual field of the environment, *all* the givens contained in the animal's environment are peculiarly reshaped, especially the whole visual field between the animal and its environment. The field becomes so structured in its relations among things, and acquires so *relatively* "abstract" a relief, that things which, perceived by themselves, appear either indifferent or as something "for biting," something "for playing," something "for sleeping on" (for example, a blanket that the animal fetches from its sleeping quarters in order to pull in a fruit lying outside the cage and out of direct reach) take on the *dynamic relational character* of "thing for fetching fruit." This applies not only to real sticks resembling the branches from which fruit hangs in the animal's normal life in the trees, which could still be interpreted as instinct. It also applies to a piece of wire, the brim of a straw hat, straws, a blanket: in short, *anything* that fulfills the abstract representation of being "movable and elongated." *It is the dynamics of drive within the animal itself* that here begins to *become objective* and to *extend* itself into the components of the surroundings. The object the animal uses acquires the dynamic functional value of "something for bringing the fruit closer," though admittedly only an *occasional* one. The rope, the stick *itself*, seems to the animal to be "directed" toward the visually given goal, if not to *move* toward it. Here we may eavesdrop on the *phenomenon of causality or efficacy* at its very origin, a phenomenon that by no means reduces to a regular succession of appearances. "Acting upon" something, then, is a phenomenon that rests on the living being's objectifying the causality it experiences in its own drive-actions onto the things of the environment, and here it still coincides completely with "being a means." Certainly the restructuring described here does not come about through conscious reflective activity, but through a kind of *intuitive*, thing-based "rearrangement" of the environmental givens themselves. The great differences in animals' aptitude for such behavior, incidentally, confirm the intelligent character of these actions. Something similar holds for choice and the act of choice. It is a mis-

take to deny the animal the act of choice and to think that it is always moved only by whichever single drive is "stronger." The animal is not a mechanism of drives. Its drive impulses are already sharply articulated into leading higher drives, executing lower drives and auxiliary drives, and into drives toward more general and more specialized performances. Beyond that, it can also intervene *spontaneously* in its constellation of drives from its *drive-center*. Up to a certain limit, it can forgo advantages beckoning close at hand in order to gain greater ones that are more distant in time and can be won only by *detours*. What the animal certainly lacks is that preferring between *values* themselves, the useful over the agreeable, say, independently of particular concrete *goods*. In everything affective the animal stands much *closer* to the human being than it does with respect to intelligence; gift-giving, reconciliation, friendship and the like can already be found among animals.

II

Spirit: openness to the world, objectivity, self-consciousness; the person as a center of acts that is never an object.

2.1 Here arises the *decisive question* for our whole problem: if animals have intelligence, is there still anything *more* than a mere *difference of degree between human being and* animal? Is there still an essential difference? Or is there, beyond the *essential* levels treated so far, something altogether *other* in the human being, something *specifically* its own, which is not touched, let alone exhausted, by *choice* and *intelligence* at all?

2.2 Here the paths part most sharply. *Some* want to reserve intelligence and choice for the human being and deny them to the animal. They thus assert an essential difference, but they assert it precisely where, in my view, there is *no* essential difference. *Others*, in particular all evolutionists of the Darwinian and Lamarckian schools, reject any ultimate difference between human being and animal, as do Darwin, Schwalbe and also W. *Köhler*, precisely *because* the animal too already possesses intelligence. They thereby adhere, in one form or another, to the great unitary theory of the human being known as the theory of "*homo faber*" [man the maker]. And then of course they recognize no metaphysical being and no *metaphysics* of the human being either, that is, no distinctive relation that the human being *as such* would have to the ground of the world.[1]

2.3 As for me, I must reject *both* doctrines in the most decided way. I maintain: the essence of the human being, and what may

1 Gustav Schwalbe (1844–1916), German anatomist and anthropologist known for his work on human evolution and fossil hominids.

be called its special place, stands *high* above what is called intelligence and the capacity for choice. It would not be reached even if one imagined this intelligence and capacity for choice increased quantitatively at will, indeed to infinity[2]. But it would also be wrong to think of the new element that makes the human being human merely as one more essential level of psychic functions and capacities, added to the previous psychic levels of feeling-urge, instinct, associative memory, intelligence and choice. Such a level would belong to the *vital sphere*, and knowledge of it would still fall within the competence of *psychology*. *The new principle* that makes the human being human *lies outside* everything we can call *life* in the broadest sense, whether psychically from within or vitally from without. What makes the human being human is a *principle opposed to all life as such*. As such, it cannot be traced back to the "natural evolution of life" at all. If it goes back to anything, it goes back only to the supreme ground of things itself, the same ground of which "life," too, is a partial manifestation. The Greeks already asserted such a principle and called it "reason"[3]. We prefer to use a more comprehensive word for that X. The word includes the concept of reason, but besides thinking in ideas it also includes a particular kind of intuition, the intuition of primal phenomena or essential contents, as well as a particular class of emotional and volitional acts still to be characterized, such as goodness, love, remorse, reverence and so on. That word is *spirit*. The *center of acts* in which spirit appears within finite spheres of being we shall call the *person*, in sharp *distinction* from all functional "life"-centers, which, viewed from within, are also called "psychic" centers.[4]

2 SCHELER'S NOTE. Between a clever chimpanzee and Edison, taking Edison merely as a technician, there is only a difference of degree, though admittedly a very great one.

3 SCHELER'S NOTE. See Julius Stenzel's essay "The Origin of the Concept of Spirit among the Greeks" in the journal *Die Antike*.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. Julius Stenzel (1883–1935), German classical scholar and historian of Greek philosophy.

4 *Geist* is rendered "spirit" throughout, never "mind." For Scheler it is a principle beyond life that includes reason, the seeing of essences, and acts such as love and reverence.

SPIRIT AND OPENNESS TO THE WORLD

Spirit frees a being from drives and environment, so that it has objects and a world.

2.4 But what is this "spirit," this new and so decisive principle? Rarely has so much mischief been done with a word, and few people associate anything definite with it. Let us place at the head of the concept of spirit a particular function of knowing, a kind of knowledge that only spirit can give. Then the basic determination of a "spiritual" being is its *existential detachment, freedom, separability*, or at least that of its *center of existence, from the spell, from the pressure*, from *dependence on the organic*. It is detached from "life" and from *everything* that belongs to "life," including its own drive-bound intelligence. Such a "spiritual" being is no longer bound to drives and environment, but "environment-free" and, as we shall call it, *world-open*. Such a being has "*world*." It can raise to "objects" the centers of "resistance" and reaction in its environment, which were originally given to it as well and into which the animal is *ecstatically* absorbed. It can in principle grasp the essence of these "objects" *itself*, without the limitation that this world of objects, or its givenness, undergoes through the vital system of drives and the sensory functions and sense organs placed in front of it.

2.5 Spirit is therefore *objectivity, determinability by the essence of things themselves*. And a being is the "bearer" of spirit if its basic commerce with the actuality outside it has been dynamically *reversed outright* compared with the animal's.[5]

2.6 In the animal, whether highly or lowly organized, every action, *every* reaction it performs, including the "intelligent" ones, proceeds from a physiological state of its nervous system. On the psychic side, drive impulses and sense perception correspond to this state. Whatever is *not* of interest to these drives is not given either, and what is given is given only as a *center of*

5 "Objectivity" renders *Sachlichkeit*: being determined by the thing itself (*die Sache*) rather than by one's own needs and drives.

resistance to its desire and its aversion. Setting out from the physiological-psychic state is thus always the first act in the drama of an *animal's behavior* toward its environment. The structure of the environment is fitted exactly, completely and seamlessly to the animal's physiological and, indirectly, its morphological peculiarity, and further to its structure of drives and senses, which form a strict functional unity. Everything the *animal* can grasp and notice of its environment lies within the secure *fences and bounds of its environmental structure*. The second act of the drama of animal behavior is some real change it brings about in its environment through its reaction, in the direction of its leading drive-goal. The third act is the physiological-psychic state, which this change has altered in turn. The course of such behavior thus always has the form:

2.7 A being that has spirit, however, is capable of behavior whose course takes *exactly the opposite* form. The first act of this new drama, the *human* drama, is this: behavior is motivated first by the pure essence of a complex of intuition that has been *raised to an object*. This occurs in principle independently of the physiological state of the human organism and of its drive impulses. It is also independent of the sensory outer side of the environment that lights up precisely in those impulses and is always determined by sense modality, that is, visually, acoustically and so on. The second act of the drama is the free inhibition or disinhibition of a drive impulse at first held back, proceeding from the *center of the person*. And the third act is a change in the objectivity of a thing, experienced as valuable in itself and final. This "openness to the world" thus has the following form: Once present, this behavior is by its nature *capable of unlimited expansion*, as far as the "world" of existing things extends. The human being is thus the X that can behave "*world-open*" to an unlimited degree. The animal, however, has no "objects." It only lives ecstatically into its environment, which it carries along as a structure wherever it goes, much as a snail carries its shell. The peculiar distancing and *substantivizing* of an "environment" into a "world" is thus something the animal *cannot* accomplish, any

more than it can transform the "resistance" centers bounded by affect and drive into "objects." I would say that the animal is essentially bound to, and caught within, the actuality of life corresponding to its organic states, without ever grasping it "as an object." *Being-an-object* is thus the most formal category of the logical side of "spirit." The animal, it is true, no longer lives absolutely ecstatically into its medium the way the plant's feeling-urge does, without sensation, representation or consciousness, and without any inward feedback of the organism's own states. The animal, as we saw, is given back to itself, as it were, by the separation of sensation and motor apparatus and by the constant feedback of its body schema and its sensory contents. It possesses a body schema; but toward its environment the animal still behaves *ecstatically*, even where it behaves "intelligently."

2.8 The *spiritual act*, as the human being can perform it, is different from this simple feedback of the animal's body schema and its contents. It is essentially bound to a *second* dimension and level of the reflexive act. We shall take this act and its goal together and call the goal of this "self-collection" the spiritual center of acts' consciousness of itself, or "*self-consciousness*." The animal, then, unlike the plant, does have consciousness, but it has no self-consciousness, as Leibniz already saw. It *does not possess itself*, is not master of *itself*, and *therefore* is not conscious of itself either. Self-collection, self-consciousness, and the capacity and possibility of making the original resistance of the drives into an object thus form a *single, indissoluble structure*, which as such is proper only to the human being. With this becoming self-conscious, with this *new* turning back and centering of existence that spirit makes possible, the *second* essential mark of the human being is also given at once. Human beings can not only expand the "environment" into the dimension of being a "world" and make *resistances* into "ob-jects," things that stand over against them. They can also, and this is the most remarkable thing, make their *own physiological and psychic makeup*, and every single psychic lived experience, into an *object* in turn.

Only for this reason can they also freely cast their life away. The animal hears and sees, but without knowing that it hears and sees. To put ourselves to some extent into the animal's normal state, we must think of very rare ecstatic states in human beings. We find them as hypnosis ebbs away, after taking certain intoxicating drugs, and also when certain techniques that deactivate spirit are applied, for example in orgiastic cults of all kinds. The animal does not experience its drive impulses as *its* drives either, but as dynamic pulls and repulsions that emanate from the *things in the environment* themselves. Even early human beings, who in certain traits still stand close to the animal, do not say "I" abhor this thing, but "the *thing is* taboo." The animal has no "will" that outlasts the drive impulses and their changes and can preserve *continuity* through the shifting of its psychophysical states. An animal always arrives, so to speak, somewhere other than where it originally "wants" to go. Nietzsche says something deep and true when he says, "The human being is the animal that *can make promises*."[6]

2.9 It follows from what has been said that there are *four essential levels* at which everything that is appears to us with respect to its inwardness and selfhood. *Inorganic formations* have no such inwardness and selfhood at all, and therefore no center that belongs to them ontically. What we call a unity in this world of objects, down to molecules, atoms and electrons, depends solely on *our* power to divide bodies, actually or at least in thought. Every bodily unity is a unity only *relative* to a particular lawfulness in its action on other bodies. A living being, by contrast, is always an *ontic* center and always forms "its" spatiotemporal unity and individuality *itself*. This unity does not exist by the grace of *our* acts of synthesis, which are themselves biologically conditioned. A living being is an X that limits *itself*. We must take non-spatial centers of force as underlying the images of bodies; they posit the appearance of extension in time. These

6 Scheler paraphrases the opening of the second essay of Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morality* (1887), which speaks of breeding "an animal that is permitted to promise."

are centers of points of force acting *reciprocally* on one another, in which the lines of force of a field converge. The feeling-urge of the *plant has* a center, and a medium into which the living being is placed, relatively open-ended in its growth, *without* feedback of its various states. But the plant does possess "inwardness" as such, and with it ensoulment. In the *animal* there is sensation and consciousness, and with them a central point to which the states of its organism are reported back; it is thus given to itself a *second* time. The human being, however, is given to itself a *third time*, in *self-consciousness* and in the capacity to make all its psychic processes into objects. The *person* in the human being must therefore be thought of as a center that is raised *above* the opposition of organism and environment.

2.10 Does all this not look as if there were a *ladder of levels* on which a primal being, in building up the world, bends *back upon itself* more and more? It would do so in order to become aware *of itself* at ever higher levels and in ever new dimensions, until finally, in the *human being*, it possesses and *grasps* itself *completely*.

THING, SPACE AND TIME

Only human beings have the category of thing, a unified space and the empty forms of space and time.

2.11 From this structure of the human being's being, its *self-givenness*, a number of *human peculiarities* can be made intelligible, some of which I will briefly mention. First, only the human being has the fully developed concrete category of thing and substance. Even the highest animals seem not to have it completely. An ape that is handed a half-peeled banana flees from it, whereas it eats a fully peeled one, and peels an unpeeled one itself and then eats it. For the animal, the thing has not

"changed"; it has turned into a *different* thing[7]. Evidently the animal lacks here a center from which it could relate the psychophysical functions of its seeing, hearing and smelling, and the things of grasp, sight, touch, hearing, taste and smell presented in them, *to one and the same concrete thing*, to an identical core of reality. Second, the human being also has a unified *space* from the outset. Consider someone born blind who gains sight through an operation. What this person learns is not to assemble originally separate "spaces," such as kinesthetic spaces, tactile spaces, visual spaces, auditory spaces and so on, into *one* intuition of space. They learn only to identify their sense data as symbols for the thing that exists in *one* place. The animal lacks this central function, which gives unified space a fixed *form prior to* individual things and their perception. Above all, it lacks that kind of self-centering which gathers all sense data together with their associated drive impulses and relates them to *one* "world" ordered like a substance. As I have shown in detail elsewhere, the animal lacks a genuine world-space that would persist as a *stable* background independent of its own movements from place to place. It equally lacks the *empty forms of space and time* into which the human being primarily sets things and events in grasping them. Such forms are possible only for a being whose unsatisfied drives always exceed their satisfaction. The root of the human intuition of space and time, which *precedes* all external sensations, lies in the organic possibility of *spontaneous movement* and of acting in a definite order. What we originally call "empty" is the remaining-unfulfilled of our drive-bound expectations. So the first "emptiness" is, as it were, the *emptiness of our heart*. In the natural view of the world, space and time appear to human beings as empty forms that *precede* all things. This strange fact can be understood only from

7 SCHELER'S NOTE. See also H. Volkelt's spider experiment. Facts demonstrating analogous things will be found in great number in my *Anthropology*.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. Hans Volkelt (1886–1964), psychologist, reported that a spider that attacks a fly caught in its web ignores or flees from the same fly placed in its retreat. Scheler's planned *Anthropology* remained unfinished at his death.

this *excess* of unsatisfied over satisfied drives. Certain deficit symptoms have shown that tactile space is not directly coordinated with visual space, the coordination occurring only through the mediation of kinesthetic sensations. This fact, too, indicates that the empty form of space, at least as a still unformed "spatiality," is experienced before any sensations whatever become conscious. It is experienced on the basis of the lived impulses to movement and the lived experience of being able to produce them. For it is precisely those impulses to movement that give rise, in the first place, to *kinesthetic* sensations. This elementary *space of movement*, the "awareness of what is around us," persists even when visual space, in which alone the continuous simultaneous manifold of "extension" is given, has broken down completely. In the transition from animal to human being we thus find a complete reversal of "empty" and "full," in time as well as in space. The animal can no more detach the empty form of space and time from particular contents of the things in its environment than it can detach "number" from a "quantity" lying in the things themselves as greater or smaller. It lives entirely into the concrete *actuality* of its present at any given moment. Only when the drive-*expectations* that translate into impulses of movement gain the *upper hand* over everything that is *factual* fulfillment of drives in a perception or sensation does an exceedingly strange phenomenon occur, in the human being. Spatial *emptiness*, and analogously temporal emptiness, then appears as *preceding* all possible contents of perception and the entire world of things, as "underlying" them. Thus, without suspecting it, human beings look upon their *own* emptiness of heart as an "infinite emptiness" of space and time, as if this would exist even if there were no things at all. Only very late does science correct this enormous illusion of the natural view of the world, by teaching that space and time are only orders, only possibilities of the position and succession of things, and have no existence outside and independently of them. Nor, I said, does the animal have world-space. A dog may live for years in a garden and have been at every spot in it many times. Yet it

will never be able to form an overall picture of the garden and of the *arrangement* of its trees, bushes and so on that is independent of its own bodily position, however small or large the garden may be. It has only environmental spaces that change with its movements, and it cannot coordinate them into the whole space of the garden independent of its bodily position. The reason is that it cannot make its own body and its movements into an *object*. If it could, it would include its own bodily position as a variable factor in its intuition of space and learn to reckon, as it were instinctively, with the contingency of its position, as human beings can do even *without* science. This human achievement is only the beginning of what human beings continue in science. For this is what is great about human science. In it, human beings learn to *reckon* ever more comprehensively with *themselves* and their whole physical and psychic apparatus as with a *foreign* thing standing in strict causal connections with other things. They thereby gain a picture of the world itself whose objects are wholly independent of their psychophysical organization, of their senses and the thresholds of those senses, and of their needs and the interests those needs take in things. These objects therefore remain *constant* through all the changes of their positions, states and sensory experiences. Human beings alone, insofar as they are persons, can swing themselves up *above themselves* as living beings. From a center lying, as it were, *beyond* the spatiotemporal world, they can make *everything*, themselves included, into an object of their knowledge.

2.12 *This* center, however, from which human beings perform the acts by which they objectify the world, their bodies and their psyches, cannot itself be a "part" of this very world. It therefore can have no definite somewhere or somewhen; it can lie only in the supreme *ground of being itself*. Thus the *human being is the being that is superior to itself and* to the *world*. As such, human beings are also capable of irony and humor, which always involve rising above one's own existence. Even I. Kant, in his profound doctrine of transcendental apperception, essen-

tially clarified that new *unity of* cogitare [thinking] which is "the condition of all possible experience and therefore also of all objects of experience." This holds not only for outer experience but also for the inner experience through which our own inner life becomes accessible to us. Kant *thereby was the first to raise "spirit" above "psyche."* He expressly denied that spirit is merely a group of functions of a so-called soul-substance, whose fictitious assumption is owed solely to an illegitimate reification of the unity of spirit, which exists only *in act*.

2.13 We have thereby already marked a *third* important determination of spirit: spirit is the only being that is itself *incapable of becoming an object*. It is *pure* and simple *being-in-act*, and has its being only in the free performance of its acts. The center of spirit, the person, is therefore neither objective nor thing-like being, but only an *ordered structure of acts* (essentially determined) that continually *performs itself* within itself. The psychic does *not* perform "itself." It is a series of events "in" time, which we can still in principle watch from the center of our spirit and can still make into an *object* in inner perception and observation. But toward the being of our *person* we can only *collect ourselves*, can only *concentrate ourselves toward it*; we cannot objectify it. Other persons, too, are *not* capable of becoming objects as persons. We can take part in them only by re-performing and co-performing their free *acts*, by "*identifying*" ourselves, as we tend to say, with a person's willing, love and so on, and thereby with the person. We can likewise take part only by co-performance in the acts of that *one* supra-individual spirit. We must assume such a spirit, on the basis of the inviolable essential connection between idea and act, if we assume at all an order of ideas realizing itself in this world *independently* of *human* consciousness and ascribe it to primal being itself as *one* of its attributes. The older philosophy of ideas, dominant since Augustine, had assumed "ideae *ante* res" [ideas *before* things]: a "providence" and a plan for the creation of the world even before the world was actual. But the ideas are not before things, not in them and not *after* them, but with them. They are pro-

duced in the eternal spirit only in the act of the continual realization of the world (creatio continua [continuous creation]). Therefore, insofar as we think "ideas," our co-performance of these acts is not a mere finding or discovering of something that already exists and holds as essence independently of us. It is a true *co-producing*, a *co-generating* of the ideas and of the values correlated with eternal love, *out of the origin of things itself*.

III

Ideation, the grasp of essences, and the act of saying "no" to reality.

3.1 If we want to make the peculiarity and distinctive character of what we call "spirit" still clearer in detail, it is best to start from a specifically spiritual act, the act *of ideation*. It is an act entirely different from all technical intelligence. A problem for intelligence would be something like this: I now have a pain here in my arm; how did it arise, and how can it be removed? Establishing that would correspondingly be a task for positive science. But I can also take the same pain as an *example* of the most strange and astonishing essential fact that this world is stained with pain, evil and suffering *at all*. Then I will ask differently: what, really, is *pain itself*, apart from the fact that I *have it now, here*? And how must the ground of things be constituted for something like "pain as such" to be possible? A magnificent example of such an act of ideation is the well-known story of Buddha's conversion. The prince sees *one* poor man, *one* sick man, *one* dead man, after having been kept from all negative impressions for years in his father's palace. But he at once grasps these three contingent facts, existing "now, here, thus," as mere *examples* of an *essential* constitution of the world that can be grasped in them. Descartes tried to make clear to himself the essentia [essence] of body and its essential structure by means of a piece of wax. These are questions of the kind that spirit as

such asks.[1] The whole of mathematics offers the most striking examples of questions of this kind. The human being can detach threeness, as the "quantity" of three things, from those things. It can then operate with the "number" three as an independent object, according to the inner law by which the *series* of such objects is generated. The animal can do *nothing* of the kind. *Ideation*, then, means grasping the *essential structural forms* of the world in *a single* example of the essential region in question, independently of the *number* of *observations* we make and of inductive inferences. The knowledge we gain in this way then holds with *infinite* generality for all possible things of this essence. It holds quite independently of our contingent senses and the kind and degree of their excitability[2]. Insights gained in this way hold *beyond* the limits of our sense experience. In the language of the schools we call them "a *priori*."

3.2 These essential insights fulfill *two* very different functions. First, they supply all the positive sciences with the highest *axioms*, which first show us the *direction* for fruitful observation, induction and deduction through intelligence and discursive thought. For philosophical metaphysics, however, whose final goal is knowledge of absolute being, they form, as Hegel aptly said, "*windows into the Absolute*." For no genuine essence that reason finds in the world can be traced back to finite empirical causes, and neither can the *existence* of "something" of such an essence. It can be ascribed only to the *one* supra-individual spirit, as an attribute of the supra-individual Ens a se [being from itself]. *This ability to separate existence and essence is the basic mark of the human spirit*, the mark that *first founds all the others*.

1 In the legend, the young Siddhartha Gautama, long sheltered in his father's palace, encounters suffering, sickness and death and renounces the world. Descartes's piece of wax appears in the Second Meditation (1641).

2 SCHELER'S NOTE. Human beings, then, very much possess that "intellectus archetypus" [archetypal intellect] which Kant denied them, recognizing it only as a "limiting concept," but which Goethe expressly granted them.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. Kant discusses the intuitive, archetypal intellect in the *Critique of Judgment* (1790), §77. Goethe claimed such a capacity for human beings in his essay "Anschauende Urteilskraft" (Intuitive judgment, 1820).

What is essential to human beings, as Leibniz already said, is not that they have knowledge, but that they have *essences a priori* or are *capable* of acquiring them. There is no such thing, however, as a "constant" organization of reason of the kind Kant assumed; on the contrary, it is in principle subject to historical change. Only reason *itself* is constant, as the disposition and ability to form and shape ever new forms of thought and intuition, of love and valuation, by functionalizing such essential insights.

3.3 If we want to penetrate more deeply from here into the essence of the human being, we must picture the *structure of acts* that leads to the act *of ideation*. Consciously or unconsciously, the human being carries out a technique that may be described as a tentative *suspension of the character of actuality*. The animal lives entirely in the concrete and in actuality. Now all actuality is bound up, first, with a place in space and a place in time, a now and a here. Second, it is bound up with a contingent essence, as sense perception gives it, always from some "aspect." To be human means to hurl a forceful "No" against *this* kind of actuality. *Buddha* knew this when he said that it is glorious to *behold* every thing, terrible to be it. Plato knew it when he bound the seeing of ideas to a turning of the soul away from the sensory content of things and to the soul's turning inward into itself, in order to find the "origins" of things. And E. Husserl means nothing else when he binds knowledge of ideas to a "*phenomenological reduction*," that is, to a "crossing out" or "bracketing" of the (contingent) coefficient of existence of the things of the world, in order to arrive at their "*essentia*." I *cannot*, admittedly, agree with Husserl's theory of this reduction in detail. But I grant that it aims at the act that most properly defines the human spirit.[3]

3.4 If we want to know how this act *of reduction* happens, we must know what our experience of actuality really consists in. There is no particular specifiable sensation (blue, hard and so

3 Edmund Husserl (1859–1938), founder of phenomenology; in *Ideas* I (1913) the reduction suspends, or "brackets," the natural belief in the existence of the world.

on) for the impression of actuality. Perception, memory, thinking and all possible perceptive acts *cannot* provide us with this impression; what they give is always only the *essence* of things, never their existence. What gives us existence is rather the experience of the *resistance* of the sphere of the world already disclosed. There is resistance only for our *striving*, for our *drive-bound life*, for our central *life-urge*. The original experience of actuality, as the experience of "the world's resistance," *precedes all* consciousness, all representation, all perception. Even the most insistent sense perception is never conditioned merely by the stimulus and the normal process in the nervous system. A *drive-bound* turning toward something, whether desire or aversion, must also be present if even the simplest *sensation* is to come about. An *impulse* of our life-urge is thus the indispensable co-condition of all possible perception. Therefore the resistances that the centers of force and fields underlying the bodily images of the environment exert on our life-urge can be experienced early: at a point in the temporal process of a possible perception *in the making* at which no conscious *perception of images* has yet come about. (The "sense images" themselves, after all, are entirely *without effect*.) The experience of reality is therefore not *given after* all our "representation" of the world, but *given before* it. What, then, does this forceful "No" I spoke of mean? What does it mean to de-actualize the world, or to "ideate" the world? It does *not* mean, as Husserl thinks, withholding the judgment of existence. Rather, it means tentatively suspending, annihilating, the *moment of reality itself*: that whole, undivided, powerful impression of reality with its affective correlate. It means removing that "*anxiety* of the earthly" which, as Schiller profoundly says, is "gone" only "in those regions where the *pure forms* dwell." If existence is "resistance," this fundamentally *ascetic* act of *de-actualization* can consist only in suspending, in putting out of force, precisely that *life-urge*. It is *in relation to* this urge that the world appears above all "as resistance," and the urge is at the same time the *condition* of all sense perception of

the contingent now-here-thus.[4] But this act can be performed only by that very being we call "spirit." Only spirit, in its form as pure "will," can bring about the *deactivation* of that center of feeling-urge which we recognized as the *access* to the being-actual of what is actual.

3.5 The *human being*, then, is the living being that can adopt a *fundamentally ascetic* attitude toward its life, the life that shudders violently through it. It can suppress and repress its own drive impulses, *denying* them nourishment through images of perception and representations! Compared with the animal, which always says "yes" to being-actual, even where it abhors and flees, the human being is the "*no-sayer*," the "*ascetic of life*," the eternal *Protestant* against all *mere* actuality. Compared with the animal, whose existence is philistinism incarnate, the human being is at the same time the *eternal "Faust*," the *bestia cupidissima rerum novarum* [the beast most avid for new things]. It is never at rest in the actuality surrounding it, always eager to *break through* the *bounds* of its being-now-here-thus and of its "environment," including its own present actuality as a self. In this sense S.[5] Freud, too, in his *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, sees in the human being the "repressor of drives." And only *because* the human being is this can it *build a superstructure* of an ideal realm of thought over its world of perception. On the other hand, precisely by this means it can channel to the spirit dwelling within it, in increasing measure, the *energy* slumbering in the repressed drives. That is, the human being can *sublimate* its drive energy into spiritual activity.[6]

4 Schiller's poem "Das Ideal und das Leben" (The ideal and life, 1795) urges casting off "the anxiety of the earthly" to rise into the realm of pure forms.

5 Goethe's Faust is the restless striver who is never content with any given moment.

6 Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920) introduced the death drive alongside the life drives.

IV

Spirit and urge: negative and classical theories of the human being; the powerlessness of spirit and its realization through sublimation.

4.1 But here arises the *decisive* question: does spirit first *arise* through asceticism, repression and sublimation, *or* does it merely receive its *energy* through them? In my conviction, that negative activity, that "No" to actuality, by no means conditions the *being* of spirit. It conditions only, as it were, spirit's *supply of energy*, and thereby its capacity to manifest itself. Spirit itself is, as we said, ultimately an attribute of being itself, which becomes manifest in the human being, in the unity of concentration of the person "collecting" itself into itself. *But* as such, spirit in its "*pure*" form is originally utterly *without any "power,"* "force" or "activity." To gain *any* degree of activity at all, however small, that *asceticism* of which we spoke, that repression of drives and simultaneous sublimation, must *be added*.

4.2 From here we gain insight into *two* initial *possibilities* for understanding spirit, both of which have played a fundamental role in the history of the idea of the human being. The *first* of these theories, which the Greeks developed, ascribes to spirit *itself* not only force and activity but the highest degree of power and force. We call it the "*classical* theory" of the human being. It is part of a whole worldview which holds that the being of the "world" (cosmos), existing from the outset and *unchangeable* by the historical process of becoming, is so constructed that the *higher* forms of being, from the deity down to *materia bruta* [brute matter], are also in each case the *mightier, more forceful—*

that is, the *causing*—modes of being. The summit of such a world is then, naturally, the spiritual and all-powerful God: the God who is *all-powerful* precisely *through* his spirit. The *second*, opposite view, which we shall call the "*negative theory*" of the human being, holds the reverse. On this view spirit itself—insofar as the concept is admitted at all—or at least all the "culture-producing" activities of the human being, and so also all moral and logical acts, all acts of aesthetic contemplation and artistic shaping, *arise* only and exclusively *through* that "No." I *reject both* theories. My claim is this: that negative act does indeed bring about the energizing of spirit, which is by nature powerless and consists only in a group of pure "*intentions*"; but it is not through that act that spirit first "springs into being."

THE NEGATIVE THEORY

Buddha, Schopenhauer, Alsberg and Freud derive spirit from the negation or repression of drives.

4.3 As *examples* of the *negative theory of the human being*—admittedly quite different from one another—I name a few: the Buddha's doctrine of redemption, Schopenhauer's doctrine of the "self-negation of the will to life," Alsberg's noteworthy book *The Riddle of Humanity*, and finally S. Freud's *late doctrine*, especially in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. I cannot go into these doctrines in detail; I can devote only a few words to them. For the *Buddha*, the meaning of human existence ends in its extinction as a subject of desire, or rather in bringing about a world of essences that is now merely beheld—that is, nothingness, or nirvana. The Buddha has no *positive* idea of spirit, either in the human being or in the ground of the world.[1] What he did grasp, with profound insight, is only the causal order in which, through the technique of de-realization—by inwardly annulling desire and what he calls "thirst"—the sensory qualities, the shapes, the relations, the spatiality and temporality of being fall

1 Paul Alsberg (1883–1965), German physician; *Das Menschheitsrätsel* (1922) later appeared in English as *In Quest of Man*.

away *piece* by *piece*. *Schopenhauer* sees the essential mark of the difference between animal and human being solely in the fact that the animal is *unable* to perform that "redeeming" negation of the will to life which the human being, in its highest exemplars, can perform. For Schopenhauer, as for his teacher Bouterwek, this negation is the *source* of all "higher forms" of consciousness and knowledge in metaphysics, art, the ethos of compassion, and so on.[2] *Alsberg*, a disciple of Schopenhauer, sees quite rightly that no morphological, no physiological, and no empirical-psychological characteristic can justify the general conviction of the civilized world that there is an essential difference between human being and animal. He has extended Schopenhauer's doctrine into the thesis that the "principle of humanity" lies solely in this: the human being has managed to *disengage* its *organs* from the vital struggle for the preservation of individual and species, in favor of the *tool*, of *language*, and of *concept formation*. The last of these he traces back to the disengagement of the sense organs and their functions and to Mach's principle of the greatest possible "economy" in sensory contents. Alsberg expressly refuses to *define* the human being by spirit and reason in the first place.[3] Reason, which he—wrongly, like his teacher Schopenhauer—knows only as discursive thinking, and in particular as concept formation, is for him a *consequence* of language, not its *root*; language itself he regards as an "immaterial tool" for disengaging the work of the sense organs. What gives rise to this "principle of humanity"—the tendency of life to disengage its organs and to put "tools" and "signs" in place of living organ function—and thus also to the increasing "cerebralization" of the human being in the morphological and physiological sense, is, according to Alsberg, the human being's particularly *deficient* adaptation of its organs to its environment (lack of a grasping foot, a climbing foot, claws, canine teeth, a

2 Friedrich Bouterwek (1766–1828), philosopher and aesthetician at Göttingen, whose lectures Schopenhauer attended.

3 Ernst Mach (1838–1916), physicist and philosopher, held that science aims at an "economy of thought," representing the facts with the least possible expenditure.

coat of hair, and so on). That is, it is the lack of those specific organ adaptations possessed by its nearest relatives, the great apes. What is called "spirit," then, is for Alsberg a late-arising *surrogate* for *deficient* organ adaptation—one could say, in Alfred Adler's terms, an *overcompensation* for a *constitutional* organ inferiority of the human species. S. Freud's late doctrine, too, belongs among the *negative* theories of the human being. Schopenhauer himself had already expressly used the terms "repression" of drives and of affects in order to explain, as he puts it, certain "forms of madness." It is well known how magnificently Freud developed this thought to account for the origin of neurosis.[4] But according to Freud these same repressions of drives, which in one direction are supposed to explain neurosis, are in the other direction—whenever the repressed energy of the drives is "*sublimated*"—supposed to produce nothing less than the capacity for every kind of higher cultural creation, indeed, as Freud expressly says, the *specific character* of the human constitution itself. Thus *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* states explicitly: "The development of the human being up to now seems to me to require no other explanation than that of the animals, and what is observed in a minority of human individuals as a restless urge toward further perfection can readily be understood as a consequence of the repression of drives on which what is most valuable in human culture is built," and so on (p. 40). Little notice has been taken of the fact that the late Freud, ever since he set out his dualistic basic doctrine of the two fundamental drives, libido and the death drive, has come into a strange affinity not only with Schopenhauer but even directly with the Buddha's teaching. According to the teaching of both, all forms of spirit—from the material thing, through plant, animal, and human being, up to the sage who possesses "holy knowledge"—are at bottom, as it were, groups in a frozen procession moving into silent nothingness, into eternal death. For Freud attributes to the organism as such—wrongly, I believe—a tendency toward

4 Alfred Adler (1870–1937), founder of individual psychology, traced striving and achievement to compensation for felt organ inferiority.

the sheer *preservation of its so-being*, a tendency toward a state of rest, toward protection against stimuli and "refusal of stimuli." Accordingly, even the *power system*, which in the animal (unlike the plant) is added to the systems of nutrition, growth, and reproduction and inserts itself *between* them and the environment, is for him a relative achievement of the fundamentally sadistic, destructive *death drive*, life's primal longing to go "back into the inorganic."

4.4 The *basic defect of every* version of this negative theory of the human being is that it offers not a trace of an answer to the following questions. What is it in the human being that negates, what denies the will to life, what represses drives? And from what different ultimate ground does the repressed drive energy *one* time become neurosis, and *another time* get sublimated into culture-shaping activity? *Into what* is it sublimated, and how is it that the principles of spirit agree, at least in part, with the principles of being? Finally: *to what end* are drives repressed and sublimated, the will to life negated—for the sake of what final values and final goals? Of Alsberg, too, one must ask: What is it that accomplishes the disengagement of the organs, what invents the material and immaterial tools? "Need," which Lamarck had already so immoderately overrated as a factor in the formation of new organs, when he regarded it even as the ultimate "cause of its own satisfaction," is by no means sufficient on its own. Why, then, did this so poorly adapted species not die out, as a hundred other species died out? How was it *possible* that this being, almost condemned to death, this *sick, backward, suffering animal*, with its basic attitude of anxiously wrapping itself up and protecting its poorly adapted, all too vulnerable organs, *saved* itself by escaping into the "principle of humanity," and thereby into civilization and culture? It has been said that the human being had a surplus of drives as an original characteristic of its species (A. Seydel), and that this is why it had to repress. But—this surplus of drives may well, on the contrary, be the *consequence* of a repression of drives already carried out, and by no means its cause. The negative theory of the human being

always already presupposes what it is supposed to explain: *reason, spirit*, a *self-standing* lawfulness proper to spirit, and the partial identity of its principles with those of being. *It is spirit itself that initiates the repression of drives.* The will, guided by ideas and values, withholds from all the impulses of the drive life that conflict with its ideas the representations needed for a *drive action*. On the other hand, it dangles the representations appropriate to the ideas and values before the lurking drives like bait, so as to coordinate the drive impulses in such a way that they carry out the *project of the will posited by spirit*. The basic process just described we shall call *steering*; it consists in "inhibiting" and "disinhibiting" drive impulses. By *guidance* we shall understand the holding-up—as it were—of the idea and the value themselves, which are realized in each case through the movements of the drives. What spirit *cannot* do, however, is this: itself *produce* or annul any drive energy. But not only this repression proceeding from spirit; the final goal, too, is again something positive: spirit's becoming inwardly free and self-standing, its gaining of power and activity—in short, the *enlivening of spirit*. This alone deserves rightly to be called the *sublimation of life into spirit*—not some mystical process that is supposed to *create* new spiritual qualities.[5]

4.5 *This* brings us back to the so-called "*classical theory*." As I have already said, it is just as false as the negative theory. But since this classical theory dominates almost the *entire philosophy of the West*, its error is a far more dangerous one for us. This theory, which has its origin in the Greek concept of spirit and idea, is the doctrine of the "*inherent power of the idea*," of its original force and activity, of its capacity to produce effects. The Greeks first conceived it, and through them it has become a basic conviction of the greater part of the Western bourgeoisie[6]. This classical theory of spirit may appear in Plato and Aristotle, where

5 Scheler's *Lenkung* (steering: inhibiting and releasing drives) and *Leitung* (guidance: holding up ideas and values) name the only two ways spirit can act on life.
6 SCHELER'S NOTE. Sociologically, the classical theory is at the same time a *class* ideology, the ideology of an upper class, the bourgeoisie. See my "Sociology of Knowledge" in *Knowledge and Society* (pp. 202 f.).

ideas and forms first appear as shaping *forces* that form the things of the world out of a "μὴ ὄν" [non-being] or out of the "being-possible" of *prima materia* [prime matter]. It may appear in the theistic form of Jewish-Christian religiosity, which lets God be nothing but pure spirit and as such ascribes to him not only guidance and steering (inhibiting and disinhibiting) but a positive, creative, indeed even *all-powerful will*. Or it may appear in a more pantheistic form, as in J. G. Fichte, or in Hegel's panlogism, according to which world history is supposed to rest on the self-explication of the divine idea according to a law of dialectic, while the human being, at its core, is only the self-consciousness, in the process of becoming, that the eternal spiritual deity gains of itself "in it." Everywhere and always the classical theory suffers from the same *error*: the belief that spirit and idea possess an *original power*. This classical doctrine of the human being appears above all in *two main forms*: in the doctrine of a spiritual soul-substance of the human being, and in those doctrines according to which only a single spirit exists, in relation to which all individual spirits are merely modes or centers of activity of this one spirit (Averroes, Spinoza, Hegel).[7] The *substance doctrine* of the soul rests, for its part, on an entirely unjustified application of the external *category of the thing* or—in its older form—on the organism-like distinction of the categories of "matter" and "form" and their application to the relation of body and soul (Thomas Aquinas). Both applications of cosmological categories to the central being of the human being miss their mark. The human person is not a "substance" but only a monarchical ordering of acts, among which in each case *one* holds leadership and guidance. But let us leave aside the critique of the particular forms these doctrines take. The basic error from which the "classical" theory of the human being stems is a deep and *fundamental* one, bound up with the *whole* picture of the world: the assumption that this world in which we live is by nature *and constantly* so ordered that the higher the forms of

7 Averroes (Ibn Rushd, 1126–1198), Andalusian philosopher, taught that there is a single intellect common to all human beings.

being are, the more they increase not only in meaning and value but also in force and power.

4.6 For us, then, it is *just as great an error* to think that the higher form of being in each case has genetically *arisen* from processes belonging to the lower forms of being—life, for example, as against the inorganic; consciousness as against life; spirit in relation to the subhuman forms of consciousness in and outside the human being (materialism and naturalism)—as it is, conversely, to assume that the higher forms of being are the *cause* of the lower: that there is, for example, a *vital force*, an *activity of consciousness*, a spirit that is active and powerful by nature (vitalism and idealism). If the negative theory leads to a false mechanistic explanation of everything, the classical theory leads to the baseless nonsense of a so-called "teleological" worldview, such as dominates the entire theistic philosophy of the West. Nicolai Hartmann recently gave very apt expression to the same thought that I had already put forward in my *Ethics*: "The higher categories of being and value are by nature the *weaker* ones."[8]

THE POWERLESSNESS OF SPIRIT

Force flows from below upward: the lowest is originally powerful, the highest powerless.

4.7 *The stream of forces and effects*, which alone can *posit* existence and contingent essence, runs, in the world we inhabit, not from above to below but from *below to above*! In the proudest independence the inorganic world stands there in its own lawfulness, containing something like "the living" at only a very few points. In proud independence plant and animal stand over against the human being, and the animal is far more dependent on the existence of the plant than the reverse. The animal direction of life means not only a gain but also a loss compared with the plant direction, since it no longer has the direct commerce

8 Nicolai Hartmann (1882–1950), German philosopher. Scheler's *Ethics* is his *Formalism in Ethics and the Material Ethics of Values* (1913–16).

with the inorganic that the plant has through its mode of nourishment. In the same independence, analogously, the masses as such stand in history, with the lawfulness proper to their movements, over against the higher forms of human existence. The flowering periods of culture in human history are short and rare. *Short* and *rare is the beautiful*, in *its delicacy and vulnerability*. The original ordering of the relations between the higher and the lower forms of being and categories of value, on the one hand, and the forces and powers in which these forms are realized, on the other, is captured in the *proposition*: "*Powerful, originally, is the lower; powerless, the highest*." Every higher form of being is relatively lacking in force in relation to the lower, and it *realizes* itself not through its *own* forces but through the forces of the lower. The life process is in itself a shaped process in time with a structure of its own; but it is *realized* exclusively through the materials and forces of the *inorganic* world. Spirit stands to life in quite the same way. Spirit can indeed *gain* power through the process of sublimation. The drives of life can enter (or fail to enter) into its lawfulness and into the structure of ideas and meaning that it holds up before them as guidance; and in the course of this entering and permeating, in the individual as in history, they can lend spirit force. *But by nature and originally spirit has no energy of its own.* The higher form of being does, so to speak, "determine" the *essence* and the essential regions of the world's formation. But it is *realized* through something else: a second principle that belongs just as *originally* to primal being—the principle that creates reality and determines contingent images, which we call "*urge*," or image-creating urge-fantasy.

4.8 The *most powerful* things in the world, then, are the *centers of force* of the inorganic world, "blind" to ideas, forms, and shapes, as the lowest points of action of that "urge." According to a view that is spreading ever more widely in present-day theoretical physics, these centers are probably subject to no ontic lawfulness at all in their relations with and against one another, but only to a lawfulness of chance of a *statistical* kind. It is only the living being that brings into the world the "natural lawful-

ness" which the understanding afterward reads off—because its sense organs and sensory functions *indicate* the regular rather than the irregular processes of the world. It is not law that lies behind the chaos of chance and arbitrariness in the ontological sense; it is *chaos* that lies *behind the law* of the formal-mechanical kind. Suppose the doctrine prevails that all natural laws of formal-mechanical structure have, in the last analysis, only statistical significance, and that all natural processes (in the microsphere as well) already result from the interaction of *arbitrary* units of force. Then our entire picture of nature would undergo an enormous transformation. The true ontic laws would then turn out to be the so-called *Gestalt laws, that is*, laws that prescribe a certain temporal rhythm of events and, dependent on it in turn, certain static shapes of bodily existence[9]. Since within the sphere of life, both physiological and psychic, surely only laws of the type of Gestalt laws hold (though not necessarily only the material laws of physics), the lawfulness of nature would, on this view, once again become strictly *unified*. It would then not be out of the question to *formalize* the concept of *sublimation* so that it applies *to all cosmic events*. Sublimation would then take place in *every* basic process through which, in the world's process of becoming, the forces of a lower sphere of being were *gradually* placed in the service of a more highly formed being and becoming—as, for example, the forces at play between electrons are placed in the service of the *form of the atom*, or the forces active within the inorganic world in the service of the structure of life. *Becoming human*, and the becoming of spirit, would then have to be regarded as the *latest process of sublimation in nature* so far. It expresses itself at once in the ever greater channeling of the external energies taken up by the organism into the most complicated processes we know, the processes of excitation in the *cerebral cortex, and* in the analogous psychic process of the sublimation of drives, the conversion of drive energy into "spiritual" *activity*.

9 SCHELER'S NOTE. See my discussion in the essay "Work and Knowledge" in *The Forms of Knowledge and Society*.

4.9 In another form we meet the same process of the *confrontation between spirit and life* again in *human history*. Here too, surely, Hegel's thesis does not hold, that history rests on an unfolding of mere ideas out of one another. Rather, as I have shown in detail in my "Sociology of Knowledge," Karl Marx's proposition holds entirely: that ideas without interests and passion behind them—that is, without powers stemming from the *vital and drive sphere of the human being*—invariably tend to "disgrace themselves" in world history. Nevertheless, history on the whole shows an increasing *empowerment of reason*—but only through, and on the basis of, an increasing *appropriation* of ideas and values by the great drive-based tendencies of groups and the interlocking of interests among them.[10] Here too we must adopt a far more modest view of what human *spirit* and *will* mean for the course of historical affairs. Human spirit and human willing can—as I have said—never mean more than *guidance* and *steering*. And that always means only this: spirit as such *holds up* ideas before the powers of the drives, and willing turns toward the drive impulses, which must already be present, or withdraws from them, such representations as can give concrete form to the realization of these ideas. A *direct struggle* of *pure* will against the powers of the drives, however, is an impossibility; where it is intended, it on the contrary stirs the powers of the drives up all the more in their one-sided direction. That was already the experience of Paul, when he said that the law goes about like a roaring lion, to fall upon human beings with sin. In recent times William James, among others, has made profound remarks on this point. Willing brings about the opposite of what it wills when, instead of intending a higher value whose realization lets the bad be forgotten and which *attracts* a person's energy, it directs itself toward the mere *combating*, the negating, of a drive whose goal stands before conscience as "bad." So human beings must also learn to *bear with* themselves, even with those inclinations they recognize in themselves as bad and

10 Marx and Engels, *The Holy Family* (1845): "The 'idea' always disgraced itself insofar as it differed from the 'interest'."

ruinous.[11] They must not attack them through *direct struggle*, but must learn to overcome them *indirectly*, by devoting their energy to worthwhile tasks that their conscience recognizes as good and excellent and that are within their reach. In the doctrine of "nonresistance" to evil there slumbers a great truth, as Spinoza already set out with profound insight in his *Ethics*. Brought under this concept of sublimation, becoming human represents the *highest sublimation* known to us and at the same time the *most intimate unification of all the essential regions of nature*. Before a picture of the world such as is sketched here, the opposition that has ruled for so many centuries dissolves: the opposition between a "teleological" and a "mechanical" explanation of the actuality of the world[12].[13]

4.10 Naturally, this line of thought cannot come to a halt even before the *highest being*, the ground of the world. The being that is only "through itself," and on which everything else depends, likewise cannot, insofar as the attribute of *spirit* is ascribed to it, possess any *original* power or force as spiritual being. Rather, it is that other, second attribute of which I spoke—the "*natura naturans*" [nature naturing] in the highest being, the all-powerful *urge* laden with infinite images—that is answerable for *actuality* and for the *contingent* essence of this *actuality*, which is never unequivocally determined by essential laws and ideas.[14] If we call the purely spiritual attribute in the supreme ground of all finite being "*deitas*" [godhead], then no positive creative power whatsoever belongs to it—to what we call spirit and *deity* in this ground. The idea of a "creation of the world out of nothing" collapses before this conclusion. If this *primal tension* between spirit and urge lies within the being "through itself," then the

11 Scheler fuses Paul's teaching that the law provokes sin (Romans 7) with the image of the devil prowling "like a roaring lion" (1 Peter 5:8).

12 SCHELER'S NOTE. See on this my essay "Work and Knowledge" in the book *The Forms of Knowledge and Society*.

13 "Resist not evil" (Matthew 5:39), a precept made famous in Scheler's time by Tolstoy.

14 *Natura naturans*: Spinoza's term for nature as active, producing cause, as opposed to *natura naturata*, nature as produced.

relation of this being to the world must be a different one.[15] We express this relation when we say: if the ground of things wanted to *realize* its deitas, the fullness of ideas and values laid down in it, it had to *disinhibit* the world-creating urge in order to realize *itself* in the temporal course of the world process. It had, so to speak, to *take* the world process *into the bargain* in order to realize its own *essence* in and through this process. And only to the degree that it realizes the eternal deitas *in the urge of world history, in* the human being and *through* the human being, does the "being through itself" become a being that would be worthy to be called divine *existence*. And only to the same degree as the world itself will have become the perfect *body* of the eternal spirit and urge can this process—timeless in itself, but *presenting itself* in temporal form to finite experience—draw nearer to its goal, the self-realization of the deity. Only in the *movement* of this mighty storm that is the "world" can the order of the forms of being and of values come into alignment with the powers *actually* at work, and these in turn with that order. Indeed, in the course of this development a gradual *reversal of the original relation* can occur, the relation according to which the higher forms of being are the weaker and the lower the stronger. Put differently: the mutual *interpenetration* of the originally *powerless spirit* and the originally *demonic* urge—that is, the urge *blind* to all spiritual ideas and values—through the *growing* ideation and *spiritualization of the urgings* that stand behind the images of things, together with the simultaneous *empowerment*, that is, *enlivening*, of spirit: this is the *goal* and *end* of finite being and happening. Theism wrongly places it at its *starting point*.

15 *Deitas*: Latin for "godhead"; Scheler's term for the purely spiritual attribute of the ground of things, as distinct from the "God" who comes to be only through the world process.

V

Body and soul after Descartes; naturalistic theories of spirit and life; Klages.

5.1 We have climbed a little high. Let us return to a problem closer to experience: the problem of *human nature*. In modern times the classical theory of the human being found its most influential form in the doctrine of *Descartes*, a doctrine that we have really only recently begun to shake off *completely* and *without remainder*. By dividing all substances into "thinking" and "extended" ones, Descartes introduced into Western consciousness a whole *army* of the gravest errors about human nature. For on the basis of this division of the entire environment he himself had to accept the absurdity of denying all plants and animals a psychic nature. He had to explain the "semblance" of animation in animal and plant, which the whole age before him had taken for actuality, as an anthropopathic "empathy" that projects *our* vital feelings into the external images of organic nature; and, on the other hand, to explain everything that is not *human* consciousness and thought in purely "mechanical" terms. The result was not only the most absurd exaggeration of the special place of the human being and the tearing of the human being from the *maternal arms* of nature. The basic category of *life* and its *primal phenomena* was also simply thrown out of the world with a stroke of the pen. For Descartes the world consists of nothing but thinking points and an enormous mechanism to be investigated geometrically. Only one thing in this doctrine is valuable: the new autonomy and *sovereignty of spirit*, and the recognition of its superiority over

everything organic and merely living. Everything else is utterly wrongheaded.

BODY AND SOUL

The physiological and the psychic are two sides of one life process, not two substances.

5.2 We may say today that the *problem of body and soul*, which kept so many centuries in suspense, has lost its metaphysical rank for us. The philosophers, physicians, and natural scientists who concern themselves with this question are converging more and more on a single basic view. That there is no spatially located soul-substance, such as Descartes assumes, is self-evident if only because there is no central point, either in the brain or anywhere else in the human body, where all the sensory nerve fibers converge and all nervous processes meet. But Descartes's doctrine is also fundamentally wrong in holding that the psychic consists only in "consciousness" and is bound exclusively to the cerebral cortex. Detailed research by psychiatrists has shown us something about the psychic functions that are decisive for the foundation of human "character"—in particular everything belonging to the *drive life* and to affectivity, which, as we have seen, are the *basic* and *primal form* of the psychic. Their physiological parallel processes lie not in the cerebrum at all but in the region of the brainstem: partly in the central gray matter around the third ventricle, partly in the thalamus, which mediates as a central relay between sensations and the drive life. Further, the system of ductless glands (thyroid, sex glands, pituitary, adrenals, and so on) has proved to be the real *point of mediation* between the whole organism, together with its form, and that small appended part of psychic life that we call *waking consciousness*. Their mode of functioning determines the human drive life and affectivity, as well as growth in height and breadth, gigantism and dwarfism, and probably also racial characteristics. It is the *whole body*, and by no means the brain alone, that has today once again become the physiological parallel field

of psychic events. So there can no longer be any serious talk of so external a binding-together of a soul-substance with a bodily substance as Descartes assumed. It is *one and the same life* that has psychic form in its "inwardness" and bodily form in its being for others. Let no one object that the "I" is, after all, simple and one, while the body is a complicated "cell-state." Present-day physiology has completely dismantled the notion of the cell-state, just as it has broken with the basic view that the functions of the nervous system come together only additively, and so not as wholes, and that each is strictly determined in its point of origin by location and morphology.[1] Suppose one regards the physical organism, as Descartes did, as a kind of machine—and in the rigid sense of the old mechanical theory of nature of the Galileo–Newton era, which theoretical physics and chemistry themselves have by now overcome and thrown on the scrap heap. Suppose, moreover, that like Descartes and all who followed him one overlooks the *independence* and the securely demonstrated *priority* of the whole life of drives and affects over all "conscious" representational images. Suppose one restricts all psychic life to waking consciousness, overlooking the enormous splitting-off of whole coherent groups of psychic functions from the conscious I; that one further denies the repressions of affect, and overlooks both the amnesias that can extend over entire phases of life and the well-known phenomena of splitting of the conscious I itself. *Then* one does indeed *arrive* at the *false opposition*: *here* a unity and simplicity of an original kind, *there* only a multiplicity of bodily parts connected merely secondarily, and of processes first *founded* in them. This picture of the *soul* is just as mistaken as the picture of physiological events that the older physiology formed for itself.

5.3 In the most extreme contrast to all these theories, we may now say: *The physiological and the psychic life processes are strictly identical ontologically*, as Kant had already surmised. They are *different only phenomenally*, and even *phenomenally* they are

1 The "cell-state" is Rudolf Virchow's image of the organism as a state made up of individual cells.

strictly *identical in the structural laws and in the rhythm* of their course. *Both* processes are nonmechanical, the physiological as much as the psychic; both are *teleoclinic and oriented toward wholeness*. The physiological processes are so all the *more*, the lower (not, then, the higher) the segments of the nervous system in which they run; the psychic processes likewise are all the more holistic and goal-directed, the more *elementary* they are. Both processes are only two sides of the *one* supra-mechanical life process, one in its formation and in the interplay of its functions. What we call "physiological" and "psychic," then, are only *two sides from which one and the same life process is viewed*. There is a "biology from within" and a "biology from without." Biology from without does indeed advance in knowledge from the formal structure of the organism to the life *processes* proper. But it must never forget that every living form—from the last distinguishable cell elements, through cells, tissues, and organs, up to the whole organism—is at every moment dynamically sustained *and newly formed by* this *life process*. Nor must it forget that in development it is the "formative functions," to be sharply distinguished from the operational functions of the organs, that first bring forth the *static* forms of organic matter, with the cooperation of the chemical-physical "situation." The late Heidelberg anatomist Braus and, from the side of physiology, E.[2] Tschermak have rightly placed this thought at the center of all their research. It may be said that the same view is today prevailing in *all* the sciences that deal with this famous problem. The old "psychomechanical parallelism" belongs on the scrap heap today just as much as the "doctrine of interaction" revived by Lotze, or the Scholastic doctrine of the soul as "*forma corporis*" [form of the body].[3]

5.4 The gulf that Descartes set up between body and soul has today closed almost to the point where the unity *of life* can be grasped. When a dog sees a piece of meat and meanwhile cer-

2 Hermann Braus (1868–1924), anatomist at Heidelberg, pioneer of experimental embryology.

3 Hermann Lotze (1817–1881), German philosopher and physiologist.

tain gastric juices form in its stomach, this is, of course, an absolute miracle for Descartes. For he threw the whole life of drives and affects out of the "soul" and at the same time demanded a purely chemical-physical explanation of the phenomena of life, even in their *structural laws*. *Why? Because he* excluded, on the *one* hand, the *drive impulse* of *appetite*. Appetite is a condition for the occurrence of the visual perception of the food in the same sense as the external stimulus is—and that stimulus, moreover, is never, as Descartes believes, a condition of the *content* of the perception, but only of the here-and-now perception of *this* content, which, as part of the "image," exists quite independently of all "consciousness." And because, on the *other* hand, he does not regard the formation of gastric juice that corresponds to the appetite as a genuine life process, rooted in the physiological unity of function and its structure, but as a process that runs its course in the stomach purely chemically and physically, quite independently of the central nervous system. But what would Descartes say if one confronted him with Heyer's finding that even the mere suggestion of eating a food can have the same effect as actually eating it? One sees the error—Descartes's basic error: he completely overlooks the *drive system* of humans and animals, which forms precisely the *mediation* and constitutes the *unity* between every genuine life movement and the contents of consciousness. In its basic concept, the physiological "function" is a self-standing, rhythmic pattern of process, a dynamic temporal form. It is *by no means* bound by nature to a *rigid location*; rather, it can to a great extent first *mark off* its field of function from the available cellular substrates, indeed first *shape* that field.[4] A summative organ reaction of a determinate and rigid kind does not exist even in those physiological functions that have *no* correlate in consciousness whatsoever; indeed, as has recently been shown, such reactions do not exist even for reflexes as simple as the patellar reflex. Phenomenologically, moreover, the physiological procedure of the organism

4 Gustav Richard Heyer (1890–1967), German physician who studied the effects of hypnotic suggestion on digestion.

is just as "*meaningful*" as conscious processes, and these are just as often every bit as "stupid" as organic processes.

5.5 In my view research today should be set the express *methodological goal* of examining, as widely as possible, how far the same modes of behavior of the organism can be brought about and altered at one time by physical-chemical stimuli from outside, at another by psychic stimulation—suggestion, hypnosis, every kind of psychotherapy, changes in the social surroundings, on which far more illnesses depend than one suspects. So let us also be very much on our guard against a false exaggeration of exclusively "psychological" explanations. In our experience a stomach ulcer can be psychically conditioned just as well as it can be caused by a certain chemical-physical process; and not only nervous diseases but also *organic* diseases each have quite definite psychic correlates. Quantitatively, too, we can so *weigh* our two kinds of influence on the actual, unified life process—through the *corridor* of consciousness and through the *corridor* of external bodily stimulation—that we save on the one kind of stimulation to the same degree as we make more use of the other. Even the fundamental life event called death can be brought about by a sudden affective shock just as well as by a pistol shot; sexual arousal can be brought about by taking certain substances just as well as by obscene pictures and reading matter. All these are only different *ways of access* that we have, in *our experience* and *steering, to* one *and the same* ontically unified life process. Even the highest psychic functions, such as so-called "relational thinking," do *not* escape a strict physiological parallelization. And finally, according to our doctrine too, the *spiritual* acts must always have a physiological and a psychic parallel member. For they draw their entire *energy of activity* from the living sphere of the drives, and without some "energy" they cannot manifest themselves to our experience, not even to our *own*. Psycho-physical *life, then, is one*. The ultimate philosophical deepening of this theory I must forgo *here*.

5.6 This *unity* of physical and psychic functions is a fact that holds unconditionally for all living beings, and so for the human

being too. The *Western science of the human being*, as natural science and medicine, has occupied itself above all with the human being's bodily side and has sought to influence life processes chiefly through the corridor *from outside*. This is one aspect of the exceedingly one-sided interest characteristic of Western technology in general. But if life processes seem to us so much more accessible from outside than through the corridor of consciousness, this need not rest at all on the *actual* relation between soul and physical nature; it may also be grounded *in an interest that has been one-sidedly oriented for centuries*. Indian medicine, for example, shows the opposite, *psychic* orientation, no less one-sided. There is not the *slightest* reason to separate the human being from the animal by more than a *difference of degree* as regards its *psychic life*, or to ascribe to *its* soul, say, a special kind of origin and future destiny, as theistic "creationism" and the traditional doctrine of "immortality" do. Mendel's laws hold for the makeup of psychic character in the same measure as for any bodily traits. The existing differences between human and animal in the course of psychic functions are, to be sure, very considerable; but—very considerable, and indeed *far more considerable* than the morphological differences between animal and human, are the *physiological* differences as well. In the human being, compared with the animal, a disproportionately large share of all assimilated material is used up in the formation of nervous substance.[5] Yet the yield of this material for the formation of form and structure in anatomically *visible* units is strikingly *small*. A much larger part of this material than in the animal is converted into purely functional brain energy. This process, however, is only the *physiological correlate of* the very same process that in psychological language we call "*repression*" and "*sublimation*." While the human organism is not essentially superior to the animal in its sensorimotor functions, the distribution of energy *between its cerebrum* and all its other organ systems is completely different. The human brain enjoys

5 *Creationism* here is the theological doctrine that God creates each individual soul directly.

unconditional priority in nourishment to a far more pronounced degree than the animal brain—and enjoys it because it possesses the most intense and many-sided energy gradients and a form of excitation whose course is far less rigidly bounded in purely local terms. Under general inhibition of assimilation, *the* brain is inhibited *last* and, compared with other organs, least. The cortex of the human cerebrum preserves and concentrates the whole life history of the organism and its prehistory. Since every particular course of excitation in the brain alters the *whole* structure of excitation, "the same" course can never recur physiologically. This state of affairs corresponds exactly to the basic law of psychic causality: only the *whole* chain of lived experiences in the past, never just the temporally preceding *single* event, explains what happens psychically next. Since excitations in the cortex never cease, not even in sleep, and the structural elements are built up anew at every moment, a *powerful surplus of fantasy* is to be expected physiologically as well. This surplus flows on even *without* external stimuli; it emerges at once when waking consciousness and its censorship (Freud) break down; and, as I have shown elsewhere[6], it must be regarded as thoroughly *original*, being only increasingly *restricted, not produced*, by sense perception. Moreover, the psychic stream runs just as *continuously* as the physiological chain of excitation through the rhythm of sleeping and waking states. In the human being, moreover, the brain seems to be the real organ of death to a higher degree than in the animal, as is indeed to be expected, given how much more strongly all human life processes are centralized and bound to brain activity. For we know from a series of investigations that a dog or a horse whose cerebrum has been artificially removed can still perform a wealth of functions that are lost in a human being in that condition. So it is not body and soul, or physical body and soul, or brain and soul in the human being that form any ontic opposition.

5.7 The opposition we encounter in the human being, and which is also *experienced* subjectively as such, is of a far higher and more profound order: it is the *opposition between life and spirit*. This opposition probably also reaches far *deeper into* the *ground of all things* than the opposition between life and the inorganic, which in recent times H. Driesch in particular has wrongly exaggerated. If we take the psychic and the physiological as only two sides of the same life process, to which two *ways of viewing* that same process correspond, then the X that itself *performs* these two "ways of viewing" must be *superior* to the opposition of body and soul. This X is nothing other than *spirit*, which itself never becomes an object and which "objectifies" everything.[7] Life is already a *nonspatial* being—"the organism is a process," Jennings aptly remarks, and every seemingly resting form is at every moment carried and maintained by this life process—but it is indeed a *temporal* being. What we call spirit, by contrast, is not only *supraspatial* but also *supratemporal*. The intentions of *spirit cut* across, so to speak, the temporal course of life. Only indirectly is the spiritual act, too, insofar as it lays claim to *activity*, dependent on a temporal life process and, as it were, embedded in it. But however different in essence "spirit" and "life" may be, the two principles are nevertheless *dependent on each other* in the human being: *spirit ideates life*. But *life alone* is able to *set* spirit *into activity and realize it*, from its simplest stirring of an act up to the achievement of a work to which we ascribe spiritual meaning.

NATURALISTIC THEORIES

Mechanical and vitalist theories, from La Mettrie and Hume to Marx, Nietzsche and Freud, misread spirit.

5.8 This *relation between spirit and life*, as we have just outlined it, has been missed and disregarded by a whole group of basic

6 SCHELER'S NOTE. See my essay "Work and Knowledge."

7 Hans Driesch (1867–1941), biologist and philosopher, the leading vitalist of his day.

philosophical conceptions of the human being. First, all those theories of the human being that may be called "naturalistic" should be briefly sketched. Within these theories *two* basic kinds can be distinguished: a one-sidedly *formal-mechanical* conception of human behavior and a one-sidedly *vitalistic* one.

5.9 The *formal-mechanical* conceptions of the relation between spirit and life overlook, first of all, the distinctive character of the category of life, and *therefore* they must misunderstand spirit as well. In Western history they appear, in turn, in two forms. The first comes from antiquity, from the teachings of Democritus, Epicurus, and Lucretius Carus, and found what is probably its *most complete* exposition in La Mettrie's book *L'homme machine* [Man a Machine]. Here, as the book's title already says, the attempt is made to trace psychic phenomena back to mere accompaniments of the physical and chemical laws at work in the organism, without distinguishing them from what is spiritual. The other form of the formal-mechanical conception was developed most sharply in English *sensualism*; David Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature* is its most complete expression.[8] In the most recent period Ernst Mach came closest to such a conception of the human being when he presented the I as a nodal point in which the sensory elements of the world hang together with particular density. In *both* doctrines alike, the formal-mechanical principle is pushed to its utmost extreme. The only difference is this. In the one case, processes of sensation are to be understood from processes that run according to the principles of physical mechanics. In the other, the basic concepts of inorganic natural science (including all concepts of substance and causality) are first derived from sensory data, taken as ultimate givens, and from the laws of the association of ideas. The error of both types of mechanical theory, however, is that they overlook the essence of life in its distinctive character and its own laws.

5.10 *The second* variety of naturalistic theory, the *vitalistic*, does the opposite. It makes the category of "*life*" the primal category

for the whole conception of the human being, and hence of spirit as well. *It overestimates* the scope of the principle of life. According to this theory, the human spirit can ultimately be understood completely from human drive life, as its late "product of development." Thus Anglo-American pragmatism, first Peirce, then William James, F. C. Schiller, and Dewey, seeks to derive the forms and laws of thought from the *forms of human labor* prevailing at any given time (*homo faber* [man the maker]). Thus, on the other hand, *Nietzsche* in his *Will to Power* seeks to make the forms of *thought* intelligible as necessary, vitally important functions arising from life's *drive for power*; Hans Vaihinger has recently followed him in this, in a somewhat modified way[9].[10] If one surveys all the views that belong here, one again finds *three subtypes* of this naturalistic-vitalistic idea of the human being. They differ according to whether researchers take the system of *nutritive drives*, the system of *reproductive* and *sexual drives*, or finally the system of *power drives* to be the original and governing system of human drive life as such. "Man is what he eats," Vogt crudely declared. Karl *Marx* in particular advocated the analogous view, in an incomparably deepened form worked into Hegel's theory of history. On this view it is not so much human beings who make history as history that shapes human beings differently in each period, and in the first place *economic history*, the history of the "material relations of production."[11] According to this conception, the history of *spiritual* productions in art, science, philosophy, law, and so on has *no* inner logic of its own and no continuity at all. This continuity and real causality are shifted entirely into the sequence of economic forms. According to Marx, each distinct historical form of eco-

8 Julien Offray de La Mettrie (1709–1751), French physician and materialist; *L'homme machine* appeared in 1747.

9 SCHELER'S NOTE. On this, see my essay "Work and Knowledge" in *The Forms of Knowledge and Society*.

10 Hans Vaihinger (1852–1933), author of *The Philosophy of "As If"* (1911), which treats many basic concepts as useful fictions.

11 Carl Vogt (1817–1895), German natural scientist and materialist; the slogan is usually credited to Ludwig Feuerbach.

nomy brings in its train a peculiar spiritual world as the well-known "superstructure"[12]. The conception of the human being as a being dominated primarily by the drive for power and the drive for recognition originated historically above all with *Machiavelli*, Thomas *Hobbes*, and the great politicians of the absolutist state. In the present it has found its continuation in Friedrich *Nietzsche*'s doctrines of power and, more on the medical side, in Alfred *Adler*'s doctrine of the primacy of the *drive for recognition*. The *third* possible conception takes spiritual life as a form of sublimated *libido*, as its symbolism and airy superstructure, and therefore regards the whole of human culture and its products as a product of repressed and sublimated libido. Schopenhauer had already called sexual love the "focus of the will to live," without, however, falling entirely into naturalism; his *negative* theory of the human being prevented that. But it was the *early* Freud, who did not yet assume an independent death drive, who developed this conception of the human being to its most extreme consequences[13].

5.11 *All these naturalistic doctrines*, whether of the mechanical or of the vitalistic type, we must *reject* completely. It is true that the "vitalistic" type of naturalistic conception of the human being has a great merit. It has brought home the insight that what is genuinely creative and powerful in the human being is not what we call spirit (and the higher forms of consciousness), but *the dark, subconscious powers of the drives* in the soul. It has also shown that the *shaping of destiny* of the individual and of the group depends above all on the continuity of these processes and of their symbolic image-correlates. In the same way, dark myth is not so much a product of history as a force that largely determines the *course* of the history of peoples. *All* these theories, however, erred in seeking to derive from these drive-powers not only the *activity* of spirit, the way spirit and its ideas and val-

12 SCHELER'S NOTE. See my critique of historical materialism in my "Sociology of Knowledge" in *The Forms of Knowledge and Society*.

13 SCHELER'S NOTE. See my critique of Freud's theory of love in my book *Essence and Forms of Sympathy*, 3rd ed.

ues acquire force, but also these ideas themselves in their *content* of meaning, as well as the *laws* of spirit and its inner growth. Western *idealism* of the "*classical*" theory, with its vast overestimation of spirit, erred by overlooking Spinoza's profound truth that reason is incapable of governing the passions unless it *itself becomes a passion*, by sublimation, as we would call it today. The so-called *naturalists*, for their part, have completely disregarded the original character and independence of spirit.[14]

KLAGES

Klages makes spirit the enemy of life; Scheler answers that spirit and life are ordered toward each other.

5.12 In contrast to all these theories, a recent writer, idiosyncratic but not without depth, has sought to understand the human being (much as we ourselves do[15]) above all under the two *irreducible* basic categories of "life and spirit." I mean Ludwig Klages. It is above all he who in Germany has given a philosophical foundation to *that pan-romantic way of thinking* about the essence of the human being which we find today among so many researchers in the most varied sciences: for example Dacqué, Frobenius, Jung, Prinzhorn, Th. Lessing[16], and, in a certain respect, O. Spengler as well. The distinctive character of this conception, which I shall not go into in detail here, lies above all

14 See Spinoza, *Ethics* IV, proposition 7: an affect can be restrained or removed only by a stronger opposing affect.

15 SCHELER'S NOTE. The distinction between "spirit" and "life" already underlies my first work, *The Transcendental and the Psychological Method,* and also my *Ethics*. It does *not* coincide with Klages's concepts, since Klages equates "spirit" with "intelligence," "I," and "willing."

16 SCHELER'S NOTE. In the fourth edition of his book *History as Giving Meaning to the Meaningless*, p. 28, Theodor Lessing sums up the basic idea of the theory as follows: "Thus my basic idea grew ever firmer: that the world of spirit and its norm is only the indispensable *substitute world of a life that has fallen ill in the human being*, only the means of rescuing a species that has become questionable in itself and that, after a brief waking consciousness, sinks back again without a trace: a species of predatory apes driven to megalomania by science."

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. Theodor Lessing (1872–1933), German philosopher and cultural critic, murdered by Nazi agents in Czech exile in 1933.

in two points. First, spirit is indeed taken to be original, but, exactly as with the positivists and pragmatists, it is *equated with intelligence and the capacity for choice*.[17] Klages does *not* acknowledge that spirit, in the first place, not only objectifies but is also the seeing of *ideas* and *essences* on the basis of de-actualization. Second, spirit, thus *robbed* of its real essence and core, is then completely devalued by him. According to Klages, it stands in an original *state of struggle* with all life and everything belonging to it, with all psychic life of simple, automatic expression, and *not* in a relation of mutual *complementarity*. In this state of struggle, spirit appears as the *principle* that, in the course of human history, *destroys* life and soul ever more deeply. In the end, then, human history appears as a *Decadence* [decline], indeed as a *progressive symptom of disease* in the life that presents itself in the human being. If Klages were entirely consistent, he would have to place the beginning of this "tragedy of life," which according to him the human being is, already within the very process of becoming human. But he is *not* consistent. Strangely enough, he has spirit "*break in*" only *after* human beings have become human, at a particular point in history, so that the history of homo sapiens is preceded by an enormous prehistory, seen through Bachofen's eyes.[18]

5.13 Given our view of this relation as set out above, a single fact is enough to forbid us from assuming such a dynamic and hostile opposition between life and spirit: spirit as such possesses *no "force* and power" whatsoever, no original energy of activity, by which it could carry out *this* destruction.

5.14 Klages's writings are rich in fine observations, and the truly lamentable phenomena of late historical culture that he adduces are not to be laid at the door of "spirit." In reality they are to be traced back to a process I call "*oversublimation*." This is a state of such excessive cerebralization that, because of it and

17 Ludwig Klages (1872–1956), German philosopher and graphologist; his main work is *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele* (Spirit as the Adversary of the Soul, 1929–32).

18 Johann Jakob Bachofen (1815–1887), Swiss historian of law and myth, author of *Mother Right* (1861), much admired in the romantic circle around Klages.

in reaction to it, there sets in each time a *consciously romantic flight* into a condition, *usually only supposedly* found in history, in which this oversublimation, and in particular the excess of *discursive* intellectual activity, is not yet present. The Dionysian movement in Greece was already such a movement of flight. So too was Hellenistic dogmatics, which saw classical Greece with eyes much like those with which German romanticism saw the Middle Ages. Such pictures of history rest very largely on a *longing* for "youth and primitiveness" born of one's own over-intellectualization, and they never agree with historical actuality; this, it seems to me, Klages does not sufficiently appreciate. *Klages* regards another group of phenomena as consequences of the destructive power of spirit. Wherever spiritual activities are brought to bear on activities of the vital soul that normally *run their course automatically*, the latter are indeed disturbed to a large extent. Simple basic symptoms are, for example, the disturbance of the heartbeat, of *breathing*, and of other wholly or half-automatic activities through attention; further, the disturbances that arise *when* the will turns directly against the impulses of the drives themselves instead of turning to new, value-laden contents. But what Klages here calls spirit is in reality only a *complicated technical intelligence* in the sense of our preceding discussion. He of all people, the sharpest opponent of every positivist conception of the human being, of every conception of the human being as "*homo faber*," becomes on this fundamental point an uncritical pupil of the basic view he combats so sharply. Klages also fails to see the following. Wherever the Dionysian, the Dionysian form of human existence, is *original and naive*, the Dionysian state itself rests on a complicated, *conscious* technique of the will, and so works with the very "spirit" that is supposed to be switched off. (And it is never entirely original and naive, since the deliberate disinhibition of the drives is initiated by spirit just as much as rational *asceticism of the drives* is; the animal knows no such disinhibited state.) Spirit and life are *ordered toward each other*, and it is a fundamental error to set them in an original enmity or a state of struggle.

"Whoever has thought the *deepest loves what is most alive*" (Hölderlin).[19]

19 From Hölderlin's short ode "Sokrates und Alcibiades" (1798).

VI

World, self and God: the origin of metaphysics and religion; the becoming deity and the human being as its meeting place.

6.1 It is the *task of a philosophical anthropology* to show exactly how all the specific monopolies, achievements, and works of the human being arise from the basic structure of human existence, as briefly outlined in our discussion above: language, conscience, tools, weapons, ideas of right and wrong, the state, leadership, the representational functions of the arts, myth, religion, science, historicity, and social life. This cannot be gone into here. In conclusion, however, let us turn our gaze to the consequences that follow from what has been said for the *metaphysical relation of the human being to the ground of things*.

6.2 One of the finest fruits of building up human nature step by step from the levels of existence beneath it, as I have just tried to do, is that it lets us show with what inner necessity human beings must grasp the most formal *idea of a supramundane, infinite, and absolute being* at the very moment they have *become human*. They become human through consciousness of world and of self, and through objectifying even their own psychophysical nature; these are the specific marks of *spirit*. Once human beings have placed themselves outside the whole of nature and made it their "object" (and this belongs to their essence; it is the very act of becoming human), they turn around, as it were, *shuddering*, and ask: "Where, then, do I *myself* stand? What is *my* standpoint?" They can no longer really say, "I am a part of the world, enclosed by it," for the actual being of their spirit and their person is superior even to the forms of

being of this "world" in space and time. And so, in turning around, they look, as it were, into *nothingness*. In this gaze they discover, as it were, the *possibility* of "absolute *nothingness*," and this *drives* them on to the question: "*Why* is there a world at all? Why and how am 'I' at all?" One should grasp the strict *essential necessity* of this connection between the human being's consciousness of world, consciousness of *self*, and formal consciousness of God. Here God is grasped only as a "being *through itself*" bearing the predicate "holy," which can of course take on a thousand different and most colorful fillings. But this *sphere of an absolute being* as such, regardless of whether it is accessible to lived experience or to knowledge, belongs to the *essence* of human beings *just as constitutively* as their *self-consciousness and world-consciousness* do. W. von Humboldt said of language that humans could not have "invented" it, since they are human only *through* language. What he said holds with exactly the same rigor for the formal sphere of being of a being that is utterly *independent in itself*, of awe-commanding holiness, towering above all finite contents of experience and above the central being of the human being itself.[1] Suppose that by the words "origin of religion and metaphysics" one understands not merely the filling of this sphere with particular assumptions and articles of belief, but the origin of this *sphere itself*. Then its origin would coincide completely with *becoming human* itself. At the very moment human beings become conscious of the "world" and of themselves at all, they must *discover*, with *intuitive* necessity, the peculiar *chance*, the contingency of the fact that "there is a world at all rather than *not*," and that "they themselves are, rather than are not." It is therefore a complete error to place the "I am" (as Descartes did) or the "The world is" (as Thomas Aquinas did) before the general proposition "There is absolute being," and to try to reach this sphere of the Absolute only by inference from those other kinds of being.

6.3 Consciousness of world, of self, and of God form an *indissoluble structural unity*, exactly as the transcendence of the object

and self-consciousness arise in one and the *same* act, the "third reflexio." At the very moment when that "*No, no*" to the concrete actuality of the environment occurred, in which *spiritual* actual being and its ideal objects constituted themselves; at exactly the same moment when world-open behavior arose, together with the never-resting craving to push forward *without limit* into the newly discovered sphere of "world" and to rest content with *no* given; at exactly the same moment when the nascent human being *broke* with the *methods* of all preceding animal life, of being adapted to the environment or adapting to it, and took the *opposite* direction, adapting the *discovered* "world" *to itself* and to *its* organically *stabilized* life; at exactly the same moment when human beings placed themselves *outside* nature in order to make it the *object* of their mastery and of the new principle of artifice and signs—at that very same moment human beings also had to anchor their center somehow *outside* and *beyond* the world. For they could no longer grasp themselves as a mere "member" or a mere "part" of the world above which they had so boldly placed themselves!

METAPHYSICS AND RELIGION

Wonder at the world's contingency leads to metaphysics; the need for shelter leads to myth and religion.

6.4 After this discovery of the *contingency of the world* and of the strange *chance* of their core of being, which had now become *world-eccentric,* two kinds of behavior were still open to human beings. On the one hand, they could *wonder* at it (θαυμάζειν [to wonder]) and set their knowing spirit in motion to grasp the Absolute and to integrate themselves into it. That is the *origin of metaphysics* of every kind. It appeared only very late in history, and only among a few peoples. On the other hand, human beings could also populate this sphere of being with whatever figures they pleased. They did so out of the irrepressible *urge* for

1 Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835), Prussian scholar and statesman, a founder of the philosophy of language.

shelter, not only for their individual being but first and foremost for their whole group, and on the basis and with the help of the enormous *surplus of imagination* that, unlike the animal, they carry within them from the outset. Through cult and rite they sought to *shelter themselves within* the *power* of these figures and to get something of *protection and help* "behind them." For in the basic act of estranging themselves from nature and objectifying it, and in the simultaneous becoming of their *selfhood* and self-consciousness, they seemed to be falling into pure *nothingness*. The overcoming of this nihilism in the form of such shelters and supports is what we call "*religion*." It is *primarily* a religion of the group and of the "people," and only later, together with the origin of the state, does it become a "founded religion." The world is first given to us as *resistance* to our *practical* existence in life, earlier than *as an object* of knowledge. Just as surely, such structures of thought and imagination concerning that newly discovered sphere, structures that lend human beings the *strength* to *assert themselves* in the world—such help was given to humankind primarily by *myth*, later by the *religion* that gradually separated itself from myth—had to precede, historically, all knowledge aimed chiefly at *truth*, and all attempts at knowledge of the kind found in "*metaphysics*."

6.5 Let us now take a few main types of the ideas that human beings have formed about the relation between themselves and a supreme ground of things, and let us confine ourselves to the stage of Western and Near Eastern *monotheism*. There we find notions such as that the human being made a "covenant" with God after God had chosen a particular people as his own (older Judaism). Or, depending on the social *structure of society*, the human being appears as a "slave of God" who throws himself down before him in cunning and abject prostration, seeking *to move* him by pleas and threats or by magical means. In a somewhat higher form, the human being sees himself as the "faithful servant" of the supreme sovereign "Lord." The highest and purest notion possible within the limits of monotheism is reached in the idea that all human beings stand as *children* to

God the Father. This relation is mediated by the "Son," who is of one essence with the Father, who proclaimed God to human beings in his inner essence, and who himself, with divine authority, prescribes certain beliefs and commandments to them.

THE BECOMING DEITY

The ground of things realizes itself in the human being, the meeting point of urge and spirit.

6.6 *All* ideas of this kind we must *reject* for *our* philosophical consideration of this relation. We must do so if only because we deny the theistic presupposition: "a spiritual, personal God, omnipotent in his spirituality." For us, the *basic relation of the human being to the ground of the world* consists in this: that this ground *grasps* and *realizes* itself immediately in the human being. As such, the human being, both as a spiritual and as a living being, is only a *partial center* of the *spirit and urge* of the "being-through-itself"; yet it is in the human being, I say, that the ground grasps and realizes itself. It is the old thought of Spinoza, Hegel, and many others: *the primal being becomes aware of itself in the human being*, in the *same* act in which human beings see themselves grounded in it. We need only reshape this thought, which until now has been put forward far too one-sidedly in an *intellectualist* way. This *knowing oneself grounded* is only a consequence of the *active commitment of our center of being to the ideal demand of the Deitas*, and of the *attempt* to carry it out. In carrying it out, we first *help to create* the "God" who is *becoming* out of the primal ground, as *the increasing interpenetration of urge and spirit*.

6.7 The place of this self-realization, then, of what we might call that self-deification which the being-through-itself *seeks*, and for the sake of whose becoming it accepted the world as a "history," is precisely the *human being, the human self, and the human heart*. They are the *only place* of God's becoming accessible to us, but a true *part* of this transcendent process itself. For

in the sense of a continuous creation, all things *proceed* at every second from the being-through-itself, namely from the functional *unity* of the interplay of *urge and spirit*. Yet only in the human being and the human self are the two attributes of the ens per se [being through itself] that are knowable to us livingly related to each other. The human being is their *meeting point*. In the human being, the logos "according to" which the world is formed becomes an act that can be performed along with it. From the *outset*, then, on our view, becoming human and *becoming God are mutually dependent on each other*. Human beings cannot reach *their* destiny without knowing themselves as members of those two attributes of supreme being, and knowing this being as dwelling within themselves. Just as little can the ens a se reach its own *without* the cooperation of human beings. Spirit and urge, those two attributes of being, are *not complete in themselves either*, quite apart from their mutual interpenetration, which is only *becoming*, as a goal. They *grow* in themselves precisely in these manifestations of theirs in the *history* of the human spirit and in the evolution of the life of the world.

6.8 People will tell me, and indeed have told me, that it is impossible for human beings to bear an unfinished God, a becoming God! My answer is that metaphysics is no insurance company for weak people in need of support. It already presupposes a *strong, high-spirited mind* in the human being. That is also why it is quite understandable that human beings arrive only in the course of their development and growing self-knowledge at the consciousness of being *fellow combatants*, of helping to bring about the "deity." The *need for shelter* and *support* in an *omnipotence* outside humanity and outside the world, identified with goodness and wisdom, is too great not to have broken through *all* the dams of sense and reflection in times of immaturity. We, however, put something else in place of that half childlike, half feeble, distancing relation of the human being to the deity, as found in the objectifying and therefore *evasive* relations of contemplation, worship, and petitionary prayer. In its place we put the elementary act of the human being's *personal commitment* to

the deity, *self-identification* with its spiritual direction of acts in every sense. The ultimate "actual" being of the being-through-itself is precisely *not capable of becoming an object*, any more than the being of another person is. One can take part in its *life* and its spiritual *actuality* only by performing its acts along with it, only through the act of *commitment* and of *active identification*. Absolute being is *not* there to support human beings, nor as a *mere* supplement to their weaknesses and needs, which *forever* want to make it into an object. For us, too, there is indeed a "*support*": it is the support offered by the whole work of realizing values in world history *so far, to the extent* that this work has already advanced the becoming of the "deity" into a "God." But in the last analysis one should never seek theoretical certainties that are supposed to precede this self-commitment. *Only in the commitment of the person* is the possibility *opened up* of also "*knowing*" the *being* of the being-through-itself.

6.9 It is not the business of this lecture to develop the core of this basic metaphysical conception in more detail.