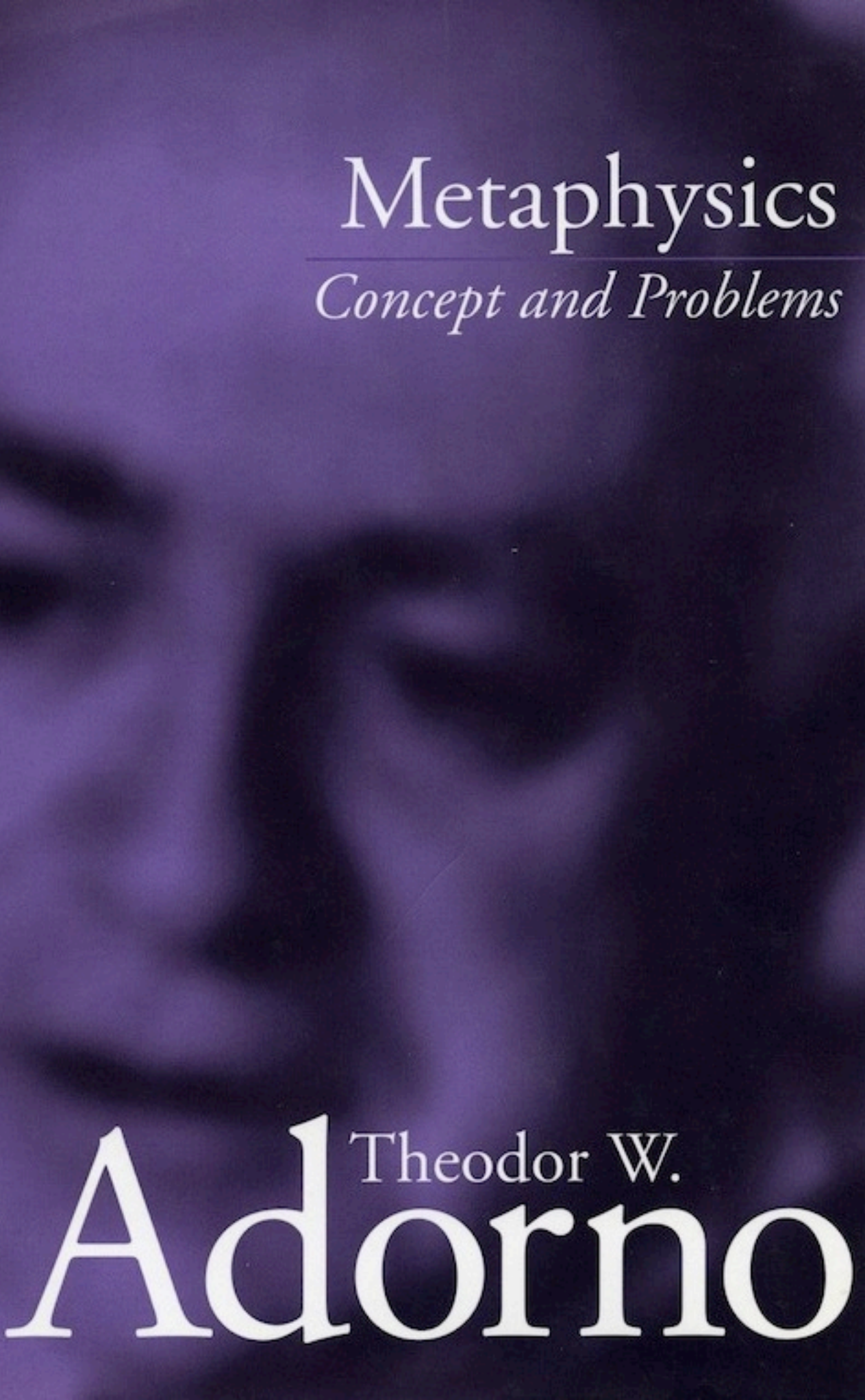
Metaphysics
Concept and Problems
Theodor W.
Adorno

METAPHYSICS

The posthumous works

Beethoven: The Philosophy of Music
Introduction to Sociology
Problems of Moral Philosophy
Metaphysics: Concept and Problems
Kant's Critique of Pure Reason

METAPHYSICS

Concept and Problems

Theodor W. Adorno

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LECTURE ONE

11 May 1965

When I announced these lectures, I gave the title as 'Metaphysics' and the subtitle as 'Concept and Problems'. The subtitle was not chosen without a good deal of thought, as the concept of metaphysics already raises considerable difficulties. And I will tell you straight away that it is my intention first to discuss the concept of metaphysics, and then to talk paradigmatically about specific metaphysical problems – indeed, it cannot be otherwise. And I shall present these problems in the context in which I have encountered them in my own dialectical work.[1] It can undoubtedly be said that the concept of metaphysics is the vexed question of philosophy. On one hand, philosophy owes its existence to metaphysics. That is to say that metaphysics – if I might first borrow the standard philosophical language, although I may later replace it by something else – deals with the so-called 'last things' on account of which human beings first began to philosophize. On the other hand, however, the situation of metaphysics is such that it is extremely difficult to indicate what its subject matter is. This is not only because the existence of this subject matter is questionable and is even the cardinal problem of metaphysics, but also, even if the existence or non-existence of its subject matter is disregarded, because it is very difficult to say what metaphysics actually is. Today metaphysics is used in almost the entire non-German-speaking world as a term of abuse, a synonym for idle speculation, mere nonsense and heaven knows what other intellectual vices.

It is not only difficult, therefore, to give you a preliminary idea of what metaphysics is, as those of you who are studying individual

disciplines will no doubt already have been told; but, as I said, it is very difficult even to define its subject with any precision. I recall my own early experience as a schoolboy when I first came across Nietzsche, who, as any of you who are familiar with his work will know, is not sparing in his complaints about metaphysics; and I remember how difficult I found it to get my bearings with regard to metaphysics. When I sought the advice of someone considerably older than myself, I was told that it was too early for me to understand metaphysics but that I would be able to do so one day. Thus, the answer to the question about the subject matter of metaphysics was postponed. That is an accident of biography, but if we look at metaphysical systems or philosophies themselves, we cannot escape the suspicion that what happens in them is not so very different to what was expressed in that piece of advice. I mean that the whole, immeasurable effort of philosophy, which once saw itself as preliminary work to metaphysics, a propaedeutic, has become autonomous and has replaced it. Or, when philosophy finally concerns itself with metaphysics itself, we are consoled, as in Kant,[2] for example, with endless possible answers to the metaphysical questions. And then, instead of being given an answer to these questions – if I can express it from the standpoint of metaphysics – we are given considerations on whether we have the right to pose those metaphysical questions at all. So that the naive postponement and procrastination that I experienced is not really so accidental; it seems to have something to do with the subject matter itself, and especially with the general procedure which philosophy adopts in relation to metaphysics – which still takes the Kantian form of a *progressus ad infinitum*, an infinite, or indefinitely continuing progression of knowledge, from which it is to be hoped that, at a time which will never arrive, the so-called basic metaphysical questions will finally have been resolved.

I mentioned Nietzsche. In his work the concept of metaphysics often crops up in the form of a joke, which, however, contains a first approximation of what actually is to be understood by metaphysics. He talks of the *Hinterwelt* – the 'back-world' – and calls those who concern themselves with metaphysics, or even practise or teach it, *Hinterweltler*[3] – 'backworldsmen' – an allusion to the word 'backwoodsmen' (*Hinterwäldler*) commonly used at that time, which, of course, was shortly after the American Civil War. It referred to those living in the backwoods, that darkest province of the Midwest, from which Lincoln, a highly topical figure at that time, had emerged. This word implies that metaphysics is a doctrine which assumes the existence of a world behind *the* world we know and can know. Behind the world of phenomena there was supposed to be concealed

– here Nietzsche's definition becomes an ironic comment on the Platonic tradition – a truly real, permanent, unchanging world existing in itself, a world of essences, to unravel and reveal which was the task of philosophy. Expressed more objectively, metaphysics was presented as the quintessence of the philosophical theory of all that pertained to the Beyond or – to use the specific philosophical term for the realm beyond experience – a science of the transcendental in contradistinction to the sphere of immanence. But at the same time, Nietzsche's term 'back-world' also poured scorn – in the spirit of the nominalist Enlightenment – on the superstition and provinciality which, in his view, automatically adhered to the assumption of such a world behind the world. I think it would be useful, therefore, to reflect for a moment on this doctrine of Nietzsche's, which equated metaphysics ironically – for he well knew, of course, that it is not literally the case – with occultism. Historically, metaphysics not only has nothing to do with occultism, but it would hardly be an exaggeration to say that it has been conceived expressly in opposition to occult thinking, as is quite manifest in one of the greatest thinkers of the modern age who is metaphysical in the specific sense, Leibniz. Admittedly, in genetic terms – with which we shall be concerned repeatedly in the course of our reflections – it is undeniable that metaphysics itself is a phenomenon of the secularization of mythical and magical thinking, so that it is not so absolutely detached from superstitious ideas as it understands itself to be, and as it has presented itself in the history of philosophy. Moreover, it is interesting in this connection that occultist organizations – throughout the world, as far as I am aware – always have a certain tendency to call themselves 'metaphysical associations' or something of that kind. This is interesting in several respects: firstly, because occultism, that apocryphal and, in higher intellectual society, offensive belief in spirits, gains respectability through association with something bathed in the nimbus of Aristotle, St Thomas Aquinas and heaven knows who else; but secondly (and this seems almost more interesting), because the occultists, in calling themselves metaphysicians, have an inkling of a fact profoundly rooted in occultism: that it stands in a certain opposition to theology. They have a sense that the things with which they are concerned, precisely through their opposition to theology, touch on metaphysics rather than theology – which, however, they are equally fond of enlisting as support when it suits them. All the same, one might here quote the statement by one of the test subjects we questioned in our investigations for *The Authoritarian Personality*. He declared that he believed in astrology because he did not believe in God.[4] I shall just mention this fact in passing. I believe this

line of thought will take us a very long way, but I can only offer a prelude to it here.

What can be said at once, however, is that no philosophical metaphysics has ever been concerned with spirits in the sense of existing beings, since metaphysics from the first – that is, from Plato or Aristotle – has protested against and distinguished itself from precisely the idea of something existing in the sense of crude facticity, in the sense of the scattered individual things which Plato calls *τά ὄντα*. Incidentally, I shall have something to say very soon on the question whether metaphysics began with Plato or with Aristotle.[5] It may be that there are certain metaphysical directions which are called spiritualistic – that of Berkeley, for example, or (with major qualifications) of Leibniz, although the Leibnizian monad is not so absolutely separate from actual, physical existence as has been taught by the neo-Kantian interpretation of Leibniz. But if spiritualistic tendencies exist in philosophy, in metaphysics, and if it has been argued that the Irish Bishop Berkeley, who might be said to have been at the same time an extreme empiricist and an extreme metaphysician, really taught only the reality of spirits, these are not to be understood as 'spirits' in the ordinary sense, but as purely intellectual entities determined by mind alone, on which everything actual is founded. It is not possible to ascribe to them the kind of factual existence with which they are endowed, prior to criticism or even reflection, by occultism and spiritualism in their various guises. I believe, therefore, that you would do well to exclude straight away from metaphysics any such idea of actually existing entities which could be experienced beyond our empirical, spatial-temporal world – or at least to exclude them as far as the philosophical tradition of metaphysics is concerned.

Metaphysics – and this may well bring me closer to a definition of what you may understand by that term – always deals with concepts. Metaphysics is the form of philosophy which takes concepts as its objects. And I mean concepts in a strong sense, in which they are almost always given precedence over, and are assigned to a higher order of being (*Wesenhaftigkeit*) than, existing things (*das Seiende*) or the facts subsumed under them, and from which the concepts are derived. The controversy on this point – the debate whether concepts are mere signs and abbreviations, or whether they are autonomous, having an essential, substantial being in themselves – has been regarded as one of the great themes of western metaphysics[6] since Plato and Aristotle. In the form of the famous nominalist dispute, this question preoccupied the Middle Ages and, as I shall show you shortly,[7] is almost directly prefigured in conflicting motifs within Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. And because the concept is, of course, an

instrument of knowledge, the question of the nature of the concept has from the first been both a metaphysical and an epistemological one. This may help you to understand why, for as long as metaphysics has existed – that is, for as long as concepts have been subjected to reflection – metaphysics has been entwined with problems of logic and epistemology in an extremely curious way, which culminated in Hegel's teaching that logic and metaphysics are really one and the same.[8] Now, by indicating to you how metaphysics stands, on one hand, in relation to the occult and, on the other, to religion, I have arrived at an historical dimension which may have a not unimportant bearing on the concept of metaphysics itself. I should remark in passing that, in my view, one cannot make progress in philosophy with purely verbal definitions, by simply defining concepts. Many of you will have heard this from me *ad nauseam*, and I ask you to excuse me if I repeat it once more for those to whom I have not yet preached on this subject. I believe that while philosophy may well terminate in definitions, it cannot start out from them; and that, in order to understand, to have knowledge of, the content of philosophical concepts themselves – and not simply from the point of view of an external history of ideas or of philosophy – it is necessary to know how concepts have come into being, and what they mean in terms of their origins, their historical dimension.[9]

Turning now to this dimension, which interests me especially in this context, it is the case that, historically, the positivist school is expressly contrasted to theology. I refer here to positivism in the form in which it first appeared, as a conception of sociology as the supreme and true science, and, indeed, as the true philosophy. This opposition to religion is explicit in Auguste Comte and implicit in his teacher Saint-Simon, even if the terms are not yet used in this way. Both these thinkers develop theories involving stages, a philosophy of history which moves in three great phases. The first of these is the theological phase, the second the metaphysical and the third the scientific or, as those thinkers liked to call it one hundred and fifty or two hundred years ago, the 'positive' phase.[10] They thereby pointed to something which is essential to metaphysics according to its own concept, and which thus helps to explain what I said to you a few minutes ago, when I stated that metaphysics is essentially concerned with concepts, and with concepts in a strong sense. For according to these positivist theories of stages, both the natural divinities and the God of the monotheists were first secularized, but were then held fast in their turn as something objective, existing in itself, like the old gods earlier.[11] Now, it is interesting to note that the positivists were especially ill-disposed towards metaphysics, because it had to do with

concepts and not with facts, whereas the positive theologies had described their deities as factual, existent beings. And accordingly, in the writings of the positivists you will find more invective against metaphysics than against theology. This applies especially to Auguste Comte who, in his late phase, had the delusive idea of turning science itself into a kind of cult, something like a positive religion.

It must be added, nevertheless, that metaphysics is often associated with theology in popular consciousness; and there are doubtless more than a few among you who tend to draw no very sharp distinction between the concepts of theology and metaphysics, and to lump them together under the general heading of transcendence. But now that we have to concern ourselves specifically with these concepts, I should like to invite you, if you still approach these questions with a certain naivety, to differentiate – and of course, progress in philosophical thinking is, in general, essentially progress in differentiation. I believe it can be stated more or less as a dogma that philosophical insight is more fruitful the more it is able to differentiate within its subject matter; and that the undifferentiating approach which measures everything by the same yardstick actually embodies precisely the coarse and, if I might put it like this, the uneducated mentality which philosophy, in its subjective, pedagogical role, is supposed to overcome or, as I'd prefer to say, to eliminate. Now it is certainly true that metaphysics has something in common with theology in its manner of seeking to elevate itself above immanence, above the empirical world. To put it somewhat more crudely, the widespread equating of metaphysics and theology, which comes about if one fails to reflect expressly on these concepts, can be traced back simply to something which pre-exists and predominates in the mental formation of all of us, even if we are not directly aware of it. It is the fact that the teachings of the Catholic church are indissolubly linked to metaphysical speculation, and in particular, as you all must know, to Aristotelian speculation in the form in which it was passed down through the great Arabian philosophers to those of the High Middle Ages, and above all to St Thomas Aquinas.[12] But even that is not so simple. And you may gain an idea of the tension between metaphysics and theology that I have referred to if you consider that at the time of the rise of Christianity in late antiquity, when Christianity was introduced as the state religion even in Athens, the schools of philosophy still existing there, which we should call metaphysical schools, were closed and suppressed with great brutality.[13] And, I would remark in passing, precisely the same thing was repeated in the great theological reaction of Islam against the Aristotelian Islamic philosophers, although this happened at a time when the metaphysical heritage,

mediated through the Islamic philosophers, had already won its place in Christian Europe. In late antiquity, therefore, metaphysics was regarded as something specifically subversive with regard to Christianity. And the fanatical Islamic monks who drove the philosophers into exile regarded it in a very similar way. The reason why they took this attitude may well show up very clearly the differences I should like to establish between metaphysics and theology. It is quite certain that metaphysics and theology cannot simply be distinguished from each other as historical stages, as the positivists tried to do, since they have constantly overlapped historically: one appeared at the same time as the other; one was forgotten, only to re-emerge in the foreground. They form an extraordinarily complex structure which cannot be reduced to a simple conceptual formula. Nevertheless, there is an element of truth in the theory of stages that I referred to, in that metaphysics in the traditional sense – and we have to start from the traditional concept if I am to make clear to you what metaphysics really means – is an attempt to determine the absolute, or the constitutive structures of being, on the basis of thought alone. That is, it does not derive the absolute dogmatically from revelation, or as something positive which is simply given to me, as something directly existing, through revelation or recorded revelation, but, to repeat the point, it determines the absolute through concepts.

And to say this is really to pose the fundamental problem of metaphysics, which has accompanied it throughout its history, and which also confronted it in, for example, the critique of metaphysics by Kant, as it presented itself to him at that time, in the guise of the Leibniz–Wolffian school. It is the problem that thought, which in its conditionality is supposed to be sufficient to have knowledge only of the conditional, presumes to be the mouthpiece, or even the origin, of the unconditional. This problem, which manifested itself in the violent reaction of theologies against metaphysics earlier, points at the same time to one of the core problems, if not to *the* core problem, of metaphysics. Thought, it might be said, has within it the tendency to disintegrate traditional, dogmatic ideas. It has that tendency even in Socrates, who taught what Kant would have called a metaphysics of morals, and who is regarded as having disintegrated the traditional state religion. This explains the occasional alliances between positivism and positive religion against metaphysics – against the disintegrating force which they both detected in it. Autonomous thought is a mouthpiece of the transcendent, and is thus always in danger – when it approaches the transcendent through metaphysics – of making common cause with it. And I believe it is a characteristic which can be ascribed, in a perhaps hasty but not unfounded

generalization, at least to all the traditional metaphysical systems known to me, that while these systems have always been critically disposed towards anything they regarded as dogmatic or fixed ideas, they have attempted, on the other hand, to rescue, on the basis of thought alone, that to which the dogmatic or transcendent ideas referred. This tension runs through the whole of metaphysical thinking, and I shall have occasion to define it very precisely for you using the example of Aristotle. If metaphysics and theology did finally come to an agreement, it was an alliance roughly comparable – if you will allow me the sociological language – to that between feudalism and bourgeois forces which can be observed at certain times in more recent history. Both find themselves confronted by a common foe, whether it be the radical, Enlightenment thinking of positivism, or, on occasion, materialism, as precipitated to a greater or lesser degree in Marxian theories, for example, whether those theories were rightly or wrongly understood. It is probably characteristic only of present-day metaphysics that it has relinquished its opposition to theology, while theology only felt obliged to assimilate metaphysics at a stage when the bourgeoisie was relatively advanced, at the high point of the urban culture of the Middle Ages. It did so in order to justify itself apologetically before the mature consciousness of the urban bourgeois, who wanted to know how the revealed wisdom stood in relation to their own developed and emancipated reason. The Thomist system is a grandiose attempt to derive this justification of revelation from metaphysics, while that of Duns Scotus is an almost desperate one.

At any rate, the first point I would ask you to note[14] is that metaphysical systems in the precise sense are doctrines according to which concepts form a kind of objective, constitutive support on which what is naively called 'the objective world', that is, scattered, individual, existing things, is founded and finally depends. You may recall that I pointed out earlier in today's lecture that the question whether concepts are real or are merely signs, that is, the dispute between nominalism and realism, is itself carried on within metaphysical enquiry – just as, originally, the realists and the nominalists were not opposed schools of metaphysicians and anti-metaphysicians respectively. Rather, these two schools – both in Islam and in medieval philosophy – were schools which arose and fought each other *within* metaphysical thinking. This reveals something which is important if you are to avoid confusion in thinking about the concept of metaphysics. This concept has undergone a certain formalization which can also be seen as a part of its disintegration, in that the mere treatment of metaphysical questions – regardless of the outcome – is

now treated as metaphysics, and not just positive teachings about concepts as entities existing in themselves. Both things, therefore, the doctrine of the 'back-world' and the doctrine which repudiates this back-world, would fall equally, and dubiously, within the field of metaphysical problems, according to this formalized or generalized concept. I say dubiously because there is a temptation here to draw a false conclusion which is constantly encountered in the field of vulgar apologetics. Whether one is *for* metaphysics or *against* metaphysics, both positions are metaphysical, both depend on ultimate positions about which it is not possible to argue, whereas the nature and operation of concepts lie precisely in the fact that it is entirely possible to argue about them, and that, in general, if the anti-metaphysical position is subsumed under the concept of metaphysics, it is deprived of its critical edge, its polemical or dialectical potency. Thus, one speaks formally, for example, of metaphysical materialism (in contradistinction to historical materialism), in which matter is designated as the ultimate ground of being, as the truly existent, as was once the case in the thought of Leucippus and Democritus. You can observe similar things in present-day theology, where, if anything is said about the name of God and His existence or non-existence, there is much rejoicing over the fact that God is mentioned at all, regardless of whether the speaker is 'for' or 'against' God. This, I would think, is enough to indicate that the present time, to put it cautiously, is unlikely to be the most propitious for the building of cathedrals. On the other hand, it is the case – one should add for the sake of justice – that in the thought of such early so-called anti-metaphysicians and materialists as Leucippus and Democritus, the *structure* of the metaphysical, of the absolute and final ground of explanation, is nevertheless preserved within their materialistic thought. If one calls these materialists *metaphysical* materialists, because matter for them is the ultimate ground of being, one does not entirely miss the mark. But this designation already contains a critical moment with regard to these early philosophers, a moment which led in the course of further reflection to a critique of what they taught.

Notes for
LECTURE TWO

13 May 1965[1]

Link: this formalization[2] *is expressed in the formal character of the usual definitions.*

The usual definition as, for example, the ultimate ground or cause of existing things; according to this, with the 'scientification' of philosophy, metaphysics is supposed to be the fundamental *science.*

Metaphysics seen accordingly as the doctrine of primary being (or primary substance), of πρώτη οὐσία.[3] *The ambiguity of this: primary for us, or in itself.*

Yet there are also doctrines, like some Gnostic teachings (e.g. Marcion),[4] *or that of the late Scheler on the divinity as a becoming,*[5] *and some speculations of Schelling,*[6] *which, again, do not conform to this concept.*[7] *E.g. metaphysics as the doctrine of the abiding does not necessarily coincide with the concept of metaphysics. While I can mention themes of metaphysics, such as being, ground of being, nothingness, God, freedom, immortality, becoming, truth, spirit . . .*[8]
Insertion 2 a[8]

[Insertion 2 a:] While most metaphysics seeks invariants, its subjects vary. E.g. the concept of force is hardly discussed in it today (natural science!),[9] *likewise that of life (largely replaced by existence). One speaks of fashions; but the so-called fashions of philosophy are indices of something deeper. Demonstrate by the example of life.*

The metaphysical question which preoccupied the entire seventeenth century, psyche and physis and the problem of psycho-physical

parallelism, and the question of their possible reciprocal influence, has receded remarkably, probably under the influence of the doctrine of the subjective constitution of the physical world – in both Kant and the empiricists – whereas, if this doctrine is invalidated, the problem of the so-called parallelism can emerge again, and actually did recur in Köhler's extended theory of Gestalt.[10] *There is an emergence and a forgetting – hardly a resolution – of metaphysical questions; also their re-emergence in the sense of correspondences within the philosophy of history.*[11] *[End of insertion]*

13.5.65

Notes for
LECTURE THREE

18 May 1965

While I can mention subjects of metaphysics, such as being, ground of being, nothingness, God, freedom, immortality, becoming, truth, spirit, their full concept – like any strong concept – cannot be given in a verbal definition but only presented through a concrete treatment of the constellation of problems which forms the concept of metaphysics. In the second part of the lecture I shall give you <u>models</u> *of these.*[1]

Decisive for an understanding of philosophical concepts – the history of terminology.

The concept of metaphysics goes back to Aristotle, and specifically to the arrangement of the corpus Aristotelicum *by Andronicus of Rhodes, 50–60 BC, in the first century before Christ, in which the main work of Aristotle devoted to that area,* μετὰ τὰ φυσικά, *was placed after the* Physics. *Insertion 2 a*

[Insertion 2 a:] as early as the Neo-Platonists this name, with its technical implications for editing, was interpreted in terms of <u>content</u>*:* μετὰ τὰ φυσικά *= that which goes beyond nature, or, precisely, what is 'behind nature' as its cause. [End of insertion]*

The term therefore arose from a principle of literary arrangement; a name for the subject was lacking because this subject was not a thing among things.

Ins. 3: The traditional subdivision of metaphysics.

[lns. 3] traditional subdivision of metaphysics:

(1) Ontology = theory of Being and of existing things (2) The nature of the world (cosmology) (3) of human beings (philosophical anthropology) (4) Existence and nature of the divinity (theology). Echoes of this in Kant, whose themes were prescribed by precisely what he criticized. This is good in that he does not think indiscriminately, and bad through its inhomogeneity with regard to his own nominalist assumptions.

Distinction between speculative and inductive metaphysics. All these are specifically dogmatic categories, relating to a prescribed and positively teachable area of subject matter, i.e. they aim at a merging of theology and metaphysics. But as the subject matter is itself problematic and no such doctrine can be advocated, I mention these categories, the pedantry of which makes a mockery of the subject, so that you are aware of them, without going into them further.

A similarly traditional distinction is drawn between deductive and inductive metaphysics (likewise not without hints from Aristotle)

Inductive metaphysics an artificially devised auxiliary concept intended to prop up a collapsed structure by adapting it to the very thing which has disintegrated it. Like relatively increasing misery[2]

Inductive = empirical = scientific.

Experience is therefore to be used to justify what transcends it. Heidegger's approach of analysing Dasein *to gain access to ontology has similarities.*

Something as apparently open to experience as Dasein, *i.e. essentially the experience of the individual subject of himself, is supposed to give insight into the nature of being, despite the limits and randomness of this experience. Of course, this presupposes the metaphysical privilege of the human being, who defines himself in calling* Dasein *the ontic which at the same time is ontological, and is therefore transparent,* qua *consciousness, with regard to its constituents.*[3]

However easy it is to point out the contradictions in an inductive metaphysics – that alone is no objection, unless one simply eliminates the contradiction in the way customary in science.

There is, in fact, a concept of metaphysical experience – though not one which can be grasped by the usual means of induction or with reference to a self-revealing ontology. Perhaps, to begin with, simply a reluctance to accept the accepted. E.g. 'Luderbach', dead animals.[4] *Why is the bank called a bank?*[5]

In presenting some of my own reflections on metaphysics[6] *in the second half of the lecture series, I hope I shall be able to give you an idea of what I call metaphysical experience. But I can say already that, within the theory as a whole, it is a moment, not itself the whole, not*

something immediate to which one could resort, in questions of metaphysics, as if to something ultimate, absolute.

The entwinement of metaphysics with <u>*thought*</u>*, inaugurated so emphatically by Aristotle in opposing hylozoism,*[7] *is irrevocable.* *[End of insertion]*

One can indeed say now that metaphysics began with Aristotle.

Bibliography here.[8] *18 May 65*

LECTURE FOUR

25 May 1965

I closed my last lecture by putting forward the thesis that, in a precise sense, metaphysics began with Aristotle. This is a rather shocking thesis, although the shock will be somewhat less severe if one reflects that Greek speculation has a long prehistory in which it largely emancipated itself from hylozoism, with its rather crude reflections on nature; here I shall mention only the names of Heraclitus, Parmenides and above all, of course, Plato. If I now attempt to substantiate this thesis somewhat further, it is not in order to indulge in witty paradoxes, but because I believe it will enable me to say something not unimportant about the concept of metaphysics itself. You will recall the definitions of metaphysics I gave earlier; they were not really definitions in the strict sense, but a series of thematic indications and propositions intended to show you roughly what the concerns of metaphysics are. Among these indications the question of true being, of the One, the essential, played a major part. The Platonic doctrine of Ideas does indeed have to do with these concepts, and I assume you are all more or less familiar with it. The Ideas – that is, hypostatized universal concepts, as they are commonly called – are regarded by Plato, in contrast to scattered multiplicity, as the true, the One, the essential and, above all, as the cause of all appearances. This definition – really a definition of metaphysics itself, which deals with the causes of all things – was taken over in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and elevated to *the* definition of metaphysical questions.[1] According to Plato, only the forms of things have true and original being; and these forms – this is the subject of the famous dispute he

had with Antisthenes[2] – are not merely the abstract attributes of diverse individual things. They are themselves, both logically and genetically, what is primary in individual things. For this reason they are called *εἶδος* or *ἰδέα*, as that which has being in itself and is open to 'seeing', as is implied in the parable of the cave.[3] Both words – *εἶδος*, essence, and *ἰδέα*, our word for idea – contain the stem *ιδ*, *Fιδ*, which relates to the visual, the optical, to seeing. To this extent, therefore, in terms of his themes, Plato could be regarded as the arch-metaphysician, the metaphysician *per se*, and perhaps he may indeed be counted as such. But in Plato – and this is the crucial point, which brings us a good deal closer to the meaning of the term metaphysics – the world of the senses is described as that which is absolutely without being, although he was no more able than the Eleatics before him to sustain this position rigorously. For him, the world of appearances really does not exist in any strong sense. And it can be said – if you will allow me to put it rather drastically, just to point out the main landmarks in this discussion – that Plato's philosophy is a synthesis of Eleatism – especially Parmenides – and Heraclitus. From Parmenides he took the doctrine of being as the One, the absolutely indivisible and imperishable, and from Heraclitus the doctrine of the absolute transitoriness of appearance, which exists in a state of constant flux and, moreover, is deceptive and unreliable, as is shown above all in Plato's relatively late dialogue *Theaetetus*. His fundamental attitude, which has had a profound and lasting influence on later western philosophy and constantly re-emerges in different forms, lies in the emphasis on deception, on the illusoriness of sense data. Even in a philosopher as nominalist as John Locke, this thesis recurs in the distinction between the primary qualities which are attributes of things in themselves, and the merely subjective, secondary qualities.[4]

No word is needed – although in the history of philosophy many have been used – to make one aware that this drastic separation of the idea from the world of the senses is very difficult to maintain. In Plato it implies the doctrine of the non-being of the sensible, of *μὴ ὄν*. It can be convincingly demonstrated that the qualities appropriated by the Ideas, in becoming that which has being in itself, are in reality taken over more or less directly from the world of appearances, and that the absolute status of the Idea is attained, as it were, at the expense of the world of the senses from which it is derived. Plato himself was by no means consistent in this respect. For example, in describing the Idea as the cause of all being and of all existing things, and locating the Idea in a realm of absolute origins, as opposed to the realm of things which have originated in it, he implies that there must be something else, precisely that which has originated. Or take another

very famous theorem of Plato's: the doctrine of μέθεξις, of the participation of the scattered things in the Idea to which they are subordinate.[5] This also presupposes something different from the Idea; if there were nothing which was different from the Idea, such a 'participation' in the Idea, such a μέθεξις, would not be possible. And in fact, the late Plato did extensively revise the strict version of the doctrine of Ideas, as it appears in what are called the classical, middle dialogues. I would mention here the very curious dialogue from Plato's late period, which has given rise to innumerable difficulties and bears the name *Parmenides*. Naturally, you should not confuse this with the Eleatic Parmenides, although he is the protagonist and victor in this dialogue. In it Plato puts forward what might be seen as the implicitly very dialectical thesis that, however little the Many amount to without the One – the Many refers to the scattered things, as opposed to the one Idea under which each thing in a genus is subsumed – however little this Many may be without the One, without its Idea, just as little is the One, the Idea, without the Many.[6] There is no doubt that in Plato's late period the existent asserts itself increasingly against the Idea, although, in the chronology of Plato's works which is now generally accepted, one of the dialogues in which the doctrine of Ideas is presented most bluntly and developed most ingeniously, the *Phaedrus*, is dated extremely late. (I personally, despite all the authority of classical philology, am disinclined to trust the current chronology, not for philological reasons but for philosophical ones, based on the subject matter.) This dating does, of course, make the development of Plato that I have referred to, towards what might be called a greater acknowledgement of the empirical, somewhat precarious. However, despite the protests of dyed-in-the-wool Platonists, I should like to assume such a development, and I would also mention that in the Anglo-Saxon countries, where there is a very strong culture in the interpretation of classical Greek texts, one not infrequently comes across the hypothesis that Plato as an old man was influenced retrospectively by his pupil Aristotle; or that, as a result of his political disappointments in his attempts to set up the world purely on the basis of the Idea, he was forced to give greater recognition to that which is, the scattered, the merely existent. If one reviews the development of the great classical work on politics, the *Politeia*, through the *Statesman* to the last work, the *Laws*, there is much evidence to suggest that that is the case. But I am only mentioning this to show you how complex these relationships are. Incidentally, you would all do well, before embarking on these very complex problems that I can only sketch for you here, to look at Goethe's famous descriptions of the two philosophers, whom

he saw as antithetical, Plato and Aristotle; he contrasted what today would be vulgarly called the idealist Plato to the realist Aristotle, who, as Goethe put it, had his feet planted firmly on the earth.[7]

After what I have just said, my assertion that metaphysics really began with Aristotle will be doubly shocking (I seem to be bent on shocking you) because the importance Plato seems to attach to the higher world, to transcendence, as against the world itself, appears to make him far more metaphysical than his pupil Aristotle. But I believe we have arrived here at the central, problematic point from which you will be best able to understand what metaphysics really means. For even if we concede that Plato[8] gave much greater weight, *nolens volens* (or however it may be), to the world of μὴ ὄν, or non-being, to the world of sensible experience, than he should have done according to the strict doctrine of Ideas; and even if we concede further that this tendency in Plato grew stronger in the course of his long life, one thing is quite definitely lacking in his work: reflection on how these two spheres – of direct experience and of the Idea, the concept, the One, or whatever you like to call it – are related to each other. It might be best to say that while the traditional problems of metaphysics present themselves in the structure of the Platonic doctrine of Ideas, they do so, as it were, *objectively*, without being reflected thematically in his philosophy. While it is true that the tension between the sphere of transcendence and the sphere of that which is merely the case, between τὸ ὄν and τὰ ὄντα, is present in Plato's philosophy, because it is unavoidable, breaking through again and again, his philosophy is not constituted in such a way that this tension is central to his speculation. Now, what I should really like to make understandable to you is that the sphere of metaphysics in the precise sense only comes into being where this tension is itself the subject of philosophy, where it comes within the purview of thought. It might be said, therefore, that metaphysics arises at the point where the empirical world is taken seriously, and where its relation to the supra-sensible world, which was hitherto taken for granted, is subjected to reflection.

It is possible to imagine the Platonic doctrine of Ideas, without doing it too much violence, as a secularization of theology. The Platonic Ideas have been called the gods turned into concepts, and one would scarcely disagree, just as the supreme Idea, the Idea of the Good or of Justice, τὸ ἀγαθόν or ἡ δικαιοσύνη, is frequently referred to in Plato as θεός, probably in direct continuation of a Socratic tradition. But the problem posed by this secularization is that once the gods are turned into concepts, that is, entities of appearance, their *relationship* to appearances becomes something quite

other than if the gods were simply located in the Beyond, on their Olympus. This problem emerges again and again in the epistemological and logical difficulties with which Plato has to contend. But, if I might put it thus, he was naively theological in failing to draw from the secularization of the gods into concepts, which he had brought about, the conclusion that the relation of the concept or the Idea to the world of appearances was thereby radically changed, and made problematic. One might define metaphysics as the product of a breach between essences – the gods secularized as ideas – and the phenomenal world, a breach which is inevitable as soon as the gods become concepts and being becomes a relation to existing things; at the same time, however, these two moments cannot be naively related together or formulated concurrently. I believe this way of stating the matter may better define the locus of metaphysics in the history of philosophy, and thus define the essence of metaphysics as well (for I believe the essential is always historical), than would be possible in the relatively superficial lectures one might give on the themes of metaphysics. Following from this definition one might say that metaphysics, because it attempts to regard the Ideas as something linked to the empirical world but endangered by advancing secularization, was itself threatened from the first in its own development. In this connection it is certainly no accident that nominalism – the radically rationalistic view which denied any autonomous existence to ideas – based itself precisely on Aristotle, and did so twice over, both in Arabian philosophy and in scholasticism; although, as cannot be emphasized too much, Aristotle himself, as you will find out, was anything but a nominalist. When Heidegger refers to metaphysics as a kind of rationalistic decline from the original understanding of being in archaic philosophy,[9] I cannot entirely disagree, from a strictly phenomenological viewpoint, with his characterization. On one hand metaphysics is always, if you will, rationalistic as a *critique* of a conception of true, essential being-in-itself which does not justify itself before reason; but, on the other, it is always also an attempt to *rescue* something which the philosopher's genius feels to be fading and vanishing. There is in fact no metaphysics, or very little, which is not an attempt to save – and to save by means of concepts – what appeared at the time to be threatened precisely by concepts, and was in the process of being disintegrated, or corroded, to use the more affective language of the ancient anti-Sophists. Metaphysics is thus, one might say, something fundamentally *modern* – if you do not restrict the concept of modernity to our world but extend it to include Greek history. And it is no accident that metaphysics re-emerges in the High Middle Ages, a period of urban bourgeois culture in

which the naive immediacy of Christian faith was already breaking down; and then a second time in the broad movement of thought which is generally embraced by terms such as the Renaissance, the Reformation and humanism.

Aristotle, in the first truly metaphysical work of literature – the one which gave that branch of philosophy its name – criticizes the Platonic attempt to oppose essence to the world of the senses, as something separate and absolutely different from it. Above all, he criticizes the Platonic hypostasis of universal concepts as a duplication of the world. In this he makes a very strong and legitimate case, based on the argument that all the attributes of the Ideas are derived from the empirical world, on which they live, rather as the rulers lived on the work of their servants or slaves. At the same time, however, he then seeks in his turn to extract an essential being from the sensible, empirical world, and thereby to save it; and it is precisely this twofold aim of criticism and rescue which constitutes the nature of metaphysics. The polarity between critical rationality, on the one hand, and the pathos of rescue, on the other, points to the essence of traditional metaphysics, or at least has done so throughout its history. Metaphysics can thus be defined as the exertion of thought to save what at the same time it destroys. That this formulation is tenable, and not arbitrary, is indicated, I believe, by the fact that the very same structure which I have demonstrated to you in principle by the example of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* – or as a precondition of that work – is also characteristic of *Kant's* position with regard to the problem of metaphysics. Although Kant, in upholding a blunt, unreconciled dualism, undoubtedly has more in common with the philosophical climate of Plato than of Aristotle – and the *Critique of Pure Reason* contains, in the introduction to the section on the Ideas, the finest pages ever written about Plato,[10] pages I would most strongly urge all of you to read – it can be said that in this double intention of critique and rescue Kant was closer to Aristotle, whom he did not particularly like, than to Plato.[11] If you will take this historical-philosophical interpretation on trust for the time being, you will perhaps understand why I consider it necessary, for a correct understanding of the concept of metaphysics, to begin with an overview of the main theoretical motifs of Aristotle's work. This does require you, however, to take some account of his historical position, for only this will allow you to picture more concretely what I have in mind.

This task is made more difficult today – in philosophy, not in classical philology – by the influence of Heidegger and his school. Although he recognized very clearly the rationalist, Enlightenment

moment in Aristotle, Heidegger attempted to rediscover a much more 'pristine' Aristotle, to an extent which is hard to conceive. And before going on to Aristotle I think I need to offer a brief critique of this approach. I'd like to do this by examining closely a very specific piece of interpretation, since I believe that such things are more clearly revealed by concrete details, rather than by remaining on the level of general assertion. I am concerned here with the first sentence of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, and I shall consider only this one sentence. I shall write this sentence in Greek on the blackboard; I am aware that many of you do not know Greek, but there is no other way to proceed; and I shall explain everything you need to know in order to understand it. The sentence is as follows: *Πάντες ἄνθρωποι τοῦ εἰδέναι ὀρέγονται φύσει.*[12] According to the generally accepted translations, this means: people by nature strive after knowledge. A well-known translation renders it as: 'All men by their very nature feel the urge to know.'[13] This sentence is reproduced in Heidegger's *Being and Time* (please keep in mind the usual translation: all people by nature strive zealously after knowledge). Heidegger's version – which, incidentally, is presented cautiously, not as a direct translation – is as follows: 'The treatise which stands first in the collection of Aristotle's treatises on ontology begins with the sentence: *Πάντες ἄνθρωποι τοῦ εἰδέναι ὀρέγονται φύσει.* The care for seeing is essential to man's Being.' It is not my purpose here to poke fun at the stiltedness of this passage, for a mannered, estranging approach to a strange text can have a very salutary function. And I'd like to say at once that Heidegger offers resistance to the flattening out of Greek texts when rendered into our language, as has traditionally been done. However, his interpretation here does not produce simply the salutary alienation effect I referred to, but violates the meaning on the most literal level. When he says, for example: '*man's* Being [*im Sein* des *Menschen*]',[14] the human being is already put in the singular, presupposing a priority of the essence of the human being, and thus a kind of anthropological ontology, which in Aristotle is still to be established.[15] Aristotle does not say '*the* human being', or 'existence as such', but simply and plainly '*all* people', '*the* people', and not '*individual* people'. For *εἰδέναι* means quite simply to know, and *ἄνθρωποι τοῦ εἰδέναι ὀρέγονται* means: people earnestly seek or strive after knowledge. Now it is undoubtedly correct, as I had occasion to indicate to you earlier,[16] that this *εἰδέναι* contains the stem *|F]ιδ*, which is also in *ἰδέα* and which characterizes the sensory relationship of seeing. But in his interpretation Heidegger simply suppresses the whole history of language which, starting from the rich, sensible conceptions originally associated with words, progressively sublimated

the words into concepts. This happened in Greek just as it has happened in our language. There can be no doubt that at the stage when Aristotle wrote, εἰδέναι already meant to know in the sense of a consciousness emancipated from the sensible present. But because ontology, which in Aristotle is only a theme for discussion, is, as I have said, presupposed by Heidegger in an act of 're-pristination', consciousness is supposed to have a direct sensible perception of essence, or being, or whatever it may be, as if it were something existing in itself. And so Heidegger translates this εἰδέναι back to its much earlier lineage as sensible presence, although by this stage it had entirely lost that quality.

He then says that 'the care of seeing is essential to man's Being' [*Im Sein des Menschen liegt wesenhaft die Sorge des Sehens*]. Here it becomes blatantly clear what Heidegger is up to. Anyone even slightly acquainted with the history of ancient philosophy and having the rudiments of Greek will know that the word φύσει is a philosophical term which – about a hundred years before Aristotle; I cannot give you the exact date – played a part in Socraticism and Sophism, in opposition to θέσει, as that which is so 'by nature', as against what is merely posited, what is θέσει. The term for 'essential' would be quite different, perhaps ὄντως or ὄντως ὄν, as it appears in Plato; but quite certainly not φύσει, since there is in φύσει an echo of φύσις and thus a memory of physical nature from the old hylozoistic period. So the sentence means quite simply – very much in keeping with the mentality of Aristotle, who was a peculiar mixture of an ontologist and a professor of physics – that human beings, as they are, strive by nature for knowledge. But as for the idea that this was meant in the sense[17] of some definite ontological pre-structuring of existence in which being was to be revealed – no shadow of that is to be found in Aristotle. Finally, the word ὀρέγεσθαι means no more than to exert oneself, to long for, to strive after something – and has not the slightest connection with care [*Sorge*], which, as we know, is one of the core categories in Heidegger. On the contrary, the straightforward 'love of wisdom'[18] has had foisted on it an existential interpretation – that it harbours the care of *Dasein* for its being – although, as you will see in any dictionary, no philology or linguistic knowledge can produce a link between this ὀρέγεσθαι and the concept of care.

In examining this sentence in some depth I believe I have shown you what I wanted to develop as the main idea of this lecture: that Aristotle starts out from an everyday, rational, sensible consciousness and attempts, by reflecting on what is given directly by the senses, to attain insight into true being – instead of presupposing this essential realm, as was the case in archaic thought. If that were not

the case – if this sentence were as Heidegger interprets it – then Aristotle would not really be a metaphysician, but precisely the ontologist which, in a different place, Heidegger says he is not.[19] But the moment of tension in metaphysics is located exactly in this seemingly straightforward, empirical sentence, in which, however, the striving for knowledge and thus, objectively, for absolute truth, is posited as a need – so that here, too, everything is finally constituted from the point of view of truth. And this really defines quite clearly the intellectual climate within which Aristotle's *Metaphysics* has its place. In the next lecture it will be time to tell you something about the content of the *Metaphysics*.

LECTURE FIVE

1 June 1965

I shall start today by presenting to you, as best I can, some of the main ideas in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*; this will lead on to some reflections on the problem of metaphysics in general. I shall base my exposition mainly on the account given by Eduard Zeller,[1] although I am well aware that, with regard to philological details, scholarship on Aristotle has made extraordinary progress since the time of Zeller's work. I should like to take this opportunity to say, however, that much of this detailed progress seems to me to have been at the expense of philosophical vision, which was available to Zeller as a member of the Hegelian school to a degree which has subsequently been entirely lost. I therefore prefer the overview and insight he gives us in his book to a possibly greater accuracy of detail, as I am more concerned to throw light on the problems and history of metaphysics through Aristotle than to give you an irreproachably punctilious account of that philosopher's work.

The definition of metaphysics is to be found in the first book, Book *A*. It agrees with what I have already told you about the themes of metaphysics,[2] even though its subject matter is somewhat narrower than the diversity of themes we are accustomed to associate with that term. The book states that metaphysics is the 'science of first principles and causes';[3] one is struck first, of course, by the link with the Platonic doctrine of Ideas, which likewise promises to deal with the first principles, the highest concepts, the causes of phenomena. The first complex which can be extracted from Aristotle's work *Metaphysics*[4] and which is fundamental to all the rest – I'm expressly

following Zeller in this – is the complex of the *particular* and the *universal*, which can be said to be really the basic theme of Aristotelian *Metaphysics*. And I should point out to you straight away that in the case of Aristotle – unlike that of Plato – one can talk of a system, to the extent that the methodological and, above all, the epistemological considerations we are accustomed to summarize under the title of the *Organon* are so closely bound up with the argumentation of the *Metaphysics* that some of the main arguments of the latter work go back to these methodological writings, the *Organon*. In particular, they go back within this methodological corpus to the work on the *Categories* (*Κατηγορίαι*). I shall only touch on the fact that 'categories' in Aristotle means something quite different than it does in Kant, namely the basic forms which are brought to light by an analysis of the procedures of speech, and not the basic subjective forms of thought; I assume that most of you are aware of this.[5] In starting from the problem of the particular and the universal in Aristotle, I am following up something I set out in the last lecture, the idea that metaphysics in general has the dual character of the critical or, as is often said, the destructive, and of the apologetic and rescuing; and you will see that this characterization applies in an exceptional degree to Aristotle.

It can be said that his treatise – I mean his deliberations, since they were not contained in a separate treatise – his deliberations on the problem of the particular and the universal, fall initially within the sphere of his critical work. However, the accent here is on 'initially', and this gives rise to a problem with which the whole of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* confronts us. The first thesis, it might be said, is that the universal is not substantial; that it is not, like the Platonic Ideas, which are universal concepts, something existing in and for itself, independently of its realization. Rather, one can only speak of a universal to the extent that it manifests itself *in* a particular. In other words, reflection on the process of abstraction has much more force in Aristotle's deliberations on the universal than it had in Plato, but does not go so far as to conceive universal concepts as pure abstractions. Rather, the difficulty and, if I might put it thus, the point of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* is that while, on the one hand, one cannot think of the universal independently of that in which it is concretized, on the other hand, it is not a *mere* abstraction in relation to the particulars subsumed under it. If you can picture the problem in this accentuated form, I believe you will be able to cope with the difficulties of this theory straight away. In general, one can only deal with difficulties by looking them in the eye. And Aristotle does make things rather difficult for us by presenting himself as a

'commonsensical' type of thinker in whose work, as in that of a number of British thinkers later, the most unfathomable problems appear initially as if they could yield self-evident answers to simple human understanding, whereas in reality they conceal abysses. I touch here on the specific difficulty presented by an interpretation of Aristotle as a whole. Let me return now to what I indicated at the outset, that I should like to relate my exposition of Aristotle to the history and overall themes of western metaphysics. It can be said that his doctrine that the universal is not a substantial moment contains the seeds of what is called nominalism, which holds that universal concepts exist *post rem* and not *ante rem*. But – and I say this to exclude all misunderstandings from the outset – it would be a grave misunderstanding to describe Aristotle himself as a nominalist. I could say that his *Metaphysics* circles around this theme; that its problem lies precisely in the contradictory situation whereby on one hand the universal is denied substantiality while, on the other, universal concepts are not mere abbreviations of the particulars subsumed under them – rather, they have an attribute which raises them above *flatus vocis*, above the mere breath of the voice. And if you want to understand the concept of metaphysics, you must pay attention from the first to this constellation of moments in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. He says that, in contrast to the universal, only the particular is substantial; that only the single, apparent, concrete phenomenon is real. This concept of reality or, better, this concept of the substantial in his work, is denoted by the noun οὐσία, from which the Latin term for substance is derived,[6] and which itself is derived from εἶναι, to be. This οὐσία, or πρώτη οὐσία, 'primary being', constitutes, from this perspective, the quintessential theme of Aristotle's work. Only the particular shall, to begin with, be such an οὐσία; only it shall be real.

This takes us to the second basic thesis of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* concerning the relationship of universal to particular: the thesis that essence or, as Plato would say, the Idea, does not lie outside the things whose essence it is, but is only in so far as it is in things themselves. In other words, Plato's basic doctrine, concerning the χωρισμός of the Ideas as against the existent, the 'abyss of meaning'[7] which separates the Ideas or the universal concepts from the concrete individual things subsumed by them, is challenged by Aristotle. And his approach has what looks like a thoroughly progressive and modern moment in stating that, if I separate the Ideas completely from everything existent and make them absolutely autonomous, I turn them into an existent of a second power, of a second, higher order. In modern terms we would say that I objectify or reify the Ideas. And from this he derived the entirely plausible objection that the whole

world would then be duplicated; on one hand there would be a world which is mere appearance and on the other a world which is being-in-itself, but which borrows all its qualities from the empirical world, so that it reappears in the latter – from which issue all kinds of logical conundrums. I shall point out in passing (to show you how contemporary all these Aristotelian questions are) that exactly the same problem makes itself felt in modern epistemology and metaphysics, as when Husserl posits a region of pure essences – of, shall we say, immanent consciousness – and a region comprising the highest unity of psychological determination; this would give rise to a double world: on one side a highly formalized psychology and on the other a doctrine of pure essences, of the forms of consciousness.

Finally, if the Ideas are presented as absolutely *χωρίς*, absolutely separate, as was the case in Plato, this gives rise to a second inconsistency of which Aristotle accuses Plato, and which forms the pivot of his own *Metaphysics*. It then becomes inconceivable how – as Plato taught and as Aristotle himself teaches with even greater emphasis – the universal, the Ideas, could have any motive force, or how far they could be the causes of their own appearances; for they are said to be absolutely separate from precisely the phenomenal world they are supposed to move. And when we are faced by such a division, by the positing of two absolutely different spheres, one of which, for the sake of brevity, we shall call the ontological and the other the ontic, the sphere of existing things, it is simply impossible to conceive how one might interact with the other, as Plato – and Aristotle again demonstrates this with great critical acuity – steadfastly teaches. This problem, too – how it is possible for a pure idea to be an efficient force acting on phenomena – has cropped up throughout the entire history of philosophy. I should like to illustrate it (again with regard to the persistent influence of this idea on the history of metaphysics in particular) by the example of Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason*. The problem with which this work of moral philosophy grapples above all (although he never states squarely that this is its real concern) is how the moral law, which is something purely spiritual, arising from the intelligible world and independent of any empirical determination, manages to act upon the empirical world – as a compulsion or duty to act in accordance with the ideas.[8] If you look at the *Critique of Practical Reason* from this point of view, you will see that Kant took enormous pains in trying to resolve this question; and that he was only finally able to do so by the complete intellectualization of the will, so that even those acts which affect the empirical world through the pure ideas are conceived as purely intellectual acts. Kant fails here to realize that if these acts are purely intellectual one

cannot really understand how they could become objective, how they could objectify themselves at all in the world of phenomena. This problem, therefore, which can be levelled as criticism against Kant's *Metaphysics of Morals*, is already fully contained in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, in the form of his realization that if the Ideas or universal concepts are absolutely χωρίς, that is, a realm of autonomous essence, it is impossible to conceive how and how far they can be causes of phenomena.

Now, the argument for the thesis of the substantiality of the particular, which I mentioned to you, is that nothing which is predicated on some other, underlying thing can be substantial. That is, only that is substantial which does not need something else in order to exist. And with regard to the οὐσία, in the sense of particular things, he now argues, somewhat curiously, that this characteristic – that we do not need anything else in order to recognize it – is possessed only by particular things. This version of the concept of substance is a fundamental thesis of western metaphysics. It holds that the substantial is that which needs nothing else in order to exist; this tenet has been handed down by scholasticism and, remarkably, reappears in the philosophy of Descartes. As Koyré has shown,[9] Descartes's philosophy is linked to scholasticism to an extraordinary degree, far more extensively than one would expect, given Descartes's polemical attitude towards his educators. Yet this concept of substance recurs in the *Principia*, in the famous formulation that substance is that 'quod nulla re indiget ad existendum';[10] that is, which needs no other thing in order to exist. And if you will permit me a brief historical aside, this interpretation of substance, as that which needs nothing else in order to exist, has survived throughout the entire history of philosophy. Not only is this definition of the concept of substance to be found among Spinoza's famous definitions in the *Ethics*,[11] for example, but it even re-emerges in modern philosophy, in Husserl's *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*.[12] Precisely this theorem of Descartes, incidentally, has its origin in the 'doctrine of categories' in the *Organon*.[13] In Aristotle, therefore, metaphysics is as tightly bound up with logic and epistemology as it was to be again at the height of western philosophy, in Kant and Hegel.

I should like to point out that this thesis includes something which is not said in as many words but which has its origin here and forms part of the bedrock, if you will, of the whole of western thought. We are all brought up so much within it that (until philosophical reflection liberates us) we take it for granted; it is truly like second nature to the mind. According to this doctrine, that thing is substantial – in the sense that it needs nothing else – which requires no means by

which we can perceive it; it is, in other words, the *immediate*. Thus, at the beginning of western metaphysics, stands the statement that that on which everything is supported, on which everything depends and by which knowledge should be orientated, is the immediate – in the form of the particular which Aristotle first equates with that which really and truly exists. However, at this point you must also be aware of a difference. For with a thinker as deeply connected to western philosophy as Aristotle it is especially important to differentiate historically, to avoid producing a general philosophical mush in which everything communicates with everything else. The immediacy implied in the basic doctrines of Aristotle that I have set out for you is not conceived by him – at least, not primarily – as the immediacy of sensory experience. It is not, therefore, an immediacy in relation to our capacity for knowledge. And it can be assumed that Aristotle, as a pupil of Plato, was acquainted with the critique of the immediacy of subjective sensory certainty in the *Theaetetus*,[14] and that he had assimilated it into his thought. His immediacy, therefore, is not an immediacy of consciousness, it is not 'les données immédiates de la conscience',[15] but, if one can put it so paradoxically, it is the immediate in itself. Here, of course, critical reflection is at once confronted with the question of how one can speak of 'immediacy in itself' at all, since any such immediacy, about which something is predicated, can only be immediacy *for* a consciousness which predicates it.

But, apart from that, I'd like to make another criticism here – not just for the sake of criticizing a historical thinker, since such an attempt would display a naivety which, I assume, you would not expect from me any more than from yourselves. I make it in order to show you that a theory like the one I am expounding leads to extraordinary difficulties within itself. For to introduce you to Aristotle's *Metaphysics* cannot be simply to set out his main theses; it must give you an awareness of the problems of his metaphysics. And to do that is necessarily to point to the difficulties which are concealed beneath the plausibility of the argumentation. Now, Hegel taught that there is no immediacy which is not at the same time mediated.[16] If you accept that Hegel successfully proves this point – and I would think that there are few moments in Hegel's *Logic* which are as obviously convincing as this proof[17] – it is no longer clear what the traditional metaphysical notion of substance, as that which absolutely requires no mediation, is supposed to mean. And it seems to me to be one of those curious anachronisms, not to say archaisms, which the history of philosophy, and especially of metaphysics, drags along with it, that while it engaged in the critical reflections on the concept of immediacy that I have just described, it did not perceive

that the doctrine of substance, that is, the conception of substance as that which exists primarily and immediately in itself, was necessarily and profoundly affected by those reflections. If I were to say to you that philosophy has taken too little notice of this throughout its history, that would be unjust and incorrect. It has, of course, taken notice, in the form of radical nominalism, but it has *not* taken notice in its rationalist-speculative-idealist mainstream, if I may put it like that. It is certainly the case that Hume, who, if you like, represents the furthest logical conclusion to be drawn from Aristotle's doctrine of the reality of the particular, disintegrated the notion of substance for this very reason. That is to say that the concept of substance, at first inseparably bound up with the concept of the particular thing, gives way in his thought to a critique which states that the thing itself does not really exist, but only the habitual associations of subjective modes of appearance, which we then conventionally regard as things. In accordance with this, Kant turned the concept of substance into a subjective function, an activity – something which the mind produces within objects, and no longer the thing existing in itself which Aristotle terms substance *qua* thing. On the other hand, however, in his doctrine of ideas and, in general, in his conception of the *mundus intelligibilis*, the intelligible world, the notion of substance in the old Aristotelian sense still prevails in Kant's thought.[18] You can see at this point how the logical conclusion later drawn from the doctrine which begins with Aristotle – that full reality can only be attributed to particular things – resulted from an attitude which, as I said earlier, was foreign to Aristotle and to antiquity (with the exception of Sophism): the orientation towards the subject. Only when the doctrine of the reality and immediacy of the particular is combined with the conception that this immediacy is only an immediacy *for the subject*, is a thoroughgoing nominalism, of the kind I have just briefly illustrated by the example of Hume, possible. And, to put the matter negatively, that is also the reason why one cannot speak of nominalism in Aristotle, despite the incipient tendency towards it that I have indicated. How the matter might be stated *positively* – you will see in a moment. To put it quite simply, there is something naively realistic in the notion of substance as used by Aristotle, and you will only be able correctly to understand his *Metaphysics* as a whole – something which is not easy for us today – if you do not see it in terms of our ubiquitous subjective reflection, but, to use an expression from scholasticism, *in intentione recta*. That means, to see it in terms of the immediate objectivity of the external world, and not in terms of mediation through the perceiving consciousness.

This curious intersection between the doctrine of the reality of the particular and, at the same time, a naively outward-turned realism, is another necessary feature of the structures of Aristotle's thought. Now, the truly Aristotelian element, which constitutes the entire difficulty I have been speaking about, is the fact that, despite this fundamental postulate of the reality of the particular, and the assertion that only that is substantial which does not need anything else but exists immediately, he was very emphatically a philosopher of mediation. To understand how this idea or (one might almost say) this cult of the immediate, of the existent in itself, is entwined in Aristotle's thought with the idea of universal mediation, is the fundamental problem in understanding the *Metaphysics*; and I would ask you to concentrate on this problem. You will then see – to jump ahead – that the concept of mediation found in Aristotle is extraordinarily different from that which those with a Hegelian training – and there will be more than a few of them among you – understand by mediation. Here, too, I would repeat like a scholastic: *distinguo*, I distinguish. You can only grasp the specific nature of Aristotle's approach if you distinguish very strictly what is meant by *mediation*, by *middle* (*Mitte*), and by *the intermediate* (*das Mittlere*) in Aristotle from what they mean in the dialectic. For, to state this in advance, Aristotle was anything but a dialectical thinker, although he was at the same time a thinker of immediacy and a thinker of mediation. One might say, if I might give this a Hegelian twist, that the thesis of immediacy and the thesis of mediateness were themselves not mediated in his work – if you will allow me to make a dialectical point at this juncture. Of course, this was not such a crucial issue for Aristotle, since the dialectic did not exist at that time, so that he could not distance or differentiate his method from it in the way I have just done. Rather, it is in keeping with the whole temper of Aristotle's philosophy, which is one of limitation, of respect, of moderation, of μεσότης, that he softens and limits the doctrine of substantiality as immediacy by introducing the idea of improper or secondary substances, which he calls δεύτεραι οὐσίαι, 'second substances'. One might also refer to them, perhaps, as second essences;[19] although the word 'second' clearly indicates that they are not pure immediacies but products of abstraction. They are 'second' because they only come into being on the basis of what is given primarily, particular things. These δεύτεραι οὐσίαι, these secondary or improper substances, cannot be hypostatized, as one would say in modern philosophical terminology, but are contained *in* particular things; they are thus immanent and not transcendent. And this thesis – that although on the one hand substantial

concepts exist, they are not *χωρίς*, they do not have their being beyond individual existing things, but are only embodied in them and are immanent to them – is really the basic thesis of the whole of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. It is the source of the fundamental difference between this philosophy and Plato's – its dynamic character. For if these *δεύτεραι οὐσίαι* are immanent in particular things, instead of standing opposed to them as something external and alien, it is no longer absurd or inconceivable, Aristotle argues, that these essences should have an effect on particular things, or that a mediation should be established between the Idea and scattered existence. I should like to close with that remark, and will continue from this point in the next lecture.

LECTURE SIX

3 June 1965

In the last lecture I spoke about the δεύτεραι οὐσίαι, which can be translated as essences of second degree or second power. These cannot be posited as existing outside substances, or things – as the language of modern philosophy would make it appear. According to Aristotle they cannot be hypostatized, but are immanent in substances, and not, like the Platonic Ideas, transcendent. I also pointed out that a problem which really is hardly comprehensible in terms of the Platonic doctrine of Ideas is at least *prefigured* in this aspect of Aristotle. It is the question of how one is to conceive the mediation between the world of ideas and the world of sensible objects, or, in Kantian terms, the mediation between the noumena and the phenomena. I should like to express this very cautiously, as the 'ideas', now, are no longer χωρίς, that is, they are no longer separated from the sensory, from objects, from the stuff of knowledge, but are realized only in so far as they are in these existent things. And the problem of causation, of the primary cause, which I mentioned as one of the problems from which metaphysics itself starts out,[1] is solved in principle in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* by the fact that this world of sensible appearance is teleologically orientated towards these ideas or pure possibilities, which are supposed to be contained within them. In Aristotle there is an expression for this relationship of the ideas or possibilities to the existent: ἓν κατὰ πολλῶν:[2] that is to say, the One in the Many. You can see here the perspective from which I view everything I have to tell you now about Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. In this perspective, the themes I have just mentioned persist throughout

the whole of western metaphysics. As in the game of *Mühle*, the pieces are already on the board in Aristotle's metaphysics; in the later phases of metaphysical thinking they are pushed about a good deal and then, finally, as in the end-game in *Mühle*, they start to hop – in the form of irrationalism. For this reason, the expression 'One in the Many' is of especial interest, and I bring this term to your attention because it recurs in almost exactly the same form in Kantian philosophy, at the point where the synthesis formed by the mind [*Verstand*], which according to Kant is the act of cognition, or is cognition itself, is referred to as 'unity in diversity' [*Einheit in der Mannigfaltigkeit*].[3] Aristotle's conception of the relationship of concept to individual existent or, to put it in Aristotle's terms, of form to matter, really contains nothing other than such a unity in diversity. I should like to point out, incidentally, that exactly the same idea that I have just sketched also appears in the late Plato, and that it, not least, has given rise to the speculation I spoke of,[4] that Aristotle may possibly have had a retroactive influence on his teacher in his late period, in the Platonic dialogue *Parmenides*, which, in many respects, is the most enigmatic and peculiar structure in the whole corpus of Plato's work. In it the thesis is put forward that the One exists only as the unity of many, and that the Many exist only as a manifold of units. This idea of the reciprocity, the interrelatedness of the universal and the particular, clearly had a powerful hold on the human mind at that point in its history. And in Aristotle it gave rise to the formulation I have just mentioned, which is especially important because this very idea of reciprocity – that on the one hand unity cannot exist independently of multiplicity, but, on the other, that multiplicity is only constituted by virtue of the One – this basic idea is already present in the formula of Aristotle that I have discussed.

You can see, therefore, that the idea of unity in diversity, which in the history of modern philosophy has been transposed into the notion of the ordering subject through which this unity is produced, has its origin in *ontology*. That is, it stems from the fact that this unity is supposed to be the unity of being itself, which is prior to all the particular and individual things from which being is composed. This is so much the case that even the formula of unity in diversity is itself to be found in as many words in the Greek philosophers – so much is the whole of western thinking in thrall to this tradition. And it might not be entirely idle to wonder whether this whole way of thinking has been subjected, through the influence of this idea, to a kind of channelling, which has forced everything in a quite specific, very compelling but also restrictive direction; and whether what we in later times have come to see as the rigour of ancient philosophy, or of

philosophy in general, could be traced back to this narrowing of the Greek tradition to the relationship of the universal to the particular. Now, in Aristotle – and this is the fulcrum of his *Metaphysics*, the point you need to understand if you are to grasp this highly peculiar and self-contradictory structure – the universal or the form (they are the same thing in Aristotle) is, just as it was for his teacher Plato, the higher reality. In this doctrine, therefore, what I said in the last lecture with regard to the reality of the immediate is found to be stood on its head. Whereas, as it seems to me, the particular thing, or, as it is called in Aristotle, the τόδε τι, was first regarded as the only reality or true being, now, on the contrary, the form is the higher reality. I shall write this concept of τόδε τι on the blackboard. This concept, too, is fundamental to the whole of western thought – since all references to facticity, to 'that there', to that which cannot be dissolved in concepts and yet for which a conceptual name is sought, originate in this word τόδε τι. Τόδε τι – and this is very interesting with regard to the whole temper of Aristotle's thinking – is not really a concept at all, but a gesture; τόδε τι amounts to 'this', and points to something. And Aristotle realized that a concept for this, by its nature, non-conceptual thing could not actually be formed, that it could only be expressed by a gesture – whereas later this gesture became a term, which was finally precipitated in concepts such as a 'given', a 'datum', in scholasticism *haecceitas*, or whatever such terms might be.

I would now draw your attention to a major shift which took place in philosophical terminology at this point, and from which you can see the specific quality of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* from a different side. For what in Plato was called the Idea and as such was something absolute, existing in itself, is now suddenly called *form*. In place of the opposition between the true being of the world of the Idea and the non-being of the world of sensible diversity, we now have the difference between *form* and *matter*. I shall write these two terms on the blackboard as well, as we shall have to use them constantly. 'Form' means much the same as the modern term *Gestalt* in the narrower sense; in Latin it was translated as *forma*; the Greek word is μορφή, familiar to all of you from words such as morphology. The word for matter – that to which this form relates – is ὕλη, translated into Latin as *materia*. I said that this transformation of terminology, which – in place of the traditional Platonic terms ἰδέα and εἶδος, on the one hand, and τὰ ὄντα, on the other – now talks of μορφή and ὕλη, has fundamental implications for the subject matter itself. You can see this quite clearly from the fact that when we speak of 'form' this term always contains a reference to something of which

the entity in question is the 'form'. The concept of 'form', therefore, is never a self-sufficient, autosemantic concept such as that of essence. Moreover, at this point Aristotle's terminology is still at a watershed: the terms μορφή and εἶδος – Plato's term – still alternate; the term εἶδος, used in Plato's sense, still exists for Aristotle. And, conversely, ὕλη, matter – as the quintessence of everything which is τόδε τι, 'here', and is therefore matter, cannot be conceived as something which does not also have form. The very choice of these reciprocal, interrelated terms, which reflect the real themes of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, therefore shows this philosophy to be as I have characterized it: an essentially mediating theory.

This notion of form as the force immanent in ὕλη, matter, this concept of the immanent idea which at the same time is the power centre which moves matter, is the decisive concept in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. It is a concept which in our world has survived as another word for force: the concept of ἐνέργεια, energy. Now, standing opposed to this energy, as realized form, is the concept of δύναμις, which refers to pure possibility. However, in Aristotle this pure possibility is that which is not yet formed, or is only now being formed: possibility for him is really what we call matter; and the term which Aristotle's *Metaphysics* uses for it is δύναμις. Around the relationship between these two moments, as we would call them today (although that would be anachronistic and far too modern, so that it would perhaps be more exact to call them categories) – around this relationship the whole of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* revolves.[5]

This, I believe, is the point where I may be able to clarify most vividly the difference between the whole of ancient metaphysics, and what it has become. For, at first sight, when seen from the standpoint of the more recent western tradition, there is something uncommonly paradoxical in the ideas I have just expounded, and I am not sure whether you have all grasped this paradox fully. Moreover, when expounding bodies of thought remote from us in time, I regard it as a duty to make the differences at least as clear as the identities. And these bodies of thought – despite the tradition or, one might almost say, because of it – include the work of Aristotle. I believe that to perceive the essence of historical phenomena and, above all, of phenomena of intellectual history, it is necessary not only to empathize with them or, to use that dreadful expression, to bring them close to us; indeed, that generally has the opposite effect. The actuality of such concepts, and their true depth, can only be apprehended by first placing them at a distance – in order to make us aware both of the constitutive nature of history and of the wholly different conceptions which this procedure obliges us to form, especially with regard to

matters which we have always thought we already knew, which were as familiar to us as if they came from our own childhood, yet which, looked at more closely, turn out to be quite different. Anyone who, as a European, has had sudden, surprising contact with Indian phenomena will be able to understand this double effect of closeness *and* extreme, alien distance. To clarify what I mean with regard to Aristotle: for us it is generally the case, when we speak of *possibility*, that we think of form, pictured as a form which has not yet found a content, whereas, when we speak of *reality*, we mean *essentially* that which is filled by sensible material. Look, for example, at the definitions of possibility, reality and necessity in the 'Postulates of empirical thought in general' in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.[6] For a fundamentally ontological mode of thinking like that of Aristotle, which still gives precedence to the Form or the Idea, this conception of possibility, though self-evident to us, looks like the exact opposite. I think you need to be aware of this difference if you are to understand what stands at the beginning of metaphysics and has dominated it ever since. For it is precisely the notion that the idea or the noumenal, the intelligible sphere, is more real than the empirical, which really forms the core of the metaphysical tradition. And only if you are aware, from the outset, of this paradoxical quality inherent in all metaphysics, will metaphysics cease to be an innocuous subject and reveal the difficult, demanding side which you need to experience if you want to have a sense of what metaphysics really means.

In Aristotle, therefore – in keeping with the idea that the δεύτεραι οὐσίαι, the second essences, have a higher reality than the first – it is the case that ἐνέργεια, which is form in so far as it is realized in matter, represents the higher, more substantial reality, just because it *is* form. In this respect Aristotle is, again, a Platonic thinker. Matter, by contrast, which for us is precisely the moment which decides the degree of reality, as that which is given by intuition, is demoted in this philosophy to mere possibility. To state the position paradoxically, reality in Aristotle's philosophy corresponds to what we call possibility, and possibility to what we call reality. You can only gain access to his philosophy if you first perform this inversion. You will, moreover, have little difficulty in recognizing once again, in this position of Aristotle's, the Platonic motif that the world of the Ideas is more real than the world of the merely existent. The difference is that in Aristotle these two spheres no longer simply diverge, but an attempt is made – and I stress, an *attempt* – to bring them together. To the extent, therefore, that ἐνέργεια confers a higher order of reality than δύναμις, to the extent that for Aristotle matter becomes mere possibility, he is the opposite of what he appears at the first level of his

thought, which I presented to you in the last lecture. For in this respect he is a realist in the medieval sense, who teaches the precedence of universals over individual things, and not a nominalist. This must be emphasized strongly, for if one simply includes him among the nominalists on the grounds that, historically, two nominalist developments branched off from his thought (as I believe I have already indicated[7]), one entirely misunderstands the nature of his metaphysics. I recall that the late Alfred Weber, at the sociologists' conference in Heidelberg – it must have been in 1954 – read a paper[8] in which he referred to Aristotle without further ado as a nominalist, on the grounds I set out for you in the last lecture. And when, seeking to save the honour of the history of philosophy and reluctant to let pass anything which flew so directly in the face of facts, I sketched for him some of the ideas I have expounded to you today, the nonagenarian[9] scholar grew quite angry and never spoke to me again. But I cannot help it: to understand Aristotle means to recognize that both these moments are contained in his work; and that the conflict between them is resolved by giving precedence to the universal concepts or Forms. It might be said – as Herr Haag formulated it recently[10] – that the contradictions and difficulties in which Aristotle gets caught up here really contain in latent form the whole problematic history of ontology, as the history of the relation of the universal to the particular, or of possibility to reality. I would also say that in Aristotle the relation of the universal to the particular is equated to that of possibility to reality – this, too, is a crucial aspect of his metaphysics. And this equation is carried out by attributing a higher order of reality to embodied essence than to matter, which now is mere possibility, because it has not yet found its form.

Now, Ladies and Gentlemen, this leads on to a basic inconsistency to which I must draw your attention. I do this, as I have said, *not* because I regard it as either possible or timely to criticize Aristotle as one would a modern thinker; that seems to me a foolish and anachronistic procedure. I do so because I wish to make you aware of the immanent problems and the inherent dynamic of this first sketch of a metaphysics, which then led on to metaphysics in general. The first thing to be said is that Aristotle, who undoubtedly possessed the most extraordinary powers of thought, despite being without the experiences of the more than two thousand intervening years, must himself have been aware of these problems. The question raised by his work is, quite simply: how is it possible that a philosopher who attached such enormous weight to the concept of the first cause (we shall come back to this), could, on the one hand, maintain that the only reality was the immediate, the τόδε τι, but then, on the other,

could regard the mediated, the concept realized and formed in matter, as the *higher* reality? The answer given by Aristotle has also become a canonical theme of the whole of subsequent western metaphysics: it is based, quite simply, on the distinction between *genesis and validity*.[11] According to Aristotle it is simply the case that *for us* what is primarily given, and to that extent is absolutely certain, is τόδε τι, the immediate; but that *in itself* the higher is μορφή or εἶδος, the idea. A distinction is therefore drawn between the path followed by knowledge in its development towards its concept, and the truth content of that knowledge, as it is in and for itself. And these two moments are placed by Aristotle in a simple, unresolved opposition, without any attempt to reconcile them; instead, he is content – somewhat mechanically, I would say – to create departments. On one side, the procedural department: how do we arrive at knowledge? what exists first for us? – and on the other the ontological or speculative department: how is the order of essences constituted in itself? I would point out that this Aristotelian procedure, too, has had highly peculiar consequences, continuing right up to contemporary philosophy. Max Scheler, who taught at this university for the last part of his life,[12] took over this same Aristotelian doctrine, which was mediated to him through medieval scholasticism; his late metaphysics, especially, is based essentially on the separation he made – as if by an 'abyss of meaning' – between the moment of genesis, the way in which we become conscious of structures or essences or whatever they may be, and the validity of ideas in themselves.[13] And underlying Husserl's thinking in the *Prolegomena to Pure Logic*, the first volume of *Logical Investigations*, which was really the source of the entire reawakening of ontology, is the basic idea to be found in Aristotle which I have just set out for you: that genesis, how I arrive *psychologically* at logical propositions, has absolutely nothing to do with the validity, that is, the truth or untruth, of the purely logical or mathematical propositions in themselves.[14] Moreover, the tradition leading to this, being the scholastic tradition, goes back to Aristotle. Its main carriers in the nineteenth century were Bernard Bolzano and Franz Brentano; the latter was Husserl's teacher. There is at this point, therefore, a direct link to Aristotelianism.

Genetically, therefore, in terms of the advance of knowledge, what is immediate and sensibly certain is primary, according to Aristotle; in terms of validity – that is, objectively – the universal comes first. This state of affairs becomes even more peculiar and paradoxical in that Aristotle follows Plato in giving primacy to what comes first temporally, as that which we prize and rank highest – much as, in a feudal social order, the older a family is the finer it considers itself to

be. Aristotle took over this idea of the higher rank of what came first in the most emphatic way, so that it is hard to see how the δεύτερα οὐσία, the second essence, the result of a process of abstraction and therefore something which came later, should suddenly be ranked higher.[15] I should like to read out the passage from Book *A* in which he argues that we always value the first and oldest thing higher, because I believe it is pivotal to what I understand generally by the term *prima philosophia*, or πρώτη φιλοσοφία, which Aristotle expressly held metaphysics to be. This notion of a first philosophy clearly implies the same primacy of what comes temporally first, and you may detect the peculiarly paradoxical nature of Aristotelian thought, to which I want to draw your attention today, quite simply in the congealed form of the terminology. I mentioned that for him, or for the scholiasts who gave the book its title, metaphysics meant μετὰ τὰ φυσικά, that which follows after the doctrine of physical nature; it is δεύτερα οὐσία, that is, the mediated, the secondary, which, therefore, is already presupposed by being. Now, however, metaphysics is supposed to be πρώτη φιλοσοφία, the first philosophy, the doctrine on which all else depends. I should therefore like to read you this passage from Book *A*, relating to Thales. Book *A*, by the way, describes essentially the prehistory of metaphysical speculation up to Aristotle's own work, and as such is still one of the most important sources on the history of Greek philosophy. The passage comes from Section 983 b, and reads as follows: 'It has, indeed, been suggested that the very earliest thinkers, long before Thales, held the same view of primary substance.' He is probably thinking of Hesiod here. 'For they made Oceanus and Tethys the parents of generation and spoke of the gods as swearing by water, which they called Styx. For what is oldest is honoured most, but the witness under oath is honoured most of all.'[16] The witness is honoured because it is he who authenticates the oldest thing, so that in this sense everything depends on him. Here, therefore, is Aristotle's explicit formulation, which, in the *Metaphysics*, is to be found in all the passages – (or, more properly, all the strands of thought), in which everything that has not evolved or become what it is, and is therefore the oldest thing, which has always existed, is regarded as the condition of the possibility of any becoming – an idea taken over directly from Aristotle by Hegel; and in which the final cause, that is, the divinity, is seen as the 'unmoved mover' of all things. Aristotle's famous formulation of this doctrine of the unmoved mover is ἀκίνητον κινοῦν.[17] In this conception, therefore, as in the relation of genesis to validity, Aristotle is inconsistent with regard to primacy, attributing it sometimes to τόδε τι and sometimes to εἶδος. Inevitably, purely on the basis of this

immanent contradiction, this doctrine proved unsatisfactory[18] – and thus provided the motivation for the whole subsequent history of metaphysics. If the primary – and not by accident is the primary something material, in this case water, as it also was for Thales, on whom Aristotle bases his argument here – is to be ranked higher in the ontological sense, or regarded as the more original entity, as modern ontology might express it, one cannot conceive how the 'secondary', the derivative, the result of abstraction (and the δεύτεραι οὐσίαι, the universal concepts embodied in existing things, are secondary in that sense), can now be ranked higher.[19] Conversely, however, it is equally hard to conceive why the sensibly certain, in its fortuitousness and individual restrictedness, as expressed in τόδε τι, in the infantile language of 'that there', can be regarded at the highest thing, the foundation of all knowledge. And it can be said that this aporia, between the higher rank awarded on the one hand to the most abstract categorial determinants, or, in extreme terms, to pure logic, and, on the other, to the pure immediacy of that which is given here and now – this aporia has been a constant theme of metaphysics. However, if one takes seriously the idea of *mediation*, which is sketched[20] but not fully worked out in Aristotle, the idea that form and matter are really *moments* which can only be conceived in relation to each other, the question as to which of them comes absolutely first or is ranked absolutely higher becomes transparent as a false abstraction. And one will then trace the forms of the concrete mediation of these moments, instead of treating the product of abstraction which keeps them apart as the only rightful source of truth. That, really, is the connecting thread which, in my opinion, leads from Aristotle's metaphysics as a whole to the questions currently occupying the minds of philosophers in this field.

LECTURE SEVEN

15 June 1965

Ladies and Gentlemen, I shall continue where I left off before the Whitsun holidays, in the middle of my discussion of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. You may perhaps recall that I said last that the modern problem of the relation of genesis to validity was also posed by Aristotle. On the one hand he argued that τόδε τι, what is immediately given, was absolutely primary, while on the other he established a spiritual or mental hierarchy in which Ideas, or Forms, as he called them, were given that status.[1] I should like to draw your attention to a paradox which seems to me extremely characteristic of the whole history of metaphysics, and which is sketched as a kind of prototype in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. There are two predominant conceptions of ἀρχή, or πρῶτον, running through the whole history of philosophy. On one side is the idea that what is directly given, the immediate facts of consciousness, should be posited as primary; from the connections between them the subjectively orientated form of epistemology sought to construct the quintessence of that which is. On the other side, however, primary status is given to the pure concept, which always stands at the origin of rationalistic versions of epistemology. Epistemology has worn itself out trying to reconcile these two notions of the primary, which exclude each other, so that you might have reason to doubt the validity of the whole approach which posits some absolutely primary thing.[2] According to Adam Riese, an exponent of simple traditional logic, it is clear that both of them cannot be primary. Nevertheless, these two approaches, which historically gave rise to the antithesis between empiricism and rationalism, have

always had a good deal to say for themselves. The various empiricist tendencies have maintained that they go back to something given which is not mediated by anything else and of which one can be certain beyond doubt. The other tendencies, which started out from the pure concept as the absolutely primary, can claim that, compared to the purity of the mental entity, its sensible content is either something transient and changing, or even, as the Platonic tradition holds, is actually deceptive. The exclusivity of both moments is untenable, since both can be refuted by simply asking: which of them is absolutely primary? The only possible answer is that each of these principles – if I can call them that – always implies the other, or that, in Hegel's language, the two principles are mediated by each other.

I should add here that to call them principles is an improper use of language, since in the strict sense one can only speak of principles rationalistically, when dealing with purely mental entities, whereas what is immediately given, which ultimately means sensations, is something non-conceptual and therefore cannot be a principle. But you may be able to recognize here something of the 'misère de la philosophie',[3] in the fact that even this non-conceptual element, this non-principle, which nevertheless is constitutive of, and inherent in, all philosophy, cannot appear within that realm – which, heaven knows, can only operate with concepts – except in the form of a concept. It is therefore not merely a piece of terminological pedantry to say that philosophy, through its very form, contains a pre-judgement in favour of principles. That means, in general, that if we want to give primacy to the sensible moments of knowledge we cannot simply, so to speak, put forward 'green' as a given entity – or we *can* do so, but it won't take us far philosophically. We shall immediately have to abstract from what is given by the senses and thus, even when operating at this opposite pole, are already moving within the same conceptual language which is located at what I might perhaps call the rationalistic pole.[4] This consideration – that both these mutually exclusive approaches which postulate something certain and primary are untenable – leads on, as a consequence, to what I have called *mediation*. And, to repeat the point, it was Aristotle's immeasurable innovation in philosophy to have been the first to be aware of this problem of mediation. Both the difficulty of understanding his work, and the criticism to which it is open, stem precisely from the fact that one must both grasp the meaning of the term mediation as he created it, and understand why the concept of mediation failed in his work. To say that it failed may sound schoolmasterly, but unfortunately, if one takes an idea seriously, one has little alternative.

I also wanted to point out that a very up-to-date problem is concealed behind this two-pronged approach of Aristotle's, which posits the sensibly certain as primary *for us*, and the pure forms as primary *in themselves* – that is, *metaphysically* primary as the pure 'movers' of everything that is. It is the question whether the genesis of concepts can indeed be separated from their truth content, as happens whenever genesis and validity, or the primary for us and the primary in itself, are kept apart, as is the case in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. This gives central access to what is called the problem of ideology, since the question raised by the latter is indeed whether the objective truth of propositions and concepts is fundamentally independent of their *origin*. I cannot set out here the entire problematic of the theory of ideology;[5] I can only sketch the connection between the problem of ideology and that of epistemology, which concerns us at present. In the case of ideology, too, it is extremely difficult to come to a simple Yes or No decision; just as, in general, it seems to me that the work of philosophy, which is essentially one of differentiation, cures us of the habit of demanding simple alternatives of Yes or No where the subject we are reflecting on may perhaps allow neither alternative. In the course of philosophical work one becomes aware that to insist on knowing 'is it such or is it such?' has something infantile about it; and if there is any such thing as an educative value of philosophy, it may lie in the fact that it weans us from that kind of naivety. So, to return to our subject, to reduce knowledge to its genesis is a bit like arguing that the validity of mathematical propositions should depend on the conditions under which mathematics came into being socially, or even on the psychological conditions under which mathematical or logical judgements are made. That, clearly, is nonsense. To that extent the separation of genesis and validity undoubtedly has some justification, and it is the very great merit of Edmund Husserl to have been the first to draw attention emphatically to this point as early as the 1890s.[6] On the other hand, if one simply separates knowledge from its genesis – if, in other words, one ignores the sedimented history contained in any piece of knowledge – a part of the truth is also lost. Truth is then pinned down to a claim of timelessness, which itself depends on something taking place within time, the process of abstraction which disregards temporal moments. There is in this context, therefore, a very central problem of how these possibilities are related to each other. I shall not dwell on the question whether this is a metaphysical or an epistemological problem; such distinctions, in any case, are difficult to maintain in concrete cases. I would only repeat that while the truth content of knowledge or of a proposition certainly cannot be reduced simply to the way in which it has come

about, nor can its genesis be disregarded in the truly dictatorial manner advocated by Max Scheler, for example – with, in some cases, the absurd consequence that a number of concepts which undoubtedly have their origin in social conflicts (a fact that even he does not dispute) are nevertheless supposed to have an intrinsic validity which has absolutely nothing to do with these conflicts.[7] This whole tangle of problems, too – like, one might say, the whole problematic of philosophy – has its origin in the work of Aristotle.

I would add – in order to avoid stopping short at this point with a question – that the genetic moments are not, as it seems to vulgar prejudice, simply external to knowledge, but are inherent in the character of validity itself. This takes us back to the idea of mediation. One might formulate the matter by saying that truth has a temporal core,[8] or, as Husserl, who turned his attention to this problem in his late phase, expressed it: that even in its objectivity truth also has an 'implied genetic meaning' (*genetisches Sinnesimplikat*).[9] Moreover, this problem also occurs in Kant, where, on the one hand, synthetic judgements are supposed to be timelessly valid a priori, yet, on the other, are constituted by the spontaneous activity of consciousness, and thus, finally, by the work of the mind; so that something supposedly timeless has a temporal moment as the condition of its possibility. That seems to me to be the only possible answer to this question. I shall just take this opportunity to point out that you can really see here, from a central position in philosophy, how deeply sociology and philosophy are interrelated, and how little the transition from one to the other is a mere *μετάβασις εἰς ἄλλο γένος*. This is simply because, if it is realized that the moment of the origin or the temporal genesis of knowledge, with all the temporality it involves, is inherent in the character of truth, is not external to it in the manner of truths which change with time, but founds the character of truth itself, then it is no longer possible to perform the absolute separation between the question of the social origin or the social history of an idea and its truth content in the manner required by the usual scientific division of labour. Nor does this amount to a sociologization of philosophy; rather, sociological problems are immanent in philosophical ones, and immanently philosophical reflection leads necessarily to these problems. This approach, incidentally, is radically different from that of the sociology of knowledge, which confuses the origin of knowledge with its truth content in a merely external sense – but this, too, I can touch on only briefly here.

Now why – this is the real question with which Aristotle's *Metaphysics* confronts us – does Aristotle, a mediating thinker, stop short at this peculiar dualism between the primacy of *τόδε τι*, the immediately

given, and of the idea? And why does he accept so relatively lightly the resulting contradictions and difficulties, some of which I have sketched for you? The central contradiction – to return to the specific problematic of Aristotle's work – is that, on the one hand, the idea is supposed to be only immanent, only mediated, only something inhering in an existent and not transcendent with regard to it; yet, on the other, it is made into something which has being in itself. Expressed in these bald terms, this is a contradiction which is very difficult to resolve. We arrive here at the point where the intellectual achievement of Aristotle has to be defined, as well as the historical position occupied by a thinker who can be described as the ancestor of bourgeois thinking and at the same time as a pupil of Plato. He raised the question of the mediation between the universal and the particular as no philosopher had done before him – and he was fully aware of this achievement. And if you read Aristotle, most of what he has to say about earlier thinkers sounds – well – a little benevolent and patronizing, as one writes about half-savages. He has what I might almost call a splendid academic arrogance, which colours the whole tone of what he writes about those earlier thinkers who lacked the precise knowledge available to him. This is highly characteristic of the temper of his thought. Thus, he raised the question, but did not solve it. The true core of the problematic of Aristotle's work is that he, unlike Plato, posed the problem of mediation with extreme clarity, but, nevertheless, did not achieve mediation. And to understand how these two things are connected is the true task presented by his work – and thus is *the* task facing the traditional approach of western philosophy.

For he conceives the relation between the categories of form and matter, which is central to his metaphysics, as an external relation, although they are interdependent in his work. That is to say that he understands the existent as composed additively of form and matter. And for this reason the two categories, although neither can exist without the other, appear as absolutely separate – instead of being perceived as abstractions which only designate moments, neither of which can be thought independently of its opposite, and both of which need the other through their very concepts. To put this paradoxically, one might say that in Aristotle mediation is not itself mediated; that while he recognized that neither moment could exist without the other, he saw this interrelatedness almost as a quantitative agglomeration; he saw it additively, as a conjunction of these two moments, which could not be kept apart in chemical purity, as it were, yet were not dependent on each other in terms of their meaning and constitution. That is the point he reached, and his critique of Plato, which I have expounded for you,[10] has proved as much. It might be said that

in the *Metaphysics* – and not only there but in the whole of his philosophy, especially the ethics and the theory of the state – Aristotle was a mediating thinker. He was a mediating thinker in the sense that his concern was always to find an intermediate position between two extremes, so that existence is to be understood here as a middle term between form and matter. But this mediation is really only something existing *between* the extremes, and not that which is implicit in the meaning of the extremes and is accomplished *through* the extremes themselves. If you will permit me this anachronistic horror, I would say that he is the mediating thinker *par excellence*, yet one lacking the idea of the dialectic. In his work the extremes are not themselves mediated, but only something intermediate between them, as is in keeping with the overall principle of this philosophy, the ideal of which is the happy medium, or the μεσότης. This principle of the happy medium, of moderation between the extremes, is thus the central problem. As it is taught in the *Ethics*,[11] and the *Politics*, this moderation is transposed, as it were, into the absolute, in that being is presented as something like the happy medium between form and matter – though with a heavy emphasis on form. I would only add that in this non-dialectical conception of mediation Aristotle was a true Platonist, since precisely this manner of defining concepts as the happy medium between their extremes is a schema which constantly underlies the argumentation in the Platonic dialogues. When, for example, Plato defines courage, in an elaborate procedure, as the happy medium between reckless daring on one side and cowardice on the other,[12] that is precisely in keeping with this climate of thought.

You may think that I am demanding an awful lot of subtlety from you at this point. Having identified something mediated, which cannot be dissolved with chemical purity into either side, so to speak, but links them both, I then distinguish further whether this 'both' is only a chemical mixture, to use the terms of natural science, or a genuine compound. But I have to tell you that – as you will find confirmed again and again if you study philosophy in any depth – the so-called large philosophical questions are regularly decided by such subtleties, such questions of detail. For example, the overall question whether some such thing as a 'first philosophy', or the dissolution of philosophy into its principles, is possible, or whether it cannot be done, since each first principle postulates the other within itself, by virtue of its own meaning – this question really depends on how one stands with regard to such subtlety. If I said earlier that I was behaving in a somewhat schoolmasterly manner in criticizing Aristotle on this point, I should like to correct that now – for it is here that the historical coefficient really enters the argumentation. I have just mentioned

the moment of dialectical mediation, by which a strongly philosophical concept is dependent, through its own meaning, on the nonconceptual, from which it has been abstracted.[13] This moment only became thinkable – and this is not just a facile a priori interpretation made *post festum*, but one that withstands proper scrutiny – once thought had passed through substantial subjective reflection; that is, once it had been realized that categories, such as those of form and matter used here, are themselves abstractions produced by the mind. They cannot, therefore, be posited in their immediacy as absolute, but can only be operated, as Hegel would put it, as something already posited. This discovery of subjectivity as the constitutive element of knowledge was entirely foreign to antiquity. Even where subjective modes of speech appear in antiquity – which is not seldom – we should not confuse them with modern ones, since they are applied there to an individual, personal relativism; that is, the validity of knowledge is related to the particular constitutions of individual people. But the question that has given such force to the concept of subjectivity in the history of modern philosophy – the question whether subjectivity actually conditions or constitutes truth and objectivity – is alien to the whole of ancient philosophy. And if it is true that correspondences with past intellectual formations can only be recognized if one places them at a distance, rather than rejoicing that they are just the same as ours (if one discerns the commonalties while being attentive to incompatibilities), that is precisely the reason why Aristotle's thought, which *in intentione recta*, fundamentally, is orientated towards the concept of substance, and as yet has no conception of self-reflection, was unable, for that very reason, to grasp the concept of the dialectic.

I would only add that, in the above remarks, the last word has not been said on the problem of the dialectic. It would be a misunderstanding to conclude from what I have said that the conception of a dialectical philosophy is essentially and always subjective. There are further reflections on reflection, by which this subjective reduction is itself surpassed and negated. I say this only so that you do not believe that I wanted here to advocate simply a subjective-idealist kind of thinking instead of the ancient ontological one; that is far from my intention. I only wanted to show that a dialectical understanding of the basic concepts of metaphysics, with which Aristotle is concerned, is simply not possible unless reflection on subjectivity has advanced much further than it had in his thought. I would also note that, through Aristotle's peculiarly additive doctrine, the concept of matter is extremely dematerialized, is turned into something very indefinite and general. And since, as I have just said, subjective reflection had

not yet taken place in Aristotle, it is all the more surprising how far his thought agrees in very fundamental moments with later idealist thinking, which does perform this subjective reflection. If it is the case that all determinants, all that which makes something what it is, really stem from its form; and if, by contrast, matter is really something quite indefinite, quite abstract, then we have already, in the midst of this pre-subjective, ontological thinking, a precise sketch of the later idealist doctrine according to which the matter of cognition is absolutely indeterminate, receiving all its determinants and thus all its content through form, that is, through subjectivity.[14]

However, I should now define precisely how Aristotle differs from the whole of modern thought. In Aristotle's work – and he is again a Platonist in this – the concept of form is not yet equated with thought, with the function of the subject. Rather, form is, as it were, picked out by a mechanism of abstraction from the diversity of that which is, and above all from the diversity of what is formulated in language, and is then made into something existing in itself, instead of being identified as an operation of the subject. One might say, therefore – if I may speak anachronistically once more – that Aristotle's metaphysics is an idealism *malgré lui-même*. It has the same consequences – the de-qualification of its own matter and thus the denigration of matter itself – which idealism was to have so emphatically later, but without having encompassed the medium of idealism (that is, constitutive subjectivity) as such. One is obliged to ask, therefore, what remains of matter in Aristotle, if all its determinants have been stripped away and attributed to form. What is left behind is an emptiness which has to be filled; and this idea that pure matter is something abstract and empty that has to be filled leads to the central doctrine of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*: that matter is not a solid entity one can hold on to but is just pure possibility; and that, by contrast, the real is actually form. In a certain sense this idea, too, recurs in idealism, in that reality is conceived as what is constituted by the subject, and matter as the indeterminate. But the remarkable thing, with which we really do find it hard to empathize, is that this distinction is made from a naively realistic standpoint. What we believe we can hold in our hands as the most important thing of all is presented here as something quite indeterminate and empty, as the mere possibility of what might emerge from it, while the true reality is form; we, on the contrary, are accustomed to understand form as that through which something existent, a τόδε τι, or whatever you like to call it, must in some way be formed. This concept of possibility only exists in Aristotle, of course, because, although he sees these two main principles, form and of matter, as belonging together in some way, he nevertheless

believes that they can be grasped as essences independent of each other, which, though interrelated, are not so interrelated that one is constituted by the other through its own nature.

This problem, still unresolved in Aristotle, that matter is really an emptiness which only comes to exist through its own reflection, through its form, is not developed further until Hegel's *Logic*, which likewise has an objective orientation. And I should like to close by pointing out, for those of you who are interested in Hegel, that the usual derivation of Hegel from German idealism reflects only one side of his work. On the other side, because of the objective orientation of Hegel's *Logic*, constant reference must be made to Aristotelian logic, from which he took this idea, as has been demonstrated in detail in the work of the Oxford philosopher Geoffrey Mure,[15] to which I would draw your attention here. We shall continue from this point next week.

LECTURE EIGHT

22 June 1965

Perhaps I might begin today by recalling the distinction I tried to make at the beginning of these lectures, in order to show you what is specific to metaphysics. For, if I could make a methodological point straight away, it is not enough, when defining the meaning of a concept of such historical depth as that of metaphysics, to outline the main areas of subject matter within it, or its essential content and the way in which it is treated. Even the understanding of concepts includes a moment of negation, in that, to understand a philosophy, for example, one needs to know what its specific rhetoric was really directed against. If one seeks to understand a philosophy purely from within itself, just from what is written down, one usually does not get very far. One needs to develop a faculty for discerning the emphases and accents peculiar to that philosophy in order to uncover their relationships within the philosophical context, and thus to understand the philosophy itself – that is at least as important as knowing unequivocally: such and such is metaphysics. Bearing this in mind, I would remind you that rather than talking about its verbal meaning I tried to describe metaphysics in a precise sense as the unity of a critical and a rescuing intention.[1] That is to say that metaphysics is always present where enlightened rationalism both criticizes traditional notions and ideas, ideas existing in themselves, as mythological, and at the same time – and not just out of an apologetic need, but out of a concern for truth – wants to save or restore these concepts, which reason has demolished, precisely through the application of reason, or even to produce them anew from within its own rational resources.

This can be said, for example, of the most famous theory of Aristotle, which concerns us now, the one concerning matter, ὕλη, and form, εἶδος or μορφή. After criticizing the Platonic doctrine of Ideas, it sought, while remaining aware of this critique and as a consequence of it, to salvage an essential moment of that doctrine, the precedence of the idea, the priority of form. And I repeat that this double-sidedness is prototypical of all metaphysics, even the Kantian, where the famous statement in the *Methodenlehre*, that he had set limits to reason in order to make room for faith,[2] points to precisely this ambivalence.

The intention I am speaking of was given clear expression by Aristotle in the proposition that true knowledge always has as its object the necessary and immutable, as in Plato.[3] You should bear in mind here, however, as in the case of all the concepts of ancient philosophy, that the concept of *causality*, or of cause, as it appears – in a complex form – in Aristotle, should not be understood as a category founded on subjectivity, but as something inherent in the objective world and indicated by the form of linguistic expression. In contrast to the necessary and immutable, the sensible is treated in Aristotle as fortuitous or inferior – and the case is very similar in Plato. Admittedly, you do not find in Aristotle the Platonic notion of the non-existence of sensible matter; this is clearly connected to his doctrine concerning the relation of form to matter. Nor do you find the doctrine that μὴ ὄν, the sensible, the spatial-temporal, is the absolutely non-existent. But if I could remind you here of the methodological principle that, in philosophy, the problems are to be found in the smallest nuances, it should be noted that, despite this different valuation of the sensible – a valuation generally attributed to Aristotle's tendency towards empiricism in contrast to classical rationalism – this changed position with regard to the sensible is not so far removed from the Platonic doctrine of the non-existent as might first be thought, and as some passages in Aristotle suggest. This is because matter, ὕλη, as the pure possibility of that which is, is divested of all specific determinants, is seen as the absolutely indeterminate and really as a mere craving for determination; and it is only this striving which qualifies it as possibility, with which matter is equated in Aristotle. So that if one were to take the Hegelian step of saying that the absolutely indeterminate is the same as nothingness, one could find the famous Platonic proposition in Aristotle as well; except that – and this, in my view, demonstrates the splendour and originality of Aristotle's thought – he refused to take this step. And it is one of the most profound and truly dialectical contradictions in Aristotle's philosophy that while δύναμις, the matter of cognition, is said to be indeterminate, it is not *only* indeterminate – that he does *not* adhere to the thesis of the

absolute indeterminateness of that which has not yet attained form. I shall take this opportunity to point out something which may help you to gain a somewhat deeper understanding of philosophy than what you read in the textbooks: it is that, in general, one does not understand philosophy by eliminating contradictions, or by chalking up contradictions against authors – there is no significant philosophical author who could not be convicted of this or that contradiction. One understands a philosophy by seeking its truth content precisely at the point where it becomes entangled in so-called contradictions. This is true in the most emphatic way of Aristotle. As far as the sensible in his work is concerned, it is treated as inferior but not as non-existent. In this he has placed himself in what is called the Platonic tradition; and both philosophers contribute to the low valuation of everything sensible which later remained characteristic of idealism in the widest sense. In his formulation, sensible matter could equally well be as not be; *ἐνδεχόμενον καὶ εἶναι καὶ μὴ εἶναι*, he says.[4] What he really has against the merely existent, therefore, is not so much its indeterminateness as what in later philosophy was referred to as its fortuitousness, its contingency. And you will hear later[5] that the notion of the fortuitousness of matter – in contrast to the regularity of form – indeed played a major role in Aristotle under the name of *τὸ αὐτόματον* (from which our 'automatic' is derived), and through the use of the old mythological term *τύχη*, meaning that *history*, too, was assigned this major role.

Matter – this proposition states – might be or equally well might not be. I should like to point out in passing that this thesis, which actually is one of the invariants occurring throughout metaphysical thinking, is by no means as self-evident as it purports to be. If one were to ask, at the crude, schoolroom level, where one of the main differences between the metaphysical and the anti-metaphysical traditions lies, the answer would probably be that metaphysics places everything in the idea or in reason or, subjectively speaking, in the mind, and therefore values sensible matter, which is genetically connected to *φύσις*, the material, less highly. I would ask you to reflect for a moment whether this conception is really as compelling as we are generally told; and I would here use the method of immanent criticism, which means taking the a priori ideal literally, and asking whether there are not also so-called a priori characteristics of cognition which are by no means non-sensible in nature. The phenomenological school was the first to point this out, in Husserl, in the doctrine of what he called the contingent a priori,[6] and far more strongly in Max Scheler.[7] According to this doctrine there are also determinants which are valid a priori, that is, absolutely and necessarily, but only on condition

that some sensible matter is given. Therefore, although they claim absolute, a priori validity, they depend on something like the existence of the sensible. Examples of this are taken from certain areas of physics and optics.[8] If it is said, for example, that in the optical similarity series violet lies between red and blue, then as long as colour sensations of the types blue and red exist it will be impossible, no matter how hard one tries, not to imagine that the colour we call violet is anything other than intermediate between the two other colours. We are certainly dealing here, therefore, with an a priori proposition; but it is one which could hardly be called necessary in the strict sense insisted upon by Aristotle – because the fact that on the basis of known nerve processes we see something like red and blue cannot itself be inferred from pure thought, but is a kind of given. I offer this as the simplest possible critique of the assertion made by the metaphysical tradition that the a priori is always purely mental, in order to show you that even if the sphere of the a priori is given the weight it has in the idealist and ontological tendencies, it certainly does not follow that sensible material and sensible relationships should be excluded in the way that that tradition has asserted as self-evident since Plato.[9]

But I should like to go beyond this relatively simple insight by pointing out that the absolute separation of the realm of the intelligible or rational from that of the sensible itself contains a certain short-sightedness in its analysis of what is called the mental sphere. By this I refer to the sphere which is generally described as the most abstract of all, that of so-called pure logic. All purely logical propositions contain the concept of a something, a substrate, however constituted, for which they are valid. Without the supposition of such a something, about which, for example nothing contradictory may be said – to cite the true and unique central proposition of traditional logic – without this substrate, however abstract it may be, no such thing as formal logic is possible.[10] But it does not require great acuity to discover – and I would encourage you to do this for yourselves, as I do not want to take the time to do so here – that within this something, no matter how pale, sublimated, abstract, spiritualized it may be, there is ultimately a reference to some sensible matter. It is doubtless impossible to fulfil this something in any way without recourse to the sensible, if it is to be given any meaning at all – otherwise it would remain permanently within the tautological sphere of mind. And the concept of something no longer has any conceivable meaning in the theory of logical forms if it is constantly expressed only through forms; it can no longer be grasped at all – although logic remains dependent on this something. If the consideration I have

just indicated (but not worked out) is correct, it has extraordinarily wide implications for the problem with which we are concerned at present. For it means that even in the most abstract sphere, in which, if anywhere at all, the pure concept of the a priori operates, it is not possible to eliminate the sensible in the manner required by the dichotomy which is taken for granted by all metaphysics. It means that in order to attain to the most extreme a priori propositions conceivable, the most formal propositions of logic, we always come up against sensible matter in the prolongation of what is meant by the something. Without any sensible matter, therefore, it is impossible to conceive the forms themselves – which would be no more than the working out of the idea that, contrary to Aristotle and that tradition, we can only conceive the so-called principle of form, or any kind of categorial form, as mediated through some content, and not as something absolutely different from it. Form is always the form of *something*, just as, if you were asked quite simply and naively what a form is – and it is always useful to go back to the simplest cases of linguistic usage to clarify such matters – you would probably say that form is something by which material is formed; this olive-green area (the blackboard), let us say, is articulated by the fact that it appears to you as rectangular. It would not occur to you to speak of form independently of its being necessarily the form of *something*. But in face of this idea embedded in language and in immediate consciousness metaphysics has remained coy; it has, as it were, kept mum about this moment of the 'form of what?' which is implicit not only in form but in the meaning of the concept of form itself. In Kant the distinction between the non-sensible, which is conceived purely in terms of concepts, and the sensible, which can just as well be as not be, is taken over directly in his distinction between the real and the possible.[11]

Only that which is conceived purely in terms of concepts, the thesis runs, is as immutable as the idea. What Aristotle overlooks here, and about which we shall have more to say later, is, first of all, quite simply the abstractive quality of concepts. That is to say that, in order to come into being at all, concepts must refer to something sensible from which they are abstracted. In being abstracted the concept retains a multiplicity of features common to sense data while excluding those features which are not common to the individual objects subsumed under the concept – in this case mental objects. This moment of abstraction, that the concept is itself mediated by the sensible, is not understood by Aristotle – and here, too, he stands on Platonic ground. Reflection on the act of the subject by which such a thing as an idea or concept comes into being does not take place. To

be sure, both thinkers analyse how thought elevates itself to concepts, but here the concept is presupposed as the in-itself, and despite all the epistemological reflections to be found in both thinkers, they overlook the fact that the path they describe is not external to the concept but is a necessary moment of that concept; it is inherent in that concept's meaning and cannot, therefore, be disregarded in considering the concept. In other words, if Aristotle teaches the immanence of the concept in the object, by which he appears to dissolve the abstractness of the concept in relation to what it subsumes, for him this immanence of the concept in the object is *ontological*; that is, the concept is *in itself* in the object, without reference to the abstracting subject. True, it is connected to the non-conceptual element within the object in a manner which Aristotle himself never clearly elaborated; and I would even say that it is inseparable from that element. But the real nature of the relationship between the concept and what it refers to in the concrete object is never worked out. The reason is that the concept is conceived as something existing in itself, which, in a sense, migrates into the real object, where it is amalgamated with the sensible material. To characterize once more the difference between the Aristotelian immanence of the concept and a dialectical view, one might perhaps use a scientific image and say that in Aristotle the relationship of concept to concrete things is that of an amalgam and not of a chemical compound, in which the two apparently antithetical moments or elements are so fused that one cannot exist without the other.

The interest which motivated Aristotle in arriving at this interpretation was really an interest in *change*. And one might discern a very fundamental step in the development from Plato to Aristotle in the fact that while Aristotle, too, located truth in the immutable, he was nevertheless interested in change, attempting to grasp in it a relation to the unchanging – whereas in Plato any interest in change lay far in the background. In Aristotle, therefore, as is almost always the case with advancing enlightenment and differentiation, thought became incomparably more dynamic than in Plato. And it can now be said – if I might for a moment describe the trajectory of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* from this aspect – that Aristotle's work is an attempt to bring together the motif of form with that of change, which he no longer denies but analyses. To be sure, form is still regarded as that which exists in itself and ranks higher; in this Aristotle takes the entirely traditional view that form, ἐνέργεια, is superior because it is lasting, unchanging and purer. It could also be said that Aristotle attempts to discover how the idea of the eternally immutable, as the higher, is to be synthesized with that of the mutable, as that which presents itself

to us empirically. And here Aristotle arrives at an extraordinarily important and profound insight, that all change presupposes something unchangeable, and all becoming something that has not become. It might be doubted – and this doubt is, if you like, the quintessence of Kant's *critique* of metaphysics – whether the conclusion drawn from becoming to something which has not become, and from change to the unchanging, is legitimate. But first, before dealing with that question, it should be noted that this conclusion contains the implicitly dialectical view that the notion of something dynamic, of change, of becoming, is impossible without reference to something fixed. This is, I would say in passing, one of Aristotle's most magnificent discoveries, to which we are hardly able to give its due weight because it has become so self-evident to us that we no longer know what an enormous exertion of genius its attainment must have cost. The idea that there can be no mediation without the immediate – though also, of course, no immediacy without mediation – and that there is no movement which is not the movement of something which, relative to it, has a moment of fixity, later became the central proposition of dialectical philosophy, or one of its key tenets. And this idea, that we cannot imagine change except in relation to something fixed, was conceived, as far as I am aware, by Aristotle – unless one interprets certain tendencies in Plato's late dialogues in this sense, on which point, given the highly controversial character of the *Parmenides* dialogue in particular, I would not presume to pass judgement in face of the conclusions of conventional philologists.

I did say, however, that in Aristotle there is a kind of short-circuit or false conclusion at this point. It is the supposition that, because every change needs something fixed, or all becoming something which has become, this fixed thing must be absolutely unchangeable. This false assumption, which is one of the main concerns in Kant's critique in the doctrine of antinomies,[12] is always taken at face value, as one of the antitheses of the transcendental dialectic. I believe you can only understand how Aristotle arrived at this curious conclusion if you bear in mind that the concept of the *infinite* was foreign to antiquity, and that really means to ancient mathematics. I am aware that this statement, like all such statements, can be met with counter-examples. I also know that in ancient mathematics there were early forms of infinitesimal calculus. And in one of the next lectures we shall have occasion to note[13] that Aristotle sometimes uses the concept of the non-limited, which goes back to the ἄπειρον of Anaximander.[14] Despite this, I believe it is legitimate to maintain that the permeation of the whole of consciousness by the notion of infinity, and the distinction between the finite and the infinite, as presupposed by the concept

of transcendence in monotheistic religions and as buttressed by the hegemony of infinitesimal mathematics in the modern natural sciences – that all this was alien to antiquity. If you will concede this for a moment – and I think one may concede it without doing too much violence to the texts – you will readily understand that precisely such determinants as that of an absolute cause, and all the categories which for us have the character of the transcendent, that is, which can only be posited in infinity, in accordance with our whole education and our habits of thought – become in his thought determinants of the finite, simply because the world (if I may put it like this) is finite; and because infinity, or the idea that the world is absolutely unlimited, is entirely foreign to his thinking.

And I would say that the fact that ontology, by its nature, posits mental categories as absolutely valid is connected with this constitutive character of finitude, since these categories are themselves conceived within a finite realm, within a closed world – whereas there is no space for them in the open world, blown apart by the concept of infinity, in which we have lived, to an increasing degree, for almost four hundred years. To that extent it might be said that ontology, as the attempt to encompass something infinite with finite determinants, itself has something archaic about it; that it is something which, in some sense, has been left behind by the development of mind towards the present concept of the infinite. However, if one were to review and analyse the history of philosophy from this perspective one would come across countless archaisms of this kind – a fact which, paradoxically enough, has been repeatedly emphasized by the opposite position, the school of Heidegger, although there it is seen as something positive. What must be noted, therefore, is, firstly, that one can only speak of change with reference to something fixed; and, secondly, that the positive tendency of metaphysics stems from the fact that infinity was alien to antiquity. For this reason, relationships or categories which we can no longer imagine except in terms of the infinite, and therefore as transcendent, were turned in antiquity into relationships of finitude. I would only add that the switch to the concept of infinity in later philosophy is, of course, connected to the increased prominence given to the knowing subjectivity, the spirit (*Geist*), since the spirit was defined from the first as something infinite in itself – in contrast to the finitude of the diversity to which it is related. Now this doctrine of immutability, with the connected notion that all mutability finally goes back to something immutable, has survived throughout the history of metaphysics, to the point that it became the subject of Kant's third antinomy.[15] And it has also had incalculable consequences for theology, since Aristotelian theology really has its centre in this

doctrine, in the form of the doctrine of the 'unmoved mover' of all things.[16] The unmoved mover is, fundamentally, nothing other than pure form existing in itself, which, as it were, draws everything up towards it. Although itself immobile, it is like a magnet of pure actuality, or pure energy, pulling up everything which is merely potential towards it and, in this way, realizing itself to an ever-increasing degree. That, really, is the core of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, if the core is defined as the point at which his metaphysics passes over into theology. The central point of any metaphysics is probably to be found where the transition between metaphysics and theology takes place.[17] And it takes place precisely in this relationship of the immobile to motion, to which it is mediated by the fact that it draws everything which merely exists to itself. And, in a sense, motion is already latent in the merely existent, since the latter, as potentiality, has within itself the ability to move towards the most perfect and highest order of being. The idea of the *analogia entis*, the analogy between the creature and the creator,[18] is thus already sketched out, if you like, in this theory of Aristotle.

Aristotle's *Metaphysics* therefore raises a further question – the question of what the unchanging, or that which has not become (*das Ungewordene*), actually is. And this gives rise to two categories which have had a decisive influence on the subsequent history of western metaphysics, the concepts of *substance* and *accidence*. These two concepts will be examined in the next lecture.

LECTURE NINE

24 June 1965

We now have to consider the question of what the unchanging, or that which has not become (*das Ungewordene*), which might be called the ontological residue in Aristotle's ontology, actually is. In seeking an answer we come across two determinants which cannot be resolved into each other, and which are thus the source of the dualism which has exerted a crucial influence on the whole history of western philosophy. On the one hand we have the substrate, which is subject to change, and on the other the properties; change consists in the communication of properties to the substrate. But the properties – to make you aware of this straight away – are not regarded as something transient and secondary, but as constant, unchanging, something which has not become. And indeed, it is on these properties that Aristotelian philosophy placed the greatest emphasis throughout its development, and to which it attached the gravest importance. That, then, is the origin of the dualism which has been predominant throughout the western tradition, which was first expressed through the concepts of the substantial and the accidental, then became central to medieval philosophy, including its terminology, and from there passed over into the rationalist philosophy of Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz. We now know that these philosophers represent two things: both the nominalist protest against scholasticism, and a direct continuation of the Aristotelian-scholastic problematic. Such is the complexity of the history of philosophy, which escapes any simple formula. What I just now called the substrate, and which I ask you to distinguish from substance – please forgive the pedantry, but not for nothing are we

nearing the realm of scholasticism, where it is impossible to manage without a certain measure of subtlety in the definition of terms – the substrate, then, is what Aristotle calls 'matter' or 'stuff': in Greek ὕλη, translated into Latin as *materia*. The term was taken up again by the phenomenological school to designate the material element, irreducible to meaning or intention, in the facts of consciousness, and is probably familiar to you from there. But in Aristotle it has not this subjective, epistemological meaning but a thoroughly objective, ontological one. Here you must distinguish terminologically – to reiterate the point in order to eliminate any confusion – between ὕλη and οὐσία. Οὐσία means true being and refers, on the one hand, to the determinate, individual thing and, on the other, to μορφή, form, or εἶδος, essence in the Platonic sense – whereas ὕλη, as something universal and indeterminate, represents neither this specific thing here, τόδε τι, nor, on the other hand, the general, idea-like quality of the form or the μορφή. Now the properties which this ὕλη takes on are called either εἶδος, like the Platonic Ideas, or (I believe I told you this in one of the lectures before the Whitsun vacation) μορφή, meaning much the same as 'form' (*Gestalt*). I don't attach importance to this terminology for its own sake, but because, without it, I cannot explain a crucial twist in Aristotle's thought – which, I would say, is the most specifically Aristotelian feature of his entire philosophy. For him, the substantial is precisely not what I have just called the substrate, it is not matter; on the contrary, matter and substance are distinguished in his work – if I might express it in modern terms. For Aristotle the substantial is pure form, exactly as the Idea is substantial in Plato, while the whole hylic level, matter in the sense of that which is given only in sensible terms, is the non-existent, μὴ ὄν. And this peculiar twist, by which substance is equated with form rather than matter in Aristotle, comes about because the substrate, ὕλη, or matter, is stripped of all determinateness, so that it becomes something entirely empty, and comes extraordinarily close to the non-existent in Plato. This results from a process of reduction through abstraction, although this abstraction is not subjected to any specific critical reflection in Aristotle's objectively orientated philosophy. This in turn gives rise to a paradox, an idea running counter to all popular notions, which has dominated the whole of metaphysical consciousness to the point where it has become a kind of second nature to thought. It is the idea that form, which might be thought to be ephemeral and unreal, something merely conceptual and pale, in contrast to the real and tangible solidity of matter, is made into the true reality, in contrast to which – at least to begin with – the other, hylic stratum, matter as the substrate of cognition, is reduced to something in the strict sense unreal, mere potentiality.

You can already find here – to draw your attention to what I regard as a crucial connection in the history of philosophy – the principle of *idealism*, by which the mental appears as the truly real, while that which is given by the senses, the sensible object of experience, is seen as less real, a mere function. The ramifications of this principle are still seen in the positivist conceptions of Hume or Ernst Mach. To this extent, therefore, Aristotelian philosophy is idealistic, in the precise sense I have just defined: that a higher order of reality is attributed to forms than to their content. But this is a very peculiar kind of idealism, in that it is really an objective idealism, an idealism conceived only with regard to the objects of knowledge, but not, or not essentially, with reference to the thinking subject. However, because the forms, or εἶδη, to which a higher order of reality is ascribed, are the forms or properties of something, they are not, as in Plato, simply being-in-itself, but are always mediated by that *of which* they are the forms. A circumstance which I pointed out to you in one of the last lectures has therefore made itself felt in Aristotle's thought: that we cannot speak of a form without saying: the form *of* something. We do not speak of form as such, but of the form of a painting, of a piece of music, or, to use this frightful example once more,[1] the form of this blackboard. At this point, therefore, Aristotle's reflections are extraordinarily complicated. On the one hand, the Platonic doctrine that Ideas or Forms have being in themselves is maintained, in the sense that reality – or at any rate, higher reality – is attributed only to them; but, on the other hand, this reality is not susceptible to thought, or only within that in which it is realized. This makes the question of the realization of form the central problem. For while form is regarded as the higher reality and that which has true being-in-itself, nevertheless, it has this being only *within* matter. Thus, the truly fundamental problem of Aristotle's philosophy becomes the question of the realization of form. And this question is, at the same time, none other than the question about change, which relates both to the effect of form on matter and to matter itself, and finally, to the relation between the two. Aristotle's position on this point is an extremely advanced one, in that he not only recognizes these two poles of being, as we might call them, but also subjects their relationship to analysis; and in that his philosophy, as a theory of invariants, now has its point of attack in precisely this relationship between its two opposite poles.

Through this twist, Aristotle's critique of Plato's philosophy, which I discussed first, is taken over into his attempt to rescue it, which I discussed next. In accordance with what I have just said – that while form is the higher category, matter cannot be conceived without form

or form without matter – the goal, or τέλος, of becoming or change is that matter should take on form. This concept of τέλος, or final purpose, has become perhaps the most fertile of all Aristotle's concepts for philosophy, since it is the origin of the distinction between cause and purpose. Purpose is defined for the first time as the higher category, which draws the lower towards it – in contrast to cause, or causes, which are said to be effective only in the lower realm, the realm of matter. The whole problematic of the relation of cause to purpose, which is, of course, the theme of Kant's third critique, the *Critique of Judgement*, and the entire subject matter of teleology – whether we should think of an entity in a causal-mechanical way, or from the standpoint of that *towards which* it tends, its higher destiny – therefore has its origin in this basic Aristotelian doctrine, which can really be called the core of the *Metaphysics*. From it Aristotle derives, as the crux of his *Metaphysics* – at the centre of which we find ourselves now – a theory which runs exactly counter to naive intuition. If we leave aside speculations like those of Heraclitus or the Eleatics, this is the first time that philosophy has placed itself in direct opposition to so-called natural common sense. This is especially out of keeping with a scientifically conceived philosophy like Aristotle's, which otherwise gives so much scope to common sense. This theory states that form is the true reality; to express it Aristotle uses specific terms which have become famous, such as ἐνέργεια or ἐντελέχεια, and also τὸ ἐνέργειᾳ ὄν, meaning that which must come into being through energy, through form. For him, therefore, reality is actually energy; it is reality only in so far as it is formed reality – and it is not the material of that reality. Matter, by contrast, is defined as mere possibility or potentiality, because it must always have within it the possibility of attaining such reality, of attaining its form, its μορφή. Matter is therefore called δύναμις, which is very peculiar, since, following the Greek meaning of the word, we associate δύναμις with the concept of force. But here δύναμις means the same as possibility; it is, therefore, precisely not the static and unchanging entity that we might associate with the concept of matter, but is, as the word indicates, a dynamic principle. If I might give you a cross-reference to the later history of philosophy, this doctrine of Aristotle's is a speculation which reappeared at the height of German idealism, in Schelling, where matter is likewise conceived, in an objective dialectic, as a principle which has the inherent tendency to move towards a higher form – except that in Schelling this comes about in the light of a subjective reflection which has already taken place.[2] That is to say that in Schelling the spirit of matter is already seen as the absolute subject – a reflection which, of course, cannot be present in Aristotle.

I repeat, therefore: form is reality, ἐνέργεια, while matter is mere possibility, δύναμις. It could therefore be said that Aristotle's metaphysics is an idealism which has not yet reflected on itself, an objective idealism. However, the mediation of form and matter which follows from this concept of reality is not really carried through by Aristotle. I have already stated this in principle but would like to recapitulate it at this point. Although the two terms, 'form' and 'matter', are related to each other, this is done only externally, through the capacity of matter to become something other than it is; that is to say, it is not itself always also form, it is not mediated within itself by form. As a result, despite the anti-Platonic twist, form becomes once again something existing in itself, whereas, according to a consistent theory of mediation, it would be dependent on matter. We are presented with the paradox that although form, according to its own concept, can only be the form of something, it now becomes, as the logical conclusion of Aristotle's thought, absolute reality. And, as a result of the same unmediated dogmatism, possibility becomes an equally paradoxical concept. Pure possibility is, of course, a formal determinant in which thought and categorization are implicit. In Aristotle's philosophy it is only conferred on matter, ὕλη, through form. Yet the fact that something contains the possibility of becoming something else is now attributed to it as if it were a property *before* all determination, residing in matter as such. This attribution has the most far-reaching consequences for the formulation of the concept of matter in Aristotle – in particular the consequence I have already mentioned: that as Aristotle's philosophy is elaborated matter ceases to be the indeterminate, empty entity which it initially appears to be according to the logic of this philosophy, and becomes, it must be said, the very thing from which he had so assiduously distinguished it, a kind of substance.

Now, I have mentioned these critical misgivings because a philosophy cannot be understood without thinking it through critically. To seek to understand something in philosophy without at the same time criticizing it is, in my view, an impossible procedure; and I suspect that whenever a distinction is made between understanding and criticism there is some kind of authoritarian demand behind it: First make sure you have understood, and by then you will be rid of all your critical quibbles. That is such folly, I think, because philosophical propositions are always put forward with a claim to truth, and can only be understood by reconstructing this claim to truth. But that can only be done by including in the analysis what I have just called criticism, by questioning their truth. The idea that one could understand any philosophical idea *without* criticism, without questioning

its truth, I regard as methodologically quite untenable. That is why, in expounding Aristotle's *Metaphysics* for you, I always present its salient points, and thus the essential problems arising from it, in the form of a critique. Now the critique I have just summarized for you is no great feat for a consciousness versed in epistemology and logic. Yet I should like to say that at the very point where Aristotle's work provokes, if you like, our strongest dissent, it nevertheless contains an extraordinary amount of truth. And, having made no secret of the criticism, I would say that it is more important that you should be aware of this truth than that you should write down at this point that Aristotle has perpetrated this or that error, which we, having made such wonderful progress since then, can mark down against him and thereby dispose of the matter. The history of philosophy is not so simple. It is, on the contrary, remarkably complex, in the sense that while it moves through the medium of criticism, and while false ideas are certainly refuted by criticism, this refutation almost never has the effect of disposing of them entirely. Rather, philosophical questions are always a bit like those self-righting toys, seeming to be knocked over but reappearing in changed historical-philosophical constellations, demanding an answer. And I believe that anyone who wants to understand what philosophy signifies as history, as history of the mind, should be aware of this curious ambiguity: on the one hand, the critical attitude towards philosophy, and between philosophies, and on the other the fundamentally open character of philosophical questions, which cannot be definitively disposed of by such criticism. One needs to be aware of this if one is not to succumb, on the one hand, to a naive rationalism with regard to the history of philosophy, or, on the other, to an equally naive belief in an 'eternal conversation of philosophical minds' carried on down the millennia, which has nothing to do with history. Neither view is correct, and both these extremes are intermingled in the history of philosophy in a way which is very difficult, and perhaps impossible, to define in abstract terms.

Coming now to the truth content of this doctrine of Aristotle's, I would like to point out that in Kant, where possibility is placed squarely on the side of form,[3] something said by Aristotle is misunderstood, as it is in the whole of epistemology, and only reappears in Hegel's dialectic. It might indeed be no bad way to present the Hegelian dialectic if one were to see it as a renewal of the controversy between Kant and Aristotle on a higher level – a view, incidentally, which finds plentiful support in Hegel's own *History of Philosophy*. For Aristotle's definition of matter as potentiality contains something which can perhaps be seen as the real foundation, or, in medieval language, the *fundamentum in re*, of every synthesis. It is the idea

that every form depends on its material as much as the material depends on the form – whereas we, influenced by the Copernican revolution brought about by Kant and the ensuing development, have all been trained to see matter as conditioned, so to speak, by form, and to believe that spirit lays down the laws followed by nature, as Kant put it in his famous formulation of this inversion.[4] According to this doctrine of Aristotle's, there is no categorial form to which there is not a corresponding moment in matter which calls for it. Aristotle knew – and I do not think this can be emphasized enough – that so-called syntheses, that is, the bringing together of facts in concepts, judgements and conclusions, are not mere adjuncts, or pure operations of the subject of cognition, but are only possible if there is something corresponding to them in that to which they are applied, that is, in matter. If (to give an example which does not occur in Aristotle) you judge that 4 + 3 = 7, this contains not only the synthetic function of the consciousness which brings these moments together, but also a real, factual basis on which this kind of synthesis can be made. Admittedly, it does so in a manner which implies that without the synthetic judgement which brings 3 and 4 together, we should know nothing of that factual basis, so that the synthesis is a necessary part of it. On the other hand, however, this synthesis would not be possible, and the statement 3 + 4 = 7 would be false, if a factual moment, which admittedly is inseparable from the synthesis, were not already contained in the material being judged.

That is not expressed by Aristotle in the epistemological form I have chosen for it here, but it does appear in his work in the form of a doctrine of substance. This states that two essences, which are posited absolutely as principles, the essence ὕλη and the essence μορφή, must always come together in order that such a thing as reality can exist. But he was the first to see that, in this interrelatedness, form – despite its self-sufficiency, which he emphasized just as much as Plato – can only be the form of a reality if there is something corresponding to it in reality itself. And that is Aristotle's outstanding discovery, which I consider more important than the hypostasis of the two merely additively connected categories, ὕλη and μορφή, which he used to illustrate this point. Now, to take this further: matter without any form, pure matter – if one might put it like that – is called by Aristotle first matter, πρώτη ὕλη;[5] and this is the point where the concept of ἄπειρον, the unbounded, appears in his work. But this ἄπειρον does not refer to anything that we might remotely equate with the modern concept of infinity, but means simply that any determination of an object is a πεῖρας, a bounding of that object, whereas pure ὕλη, or πρώτη ὕλη, which is absolutely without any such restriction,

has no boundary, since it is absolutely indeterminate.[6] However – and this is crucial – this having-no-boundary is not interpreted in his thought, as it is in the whole of modern philosophy, as something transcendent, going beyond the possibility of contingent experience, in keeping with the modern interpretation of infinity. Exactly the opposite is the case in Aristotle, for whom πρώτη ὕλη, because it lacks bounding, is something impoverished which needs its form. For Greek thought, therefore, the infinite, if such an idea is conceived at all, is a mere scandal, something repugnant which still lacks its destiny, its form. Oswald Spengler noted in this context that for antiquity, with its plastic mode of experience,[7] reality lay in the bounding of the infinite by form and not in infinity as such. Despite the barrage of criticism unleashed on Spengler for such remarks,[8] what he says on this central point of Aristotle's philosophy seems to me by no means as perverse as people are apt to insist in 'polite society'. One might ask, of course, whether this concept of matter, of absolutely unformed πρώτη ὕλη, is not itself, as a concept, a form; for by speaking of matter as an ἀρχή, a principle, I have already abstracted from the immediacy of matter itself and reduced it to its most general concept – so that if Aristotle speaks, as I have just done, of pure matter, of πρώτη ὕλη which has absolutely no form, he is actually contradicting himself, since speech about it is itself something formed. While I shall not keep this criticism to myself, I would again point out that, with important thinkers, the real problems are located where they make so-called errors, and that nothing is more foolish than to dismiss them by pointing out those errors, as I have just done. For one must be on one's guard against the idealist misconception – especially threatening at this point – that because we cannot speak about anything, or have anything, which is *not* mediated by form, form must therefore be the only thing which *is*.

Having touched on these matters, I should like to say something about a very basic question of metaphysics which, I realize, goes far beyond the scope of a historical introduction to Aristotle, but concerns a state of affairs which one needs to be aware of if one is to occupy oneself usefully with metaphysical questions today. The fact that, just by talking about matter, one endows this matter with form – that is, conceptual form – should not be confused with the meaning of this form itself. The peculiarity of the concept of ὕλη, or matter, is that we are here using a concept or speaking of a principle which, by its meaning, refers to something which is not a concept or a principle. We only correctly understand what a concept such as ὕλη means if we realize that its conceptual meaning refers to something non-conceptual. The paradox facing us here is removed if we do not

allow ourselves to fetishize the language or conceptual system we use. It is true that we can only speak in a way which is mediated through language, but for that reason language itself, as one phenomenon among others, becomes a part of reality as a whole, a moment of reality, and should not be hypostatized over against it. It is in the nature of language that we can speak of an absolutely formless matter, even though *speaking* of formless matter is itself a form. It is as if we were in the prison of language but were able to recognize it as a prison. I have set out this dialectic for you because I believe that philosophizing begins at exactly the point I have just shown you, where one refuses to be fobbed off with curt pronouncements such as that matter as a 'primary concept' or 'first principle' is itself a form, so that the concept of formless matter is meaningless; one actually starts thinking at such points and reflects further on them. And if I had to characterize the difference between the kind of thinking I advocate and positivist thinking, I would say that non-positivist thinking is precisely that which is not content with the rigid logic of exclusivity – the logic of either-or: either mediated or immediate, either concept or pure non-conceptuality – but analyses phenomena in such a way that seemingly self-evident statements like the one I just mentioned grow more and more shaky. What seems to me to be unique about philosophical concepts is that, in face of the despair which philosophy can sometimes induce, they provide, if not the 'consolation of philosophy',[9] then at least a consolation *for* philosophy. Philosophy has the curious characteristic that, although itself entrapped, locked inside the glasshouse of our constitution and our language, it is nevertheless able constantly to think beyond itself and its limits, to think itself through the walls of its glasshouse. And this thinking beyond itself, into *openness* – that, precisely, is metaphysics.

LECTURE TEN

29 June 1965

I have spoken repeatedly in these lectures of the problem of mediation in Aristotle, emphasizing that the more one concerns oneself with questions of the dialectic the more the problem of what is called mediation forces itself into the centre. I wanted to use the example of Aristotle to show you the source of the problematic of development. In general, I have not presented Aristotle's *Metaphysics* to you as a piece of immutable ontological wisdom, as it is doubtless presented in many other places. I have shown it from a different perspective, arguing that in this still relatively unproblematic yet very sophisticated philosophy you can see, as in a test tube, the problems which were later to unfold in an infinitely more differentiated and complex form throughout the history of western philosophy. For Aristotle the problem of mediation lies in the fact that the merely possible, that is, the absolutely formless – I would remind you that for him possibility is not form but matter – never exists and never could exist for itself. In this he gives expression to an insight which idealist philosophy later stated in the subjectively reflected form that matter, as far as we can speak of it, is mediated by consciousness. In Aristotle, by contrast, forms – and this is the moment of Platonism which remains unchanged in Aristotelian philosophy – are imperishable and eternal; and this imperishability and eternity is inherent in each individual form. That is, if you like, the rescuing or conservative moment in Aristotle, in contradiction of the critical moment. Now, many of you will feel compelled to ask why it did not occur to a thinker as astute as Aristotle – who, after all, was the founder of the whole of western

logic – that there can be no form without something formed – an objection which cannot fail to arise at this point. In view of the reciprocity of form and content which I have explained, it is very surprising to us that someone could assert that there can be no matter, no content, without form, but fail to apply the same consideration to forms, attributing an autonomous existence to them instead.

I believe that, as in most philosophical cases of this kind, it will be useful to try to reconstruct what it was that enabled Aristotle to overlook this reciprocity, when it applied to form. It will also lead us beyond the particular Aristotelian problem to a more universal problematic. For – I cannot repeat this often enough – we should not take unfair advantage of our posterity by regarding Aristotle as more stupid than us. To understand Aristotle, I believe we should reflect briefly on the nature of the concept. The concept, as we know, is a unity, the unity of the properties of the elements subsumed under it. Thus, if I have three elements, A with the index 1, B with the index 1 and C with the index 1, then 1 is the concept for these three elements, since it brings out what they have in common, and does so only with regard to what I wish to call the identical properties of these elements. Now, the abstraction from the particular content which is performed here has a very peculiar quality, which is probably based on countless considerations, especially metaphysical and ontological ones. For in referring to the item which I have just called '1' as the concept, or in some cases the essence, of the elements it subsumes, I generally disregard the special spatial and temporal positions of the elements subsumed under this concept. And even if, for example, I subsume under the concept of contemporaries extremely antithetical people, such as Hitler, Stalin and Churchill, their contemporaneity – if by that I define all the people who played a decisive individual role between 1930 and 1950 – is a general concept which is independent of the particular existence of these people. That is, to put it very crudely, I can speak of the contemporaneity of these three contemporaries even when they are long dead. Because I have turned it into a general concept, their contemporaneity, which here defines the conceptual unity formed by the three political contemporaries, is now *not* a temporal entity. We could, if we were so inclined, talk about these three men, defined by their contemporaneity, as long as we liked. Inherent in the concept, therefore, is a curious de-temporalization of what it refers to. The concept as such, once established, is not temporal; it relates, of course, to something temporal, it has its temporal content, and a critical analysis will finally uncover time as an implication of its meaning. But in the first place, through its formation, the concept is independent of time. This is undoubtedly connected to

practical processes involved in the formation of thought, which have taken place in certain phases of the development of humanity. In order to create some kind of order in successive circumstances, nomenclatures or systems of thought were created which could survive with a certain constancy in relation to the temporal elements which they encompassed. Now it seems to me to be the case at this point – and, indeed, in the whole tendency to see ontology as a doctrine of invariants, of the timelessly abiding – that this timelessness of the concept represents a *στέρησις*, an impoverishment, a deficiency of the concept. For this timelessness is mediated through abstraction; and that which is simply omitted from the concept, so that it can be formed and maintained as a constant, is now attributed to it as its in-itself quality, and even as its 'positivity', its superiority. The reflection which leads to the realization that the timelessness of the concept is itself something which has become, which has arisen and is not an attribute of the concept in itself, is a very late reflection; and it has no more place in the philosophy of Aristotle, which is exemplary in this respect, than it has in that of Plato. And what could be described as the greatest paralogism of all in metaphysics, and as the crucial fallacy in traditional philosophy as a whole, is nothing other than this de-temporalization of the meaning of concepts, which is produced by the way in which concepts are formed, but is attributed as an inherent property to that which they subsume.

That, I believe, is the mechanism which lies behind Aristotle's positing of forms and concepts as something eternal and immutable. What is taken away from them by abstraction, the moment of de-temporalization, he has ascribed to them as a positive quality, as their ontological priority, their pure being-in-itself. And it can be said that the whole of western thought has been placed under the spell of this conclusion drawn by Aristotle, and by Plato before him. Even Hegelian philosophy has been unable to divest itself entirely of this illusion. I would like to use a brief example to show you the absurdities generated by this transference of the structure of the concept to being itself. About thirty years ago, perhaps slightly less, a so-called philosopher named Maximilian Beck, who came from the phenomenological school, published in emigration a book with no less a title than: *Psychology. The Nature and Reality of the Soul.*[1] This book, which, apart from what I want to tell you, is one of the purest sources of merriment known to me in philosophical literature, where such sources are far from rare, is concerned, among other things, with the immortality of the soul. In discussing this it adopts the modern practice of disconnecting the concept from the subjective act of abstraction which produced it, and states (as Husserl would

probably also have done) that the soul of each individual person corresponds to an *essence* of that soul. That is to say that one can 'look upon' this soul, can verify its existence. In plain language, he argues that one can obtain a pure concept of the soul of each individual without any coincidence between this essence or this concept of the individual's soul, to which the philosopher has access, and actual existence. By means of phenomenological operations, therefore, one can arrive at a pure concept of the individual soul, but only by subtracting the question as to whether this soul actually exists. I can, following Husserl, identify all its qualities, all its concrete fullness, without positing its spatial-temporal existence. This enables Maximilian Beck to arrive at an unusually simple and quite astonishing solution to the question of immortality. He says that this essence called the 'soul', this concept of the soul of each individual person, which I can identify in all its concrete materialization, is – eternal. Thus, if a phenomenologist possesses such a concept of the essence or soul of someone sitting here in the front row, and if that concept is adequate, it can never perish. It abides; it is objectively valid even when no person who has it is alive, or even when there is no empirical person to which it could refer. And to the extent that this essence of each individual person is independent of any spatial-temporal fate, it can be said – according to Beck – that immortality exists, that these essences of each and every individual *are* immortal. By contrast, individual people – says Herr Beck condescendingly – are, of course, mortal, but that has absolutely nothing to do with it. The individual consciousness, the individual body, the individual psychology of a person is also mortal. Nothing except the *possibility* of each person, which is concrete but purified of all existence, the pure concept of each person, is immortal. And that is supposed to solve the problem of immortality – while people themselves amount to nothing, and can be annihilated.

I believe, Ladies and Gentlemen, that you need to reflect for only a moment on what such a theory is worth in comparison to the expectation of immortality, or the hope of salvation, expressed in the great religions, to realize that the hypostasis of the concept as something eternal and imperishable has here become simply a fraud, a deception, in relation to the true meaning of such a concept in a context of this kind. Well, in this instance we are only dealing with the foolishness of a demented phenomenologist; but it often happens that pathogenic cases are more revealing than so-called normal ones – as is the case with this ineffably fatuous solace. What use is it for one's concept to be, for some logical reason, immortal, if one is nevertheless a heap of ashes? When a doctrine of this kind is coupled to a concept such as

immortality, its absurdity and pretentiousness become obvious. But I do not say this to engage in polemics against Herr Beck, but only because I believe it shows in blatant form something of the fraudulence of such an approach to a question like that of immortality, which, after all, is one of the most central of all metaphysical questions, and because it relates to the sublime doctrines of the great philosophers, from Plato and Aristotle to St Thomas Aquinas and, if you like, to Descartes as well. Kant was the first to avoid this hypostasis, but even for him the concept has a moment of autonomy, of hypostasis, since his work contains pure forms of an almost pre-Aristotelian kind, which are not required to be the forms of a possible content. I hope these remarks have made clear to you why Aristotle fails to reflect on the mediateness of form, and that if the idea of the autonomy of form is taken seriously – that is, if it is applied to something as fundamental as the concept of immortality – it has consequences the absurdity of which is beyond dispute.

Now, in Aristotle himself this hypostasis of form has a consequence which holds his whole system together, is its precondition, or however one likes to express it. Because he understands pure form, as pure actuality or pure reality, in the way I have described, it becomes the only force which realizes the purpose – *τὸ οὗ ἕνεκα* – contained in scattered individual things. It thus becomes a *causa finalis*, an ultimate causality on the basis of which the process of the universe is constituted. And it might be said that just as the relation of reality to possibility is in a curious way stood on its head in Aristotle, in an analogous way the relation of purpose to cause is also stood on its head. For according to it purposes are the only and the true causes; in comparison, what is usually referred to as causality has, as we shall soon see, a very bad press in Aristotle. However, this general observation requires further differentiation. There are four kinds of cause in Aristotle, a division which remained in force throughout medieval philosophy and reappears in Schopenhauer, in his book *On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason*. According to Aristotle, there is, first, the material cause – although he does not use the terms 'material' and 'formal' in the way we use them in normal logic, but in the sense of the antithesis between *ὕλη* and *μορφή*, which I have explicated for you in detail. The material necessity or cause arises from *ὕλη*, in so far as it is mere stuff and has not yet been formed. Then come the classes of the formal cause – the one arising from *μορφή* – the moving cause and the final cause, the *causa finalis* or *τέλος*, of which I have already spoken. It is not difficult to see – and it was recognized relatively early in the history of Greek philosophy[2] – that the last three classes of causes: the formal cause as the

μορφή, the moving cause which orientates everything which is towards itself, and lastly the final cause as the highest – are all the same, and that, if radically reduced, they all actually coincide with the fourth. It can therefore be said that, despite this 'fourfold root of the principle of reason', only the two main dualistic categories, ὕλη and μορφή, appear in Aristotle – or perhaps it would be better to say, only the categories of δύναμις, as the mere possibility residing in matter, and of ἐνέργεια, as the actuality realized in it. Originally, therefore, his philosophy contains only the dualism of form and matter, which dominates his entire *Metaphysics*, in much the same way as it has again become the determining dualism of metaphysical thought in modern philosophy since Descartes.

This is complicated, however, by the mediating element in the philosophy of Aristotle, to which I attach such weight. It manifests itself in the fact that, while everything determinate is drawn to the side of form, nevertheless matter – as I have indicated more than once already – becomes far more than the mere possibility which it is supposed to be in his philosophy. There is a curious tension and difficulty in the concept of ὕλη in Aristotle; on the one hand it is denigrated, disqualified, censured in every respect, including the moral, while on the other there is the remarkable assumption whereby this element, though heterogeneous with regard to form, is endowed with a kind of animation, a tendency, even a certain kind of yearning. There is, of course, a reason for this. For the very fact that he conceives matter, as I have explained, as a pure possibility which is itself mediated categorially as that which is possible – this very fact implies a concept. What is possible is an existing thing which is determined in relation to another which it has not yet become. For this reason the concept of pure possibility already includes a kind of determinateness which, in strict accordance with Aristotle's thesis, it should not have. However, if he understands ὕλη as the possibility of form, that is, as something which is at least potentially able to be determined by something else, he is forced to go beyond this idea that possibility is a pure empty x, which ὕλη at first appears to be. In fact, far more formal determinants have their origin in matter, as he conceives it, than might first be supposed. For he endows this possibility of matter, which we have subsequently called necessity in the scientific sense, with causality or, to use the Greek word, ἀνάγκη.

Ἀνάγκη is the mythical notion of the intertwinement of all living things in a fate in which everything has to make atonement according to the ordinance of time, as it is expressed in the famous saying of Anaximander.[3] And the notion of ἀνάγκη, like all mythical ideas, was originally a category of natural philosophy, that is, a rationalization

or secularization of a doctrine of the animating forces of nature. This mythical, natural origin of *ἀνάγκη*, or necessity, survives in Aristotle in that this kind of necessity is attributed to matter, and not, as is the case in modern philosophy, above all in Kant, to the reflecting subject. And, of course, it never occurred to Aristotle to consider this natural necessity, this *ἀνάγκη*, merely as a conventionally subjective entity. No doubt, the substantiality of causality as a part of fate never became problematic for ancient people. This is precisely the point on which antiquity never went beyond mere reflection on its own mythological ideas. It also seems to me highly revealing that he attributes something else to matter: what in modern terms we would call 'chance', and for which there are two concepts in his work, firstly *αὐτόματον*, that which moves by itself, and secondly *τύχη*, containing the mythical idea of the way things just happen to turn out. I will point out – although I do not want to pursue this very central problem here – that the concepts of causality as natural causality and as chance, which appear to be strictly antithetical, have always been associated in a certain way in philosophy. Because the regularity of natural causality can never equal the internal coherence of successive moments, as Aristotle seeks to describe it through his teleology, everything causal also seems to have a moment of the fortuitous. And, perhaps more important, apart from the moment of causality there are all those moments which cannot be subsumed under the principle of identity and which, in accordance with the omnipotent principle of identity in thought, must appear as extraneous and accidental. There is thus a curious correlation between causality and chance; and the more relentless the dominance of causality, of causal-mechanical thinking, becomes in the world, the more the category of chance increases, as a kind of reminder of how much meaning, how much *internal* coherence, has been lost through the predominance of causality. No doubt there are also social reasons for this – the fact that, as rationality has increased in the means of social organization, the ends of social organization have remained irrational, fortuitous. And this relationship is reflected in the correlation of causality and chance, which, of course, are now undergoing a remarkable convergence, as the law of probability, which is profoundly bound up with chance, has begun to displace causality in microphysics and quantum mechanics.[4]

You can see, therefore, that Aristotle attributes far more than one would expect to *ὕλη*, which he had himself demoted to something totally abstract. It becomes, in a sense, the repository, the refuge of those mythical categories which were displaced by the advance of the Greek enlightenment, and especially by the rationality of Plato and Aristotle himself. And both these moments – on the one hand, blind

natural causality which is not transparent to itself, which is not an idea, the moment of blindness in causality, and on the other, τέλος, teleology, which is like the idea of a creator – go back, like chance, to Aristotle. In his *Metaphysics* these moments have the function of limiting the purposive activity of pure form, of μορφή, or, finally, of the 'unmoved mover'.[5] You therefore have before you a basic schema of the whole of western metaphysics; in it you can observe, as if under a microscope, the difference between natural causality and teleology, which has its foundation in reason or in freedom. This doctrine of a causality based on freedom, on a consciousness independent of blind ἀνάγκη, goes back to the Aristotelian dualism and is reproduced in that of Kant.[6] However, as soon as the dichotomy of form and matter enters a state of flux, in which the two appear to be reciprocally mediated, this antithesis of causality and freedom also becomes fluid, dynamized, as it is in Hegel.

You can also see here – and I should like to close with this point – how a metaphysical theme such as that of freedom – which at the beginning of these lectures I called one of the fundamental themes of metaphysics – only takes on the form familiar to us through the unmediated antithesis of ὕλη and μορφή, which is the special feature of Aristotle's philosophy. I have explained the structure of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* at some length in order to show you that metaphysics does not consist in the isolated treatment of its so-called main themes, as first appeared when I read out a list of those resounding themes; it resides in the structural relationship between these themes, and finally in the tendency to unify them or form them into a system. And you will see that the concept of unity, the One, does indeed emerge at the apex of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*.[7] You cannot, therefore, understand metaphysics by finding out how the separate metaphysical themes – being, God, freedom, immortality, or whatever they may be – are treated by different philosophers. You can only understand these categories through the place they occupy in a philosophy considered as a whole. And if I may give you a piece of advice which may help your own philosophical understanding, it is that while you should always strive to understand philosophical categories as strictly and precisely as possible in terms of their meaning and effect in their particular place, you should also be aware that there is no philosophical category which does not take on a meaning that is different from its general meaning through the structure, the total context, of the thought in which it appears. And in understanding philosophy it is this specific meaning which matters.

LECTURE ELEVEN

6 July 1965

I have discussed the determinants of matter in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, and the negativity of these determinants, seen in its most extreme form in the concept of natural causality and chance. In Aristotle these are qualities of ὕλη and not of μορφή, and thus are qualities of δύναμις, of abstract possibility (Hegel would say), and not of ἐνέργεια, of ideas which have become concrete. Now, according to Aristotle, all the imperfection of nature originates in matter. All notions of inert, sluggish matter, of *rudis indigesta moles*, as the Latin poet expresses it,[1] go back to this thesis of Aristotle that matter is to blame for the imperfection of the world. So, too, in a sublimated form, do all ideas of mere existence as something untouched and abandoned by mind and meaning. I do not think it is usually realized (and perhaps I may draw your attention to it here) how much the notions of so-called everyday life – what I call 'bleating', the ideas passed uncritically from mouth to mouth, or presented as self-evident in leading or not-so-leading articles in newspapers – how much almost all these notions are cultural assets which have sunk down from the upper stratum, to use the language of the sociology of literature. That is to say, they are simply residues of great metaphysics, of great philosophy, which, through being severed from an original context which has lapsed into oblivion, take on the character of seemingly self-evident truths. The self-evidence is only apparent, since they owe their obviousness or compellingness to the structures in which they first appeared, whereas they are now treated as matters of fact which require no further justification, and precisely thereby are transformed into untruths. This

applies especially to the antithesis of matter and form in Aristotle, which can be said to have pre-formed the familiar dualisms in our received ideas to an extent of which we are entirely unaware. It is really the same as with Monsieur Jourdain in Molière's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, whose rhetoric teacher explains to him that there are two kinds of speech, prose and poetry, and who then asks: 'Oh really, and what do I speak?' When he is told that it is prose, Jourdain exclaims proudly: 'Goodness! I've been speaking prose all my life and I didn't even know it!'[2] And we speak Aristotle all our lives and 'don't even know it', except that this is not such an innocent matter as the good Monsieur Jourdain's prose.

For example, the difference between the heavenly and earthly spheres, which has become so central in Christian doctrine and led for the first time in Augustine to a kind of hierarchy of intra-mundane happenings,[3] points back directly to this Aristotelian dichotomy or dualism. Even the categories of male and female are distinguished according to the same dualism by Aristotle, all the higher, form-giving categories being equated with the male – as was only too self-evident in a patriarchal society – and the merely material and existent with the female. No doubt you will all have endured a learned school-teacher telling you that the roots of *mater* and *materia* are related, and you will recall the ensuing howl of triumph – that, too, is an echo from Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. Behind it, of course, lies the distinction between the principle which controls nature and the nature oppressed by this principle and presented, because oppressed, as amorphous. With some exaggeration one might say that the world of ὕλη in Aristotle is the world of the prehistoric imagination, which Bachofen called matriarchal, while the world of *logos*, the world of the Olympian gods, of the centralizing principle, is equated with μορφή. And you will see that this idea of the centralizing principle applies to his thought in a far stricter sense than emerges from what I have just said. But the most important quality attributed to matter is its resistance to form, and according to Aristotle this resistance explains something which is of special thematic importance for him: the specific character of change or development, which he conceives as gradual.[4] What you have here is, fundamentally, the later problem of Christian theology: why the world created by God is not a divine world, why it is not already perfect. This, too, is answered in accordance with the same dualistic principle, which states that creation opposes, or in some way resists, pure identity with the creator. And even the complementary principle, that, on the other hand, some urge towards the highest principle is present in matter, in creation,[5] you will also find prefigured in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. There is already

here, if you like, a sketch of the dialectic, even though Aristotle does not reflect thematically on this concept. And it would not surprise me if the Aristotelian motif had played a considerable role in the conception of the world process or the absolute in Hegel, whose work can be very well described at an idealist reprise of Aristotle's. For according to this doctrine, movement is caused or triggered just because matter opposes its potential, is in contradiction to it, because any existing situation is inherently rigid; in later philosophy it was therefore called 'mere existence'. Similarly, in the philosophy of history, for example, it can be said that revolution was triggered in 1789 just because of the ossification of absolutist conditions in France, which was more extreme than in any other country. The special rigidity of such social conditions, their resistance to *ἐνέργεια*, is thus made into the actual cause of the opposed, radical development.

Further, it is only matter, conceived in this way as a kind of autonomous principle, which in Aristotle makes it possible for the lowest generic concepts which we have – that is, the concept 'dog' or the concept 'human being' – to be split up into a multiplicity of individuals, which have nothing general in them. This results from Aristotle's curious conception of the concrete, which I have mentioned to you repeatedly, as a kind of sum of the absolutely indeterminate and concept-less existing thing on the one hand and its concept on the other. It might be said with some exaggeration that matter is the *principium individuationis* in Aristotle, and not, as we are inclined to think, form, which is that which determines a particular thing as particular. For him, however, individuation itself is founded precisely on this particularization – the lack of identity, or full identity, of an existent thing with its form.[6] Individuation thus becomes something negative in Aristotle. And that, too, is a basic thesis of all western metaphysics, as it reappears in Kant, where cognition is equated with the determining of an object in its generality and necessity, and as you find it worked through to its extreme in Hegel, where only the universal manifesting itself through individuation is the substantial – whereas anything which lies outside the identification with the universal principle is regarded as absolutely insignificant, ephemeral and unimportant. I do not think I need to elaborate here the theme which was central to my lectures in the last semester:[7] the incalculable consequences of the elevation of logical universality as the positive metaphysical principle, and of the branding of individuation and particularity as the negative. If the so-called great tradition of philosophy has anywhere lent its name to ideology, it is at this point. The universal manifesting itself as pure form is, of course, the existing form of social dominance *in abstracto*; and according to this definition the

bigger battalions in world history are justified in advance. You have here the equation of the universal with the good. You can say – as Zeller has rightly pointed out[8] – that antithetical definitions such as those applied by Aristotle to matter have turned matter into the opposite of what the concept of matter implies; that is, matter in his thought becomes a second principle endowed with its own force. That, too, later had uncommonly far-reaching consequences – I am trying today to make you aware of those moments in Aristotle which have been precipitated in the general stock of ideas and have dominated the whole philosophical tradition to an incalculable degree. Its consequences were that people have forgotten, if they ever knew, that when they think of matter in general as that which is opposed to a principle of a different kind, the principle of mind, they are, if you like, dematerializing matter by turning it into a principle. What the concept of matter points towards, the only reasonable content and meaning of this term, is the non-conceptual. And one of the most remarkable characteristics of the concept is that, although itself a concept, it can yet refer to something which is not a concept; indeed – if one traces out the reciprocal foundation of intentions – in the end it *must* mean something non-conceptual. Given the direction which the whole philosophical tradition has taken as a result of the Aristotelian dualism, it is the case that through the covert substitution of the general concept of 'matter' for materials, matter has itself been turned into something which it ought precisely not to be: something conceptual. Only determinants which are really of such a conceptual kind are recognized *qua* matter.[9]

The consequence which this had for philosophy was idealism, and one might say without exaggeration that Aristotle was an objective idealist, except that he didn't know it, if you will forgive such a lax turn of phrase. In other words, the fact that I can only speak of matter in concepts, even if these concepts themselves mean something which is *not* material, prepares the ground for the identification of all matter with the concept, and finally for the dissolution of all matter in the conceptual, the reduction of all objectivity to the thinking subject, in which the idealist interpretation of philosophy later consisted. These considerations, extrapolated from some of the most remarkable definitions and characterizations in Aristotle's discussion of matter, make his ideas more plausible in retrospect than would a purely genetic approach, focused on the difference between knowledge for us and knowledge in itself at that time. They enable us to understand why Aristotle sometimes attributes primary being, *πρώτη οὐσία*, to pure, that is, formless, individual entities, to *τόδε τι qua ὕλη*, and sometimes equates it with form itself. The explanation is that, because

of the relation between form and content posited in this dualism, content, or matter, is itself multiply, if antithetically, determined. As a result, Aristotle is never quite sure whether he should treat it as primary being, *πρώτη οὐσία*, because it is something and has very definite properties, or whether, in line with the general trend of his *Metaphysics*, he should reserve the determination of *πρώτη οὐσία* to *μορφή* or *ἐνέργεια*.

It is the relation of matter to form which gives rise to movement, or change of any kind, in Aristotle. Change is confined to that which has form, so that, correlatively, that which has no matter and is pure *ἐνέργεια* is not subject to change. One might say that pure actuality, *actus purus* – and this is the supreme paradox of this philosophy – is also the eternal. It may be supposed that the real purpose – or, better, the real interest – of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* lay in the attempt to bring together the change in being, or in existing things, which was ineluctably taking place with the advance of empirical science – and he was an empirical scientist – with the Platonic moment of eternity and immutability. Latent in his philosophy is a contradiction between the Eleatic and Platonic element of the doctrine of being and the unmistakable moment of change associated with the advancing Greek or Hellenic enlightenment. Thus the whole construction of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* is really focused on this one problem: how is change possible? And this change or movement is derived by Aristotle from the relation of form to matter; it is, so to speak, the result he obtains from his ontology, in which these moments are distinguished. The task is to deduce why mutability exists from the basic structure of being itself, that is, from the dualism of *ὕλη* and *μορφή* located within being. The mutable is to be spun out, so to speak, from the immutable – a problem which later recurs in Hegel, whose *Logic* is both a *prima philosophia* (that is, an ontology) and a dialectic (that is, a radically elaborated theory of development). This ambiguity of philosophy at its later peak is also fully prefigured, therefore, in the philosophy of Aristotle.

The answer to this question given by Aristotle will not surprise you, after all we have said about his *Metaphysics*. It is that movement – by which he means an upward movement or change, the advancing amelioration of everything which is through its increasing determination by the absolute – is to be equated with the realization of the possible, in so far as the possible is opposed to natural causality. That is really Aristotle's central proposition. And this proposition, that movement is the realization of the possible, already implies the Hegelian thesis of history as progress in the consciousness of freedom.[10] I remind you that for Aristotle determination by *μορφή* is the

opposite of determination by ἀνάγκη, and thus of blind necessity. This conception also contains, at least implicitly, an inversion of the Hegelian proposition[11] of the reality of the rational (an inversion also to be found in Hegel himself). To formulate such a conception, Zeller quotes a passage which does not come from the *Metaphysics* but from the *Physics*: ἡ τοῦ δυνάμει ὄντος ἐντελέχεια ᾗ τοιοῦτον.[12] That is to say, that which is by virtue of its possibility *becomes* by virtue of its entelechy; movement is the becoming real of the possible. But Aristotle is not content to let matters rest with this proposition about movement *in abstracto*. At this point he already feels the need for mediation or, as one also says, for concretion; he therefore asks how this movement arises in the first place. He now argues as follows: the impulse towards movement can only come from something which already *is* what the moved object is to *become* through its movement. That is, I would say, a typically rationalistic inference based purely on concepts, of the kind you will find over and over again in the philosophy of the seventeenth century. It is exposed, of course, to the entire Kantian critique of conclusions drawn from pure concepts. But in the sense that he drew conclusions from pure concepts Aristotle truly was a rationalist. And it was not just an external historical connection when medieval scholasticism, the philosophy whose essential feature was the procedure of drawing conclusions from pure concepts, harked back to Aristotle. On this crucial point the thinking of Aristotle was, if you like, already scholastic – for example, in propositions like the one I have just mentioned: that the impulse towards movement can only come from something which already is what the moved object is to become through its movement. This presupposes that the two moments, the mover and the moved, are structured in a rational, purpose-directed way, are inwardly determined in precisely the manner from which the whole of modern natural science has emancipated itself. And if you imagine such a proposition in relation to the classical, causal-mechanical physics associated with the name of Newton, for example, you will understand why the genesis of the modern natural sciences has been to such a major degree an emancipation from Aristotle – from the doctrine of the reality of forms and the teleology dependent on it. Already implied in that doctrine is the motif of full-blown idealism, that the movement of the particular towards the absolute already presupposes that absolute. Aristotle's theory of motion is only comprehensible if one assumes that, in any movement, that towards which it wants to move is also the agent of the movement. And Hegel's *Logic* attempted to explicate precisely this presupposition, now applied to spirit, by means of epistemological reflection, and to show how something which is effective

from the first subsequently manifests itself in and for itself. It can therefore be said in a precise sense that Hegel's work seeks to recover the ontological programme of Aristotle's metaphysics through a transcendental, subjectively directed analysis.

According to Aristotle, every movement presupposes two things: a mover and a moved. And for him this applies to self-moving things as well. Even when we can speak of something as moving itself, we find in it two different elements or principles: the moving and the moved. This doctrine in Aristotle is based on the human being, who is the only self-moving entity – apart from animals – which we can know. According to this theory, the human being is divided into two principles; the moving principle, which is the higher, the immaterial and the spiritual; and the moved, the material principle. This provides another illustration of how we all 'speak Aristotle' without knowing it. For the entire figure of the dualism of body and soul, the so-called body–mind problem which dominates the whole of western thinking and becomes an overt philosophical theme in the seventeenth-century rationalism of Descartes, goes back to Aristotle's conception of the human being that has just been mentioned. The whole later dualism of substances, of body and soul, and thus the whole question of how these dualistic moments, body and soul, are interrelated, was formulated for the first time, and in all its trenchancy, in this ontological anthropology, which divided the human being itself into a moving principle and a moved, material principle. In this division the mover is the actual or the form, and the moved is the potential or matter. Only form – ἐνέργεια – causes matter, despite the moments of resistance it contains, to move towards it. It should not be overlooked here that in Aristotle – who, like all truly significant philosophers, was more concerned with expressing phenomena than with unifying them seamlessly and without contradictions – the question of the relationship between what might be called the immanent tendency of matter, and the opposed principle of the resistance of matter to form, was never completely articulated and elaborated. For whereas I explained to you earlier that matter was defined essentially as the resistant, antithetical and thus dialectical moment in face of the reality of form, it is also the case (as I believe I pointed out to you at the outset, together with the affinity of this theory to the later one of Schelling)[13] that matter itself is also endowed with a yearning, an ὀρέγεσθαι or ὁρμή, towards form as the good or the divine. This points again, of course, towards the Hegelian motif I mentioned to you: that matter itself, without knowing it, simply through its possibility, is already spirit. For only as something spiritual can it be endowed with this ὁρμή which is gradually realized in it.

And this need of matter for form is defined by Aristotle as the need for the good or the divine. The identification of form as the universal, of the good as the moral norm and of the divine as the highest metaphysical principle, is already accomplished in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. And that, too, has become through Christianity a universal idea, which we generally accept simply as a result of our education, without reflecting on its connection to a specific philosophy, and therefore on the philosophical problems implicit in it. Now, Aristotle states that where matter and form touch movement must always and necessarily arise.[14] This proposition of the touching of matter and form is, one might say, another of the Aristotelian archaisms. That is, it is one of those elements or moments in his thought which we find it hard to envisage, since these two moments, matter and form, are here suddenly separated as two absolutely different principles, and then retrospectively brought together. This inconsistency is, however, connected to the fact (as I have repeatedly pointed out, and would reiterate here) that subjective reflection is essentially absent in Aristotle, so that he is not really aware of the abstract character of either his concept of form or his concept of matter as principles, and therefore hypostatizes both moments. The remarkable, exciting, but at the same time constantly puzzling thing about Aristotle's philosophy is that he simultaneously recognizes the reciprocity, the interdependence of form and matter, and nevertheless treats them as so separate that their interdependence remains a merely external relation and their internal mediation is not recognized. True, they are mediated in the sense that one cannot really exist without the other – with a crucial exception which we shall come back to in the next lecture – but this dependence is not such that one principle contains the other within it as a condition of its possibility. This externality is strikingly demonstrated in Aristotle's doctrine that these two principles actually do touch each other from outside – almost, one might say, as if they were two different substances, if that does not sound too paradoxical – so that movement only arises through the *kindling* which occurs when the two things come together. It is easy to poke fun at the somewhat mythological aspect of this idea from our later standpoint. But if you picture once more the basic structure I tried so strenuously to make clear to you in the first part of this lecture series, you will see that this apparent naivety is itself the necessary fruit of the basic structure.

And now, the decisive question for Aristotle – which takes us to the central problem of the connection between the dynamic moment and the ontological moment – is how these two moments are related structurally. But I should prefer not to embark on that question today.

LECTURE TWELVE

8 July 1965

I told you in the last lecture that in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* movement arises from the touching of matter and form. And I pointed out that the additive moment of these two basic categories emerges very clearly in his work. That is to say that while he knows that one does not exist without the other – to that extent he entertained the idea of mediation – he did not perceive this mediation within the categories themselves, but only in their amalgamation. It might be useful at this point, where we are nearing the end of our discussion of Aristotle, if I add something which I ought, perhaps, to have said earlier, as it might have facilitated understanding. When one hears terms such as 'matter' or 'form' – and this really applies not just to Aristotle but to an understanding of the whole of ancient philosophy – one is not quite sure what to make of them. I did at least touch on this problem by saying[1] that when Aristotle speaks of matter he substitutes the *concept* of matter for matter itself, and that this substitution – or 'subreption', as Kant would have called it – is the vehicle which allows him to make matter into a kind of second principle. Now there is something rather peculiar about all these categories in antiquity. I imagine that you are at least vaguely aware, from the history of philosophy, that the term 'hylozoism',[2] meaning the animation of natural categories, is applied to the earliest Greek philosophers, the Ionian nature philosophers. And you will recall that in them physical and metaphysical entities, that is, physical concepts and metaphysical essences, were curiously intertwined – which is connected to the fact, of course, that the ancient concepts are essentially secularized gods.

Something of this archaic wavering, this archaic ambiguity, survived throughout Greek philosophy. And it cannot be properly understood if the distance separating it from us, which I mentioned early in these lectures,[3] is not respected, and these concepts are simply translated into ours. So that if Aristotle speaks of matter, he is referring neither to the philosophically sublimated concept of matter which is found in modern philosophy, nor simply to the animated matter of primeval times, since both these moments, the metaphysical and the physical, are not yet strictly distinguished in all these concepts. This distinction only occurred at a relatively late state of reflection, though the ground for it was decisively prepared by the radical dualism of matter and form, the divine and the earthly, body and soul, which I spoke of in the last lecture. You may well, therefore, have difficulties – which are logically undeniable and self-evident – in understanding what I illuminated from different sides in my last lecture: that the concept of matter in Aristotle is itself a moment of a principle which has not only an essence of its own but a kind of immanent tendency. The fundamental reason for this difficulty of understanding is, no doubt, that in such concepts the meaning of the hylozoic element, that is, matter, oscillates between something archaically animated and a pure concept – an echo of both of these is contained within it. And we commit an anachronistic error if we translate these concepts naively into our own kind of conceptuality. For it is first necessary to understand such philosophies before we set about criticizing them – although I do not believe the two activities can seriously be separated. Our modern concepts are the outcome, of course, of many centuries of mathematical science, in which these animistic or hylozoic tendencies have been thoroughly exterminated.

Now the real point in Aristotle's philosophy which bears on the concept of motion is as follows: he teaches not only that form and matter are in themselves something eternal, but that the *relationship* in which form and matter stand to each other is also eternal. As I made clear to you in the last lecture, the real interest of Aristotle, who wanted to combine a largely enlightened, dynamized Hellenistic mode of thinking with Platonic conceptual realism, lies in his explanation of movement, of dynamics. And that is done by the means I indicated to you – by asserting that the relationship of form to matter – and not just the two entities in themselves – was eternal. This thesis of Aristotle's has had incalculable consequences for the history of philosophy. If it can be said of Hegel (as was also mentioned earlier)[4] that his philosophy is at the same time dynamic as a dialectic and ontological as a theory of being – is at the same time static and dynamic – that is, if you like, a continuation or sublimation of one

of the basic theses of western metaphysics, which you find prefigured in Aristotle. But that is not all: in our own time this doctrine of the eternal character of the relationship of matter and form, and thus the doctrine of the eternity of movement, has cropped up again in Heidegger's theory which seeks to grasp historicity or temporality as an invariant, an *Existenzial*, that is, a basic condition of existence.[5] It is clearly always the case, when the dynamic of society, which is reflected in thought, causes the assumption of invariants to become problematic, that philosophy shows a tendency to make that variability, and thus change itself, into an invariant. In this way even change is assimilated into the doctrine of a static ontology, and is thus rescued. And that is precisely what also happens in Aristotle, who was on the one hand a teleological philosopher of development, and on the other a philosopher of being, an ontologist. He extricated himself from the difficulty by ontologizing change itself, as we would put it today. And this in turn had the consequence that, through his conceptual sleight of hand, through his reducing movement to its concept and thereby immobilizing it, change is in reality conjured out of his thought. By being reinterpreted as a condition of being, change is concretely neutralized, in the sense that, in face of this universal mutability, *concrete* changes no longer carry any weight. This idea is also fully consonant with the other basic thesis of Aristotle's that I expounded to you: the one which endows the universal, as against the particular, with both metaphysical and moral priority.

Now, the reason given by Aristotle for this eternal quality of the relationship between the two basic categories, and thus for the eternal nature of movement itself – which, incidentally, was also conceived ontologically by Heraclitus – is none other than that both the genesis and the disappearance of this movement, and thus of the relationship between the two, can in turn only be caused by a movement. Under all conceivable circumstances, therefore, movement must be eternal. Hence the doctrine that movement can never have begun and can never cease. In this way the dynamic itself is made an invariant, is made static. And Goethe's dictum that all striving and struggle amount to everlasting peace in the Lord[6] also has its model in this theory of Aristotle – just to demonstrate that these Aristotelian concepts have indeed become common property of the western mind. Or, to put it differently, it shows how much that which is taken for granted by unreflective consciousness within our culture is dependent on a highly specific philosophy, and – far more important – how much its truth, its validity, itself depends on the validity of the philosophy from which such theses are derived.[7] I repeat yet again that even here, where we are concerned with the concepts of that which moves, with

motion, change, the eternity of movement, they are dealt with by deduction from pure concepts, without regard to their sensible content. And in this procedure of drawing conclusions from pure concepts, more than in the explicit content of the doctrine of the precedence of the universal over the particular, Aristotle's conceptual-realistic or anti-nominalist moment is expressed, although up to now we have had much occasion to talk about precisely the opposite, nominalist moment. Now, according to this kind of deduction, the ultimate reason for eternal movement must be something immobile, otherwise we should arrive at a *regressus ad infinitum*. I have mentioned antiquity's dislike of the concept of infinity,[8] which should really be seen as an aversion rather than a result of mathematical ignorance. It is very characteristic of this outlook that, for Aristotle, the fact that failure to assume such an immobile entity at the outset would have led to an infinite regression was sufficient grounds for assuming the existence of an 'unmoved mover', or, as he calls it, a ἀκίνητον κινοῦν, that is, something which, unmoved itself, moves all things. And with this concept we have made the transition from Aristotelian metaphysics to what might perhaps be called Aristotelian theology.

Perhaps I might remind you here that I said to you earlier[9] that metaphysics in the precise sense I have set out here is both a critique and a reprise, a resumption, of theology. It is a peculiarity of metaphysical thinking – it is, I might almost say, one of the invariants of metaphysical thinking, which are repeated over and over again in its history – that the conceptual operations it performs, which aim initially at something like a critique of mythological beings, repeatedly end in reinstating these mythical beings, or the divinity; but it no longer does so in a belief in the direct experience or the sensible perceptibility or the substantial existence of the divinities or divinity, but *on the basis of conceptual thought*. What I said earlier about the rescuing intention which accompanies the critical aim of all metaphysics now takes on its precise meaning, which is quite simply that metaphysics attempts to rescue through concepts what it simultaneously calls into question through its critique. That is a moment which can be traced through the entire history of western metaphysics. Now, in Aristotle this first and unmoved thing, or this first and unmoved being, this ἀκίνητον κινοῦν, is immaterial; it is form without matter, it is pure actuality. The later medieval concept of the *actus purus* is a direct translation of this notion of the prime mover as the purely immaterial being. Aristotle harks back here to a doctrine I have also described to you,[10] and which only now, so to speak, bears fruit in the economy of his thought – and, in general, the theorems of thinkers are apt to have their origins very far from the *terminus ad quem*;

that is to say that they are conceived in such a way that they only yield a profit at the end, if I may express it so vulgarly. I am saying, therefore, that only here does the doctrine that matter, as something fortuitous, could always equally well be other than it is, come to fruition, only here does it come into its own. Only the incorporeal, according to Aristotle, is immutable and absolutely immobile: you have here, therefore, in this doctrine of the ultimate being as something at the same time immobile, immutable and incorporeal, the basic thesis of objective idealism – although, and I repeat this too,[11] the reflection on the subject which this idealism later carries through is not performed in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. Here, practically everything which in Hegel, whose thought can be seen as running closely parallel to Aristotle's, is developed by transcendental analysis, that is, from absolute and pure subjectivity, is attributed, *in intentione recta*, to principles or concepts existing in themselves. Form is the perfect being and matter the imperfect – and from that Aristotle concludes that the prime mover, as pure form, and on account of its very purity, is the absolutely perfect.

You find here two moments which became very important in the later history of western thought and to which I should like to draw your special attention. First there is the affirmative and optimistic moment possessed by almost all great metaphysical systems. It holds that just because form is the perfect and matter the imperfect, and because form is in every sense given priority over reality, reality is thereby itself made into something positive which, if not perfect, at least tends towards perfection. This affirmative trait which has accompanied philosophy for so long is already present in Plato and, as you see here, in Aristotle too. That is to say, that by reducing the world to its concept and making the concept the supreme and perfect entity, this thinking already has the tendency to justify the world itself in its current state of being so and not otherwise. The second of these moments that I want to point out to you is that the conclusion that the prime mover must be the absolutely perfect entity is an ancient precursor of the ontological proof of God. Absolute perfection and absolute reality are equated, since reality for Aristotle is precisely ἐνέργεια, that which has become form and to that extent is the higher. However – unlike St Anselm of Canterbury later – Aristotle does not draw conclusions about existence from the concept of perfection, but concludes from the structure of existence – the structure of the precedence of form over matter – that the being of God must arise virtually out of pure thought. Furthermore – and this, too, is in agreement with motifs of the later Plato which date back in the history of philosophy to Pythagoreanism – the prime mover must necessarily be only *One*.

That is to say that it is itself the ultimate purpose – and apart from this ultimate purpose, this *οὗ ἕνεκα* or *τέλος*, no other purpose is conceivable. This is where you find the idealistic motif most strongly, as the antithesis between unity, as the unity of subjectivity, and the diversity of diffuse and divergent nature, is the real theme of any idealist philosophy. What is astonishing is that the whole *instrumentarium*, if you like, of later idealism is to be found in Aristotle, although that which was later to constitute its conceptual foundation, the reference to the thinking subject, is not yet explicitly present. But he nowhere comes closer to what in the later terminology can be called the principle of identity than here, where he deals with the oneness of the prime mover. This proposition is arrived at by Aristotle, however, more or less from the empirical side, just as, indeed, it is one of the basic endeavours of his metaphysics to present metaphysical propositions as if they not only agreed with the observations of natural science but were necessarily generated by them. To this extent, one might say anachronistically, Aristotle is really much like a philosopher of the seventeenth century. From the oneness of the world and the oneness of movement as he conceives it, he deduces cosmologically the absolute oneness of the prime mover.

What I said about the transition of Aristotle's metaphysics to theology can be seen most clearly here, for in this notion of the absolutely single prime mover, which for purely logical reasons – that is, by virtue of the theory of movement – can tolerate no other beside it, you already find Christian monotheism speculatively prefigured in Greek philosophy. And it is undoubtedly no accident that Plato, who certainly did not want to be guilty of impiety towards Greek polytheism, speaks very often, at least through the mouth of Socrates, of *ὁ θεός*, the god, and not of *οἱ θεοί*, the gods. In this, the doctrine of the absolutely unitary prime mover is in complete agreement with the immanently monotheistic tendency of speculative philosophy, which is already hinted at in the principle of the oneness of synthesis as opposed to the multiplicity of the material of experience – or, as it is called here, of matter or mere potentiality. The decisive breakthrough of what I have called Aristotle's objective, but not yet self-aware, idealism occurs in the proposition – and this is indeed an openly idealist proposition – that the prime mover as absolutely incorporeal spirit is, to use Aristotle's term, *νοῦς*;[12] the expression *νοῦς* is derived from the word *νοεῖν*, which in Greek means much the same as 'to think', in the sense of the subjective activity of thinking. This goes back to the famous proposition of Parmenides, that being – which Parmenides understands as nothing other than absolute and abstract oneness – is the same as thinking.[13] I am well aware that in modern

philological criticism the meaning of this proposition of Parmenides is a subject of controversy.[14] And there will no doubt be not a few classical philologists who will refuse to reduce this νοῦς and the νοεῖν associated with it to the subjective human mind. In this they will undoubtedly be in accord with Aristotle's explicit intention; without question, Aristotle would have said precisely the same thing. Nevertheless, it might reasonably be wondered whether, without such a νοεῖν, without the model derived from the human activity of thinking, this notion of pure, self-sufficient thought would have been conceivable at all. Consequently, although this reflection on subjectivity does not take place in Aristotle, it is palpably close – if anything as insubstantial as pure thought can be referred to as palpable. That is to say, that a different model for this pure and disembodied actuality of the divinity as the pure act of thought simply cannot be found. It is the point at which the project for an objective ontology clashes with the concept and violently absorbs it, and this in turn implies the recourse to subjectivity on which all idealist metaphysics is founded.

The ultimate ground of all movement, therefore – to state the matter in Aristotelian terms – is the divinity itself as pure and perfect mind or spirit (*Geist*). Its activity – so Aristotle's argumentation runs – can only consist in thought. This is the working out of the idea of νοῦς as the truly absolute entity; I would remind you in passing that the concept of νοῦς in this strong, metaphysical sense has a long prehistory going back to Anaxagoras. The activity of the pure, divine spirit can only consist in thought because, according to this philosophy, any other activity – that is, what is understood by praxis both in the moral sense, πράττειν, and in the sense of making things, ποιεῖν – has its purpose outside itself, whereas that is inconceivable in the case of the first, pure, self-sufficient being. This can have its purpose only in itself; it is purpose to itself alone.[15] That is the justification for the proposition that god is pure actuality and is not determined by a purpose lying outside himself; that is the argumentation underlying Aristotle's doctrine of the *actus purus*. Now, this argument has a further, extraordinarily far-reaching consequence in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. This pure activity of the mind, which has no purpose outside itself, is equated by Aristotle with θεωρία – pure, purposeless thinking related to no real praxis. And the apotheosis of pure thought, pure contemplation regarded as an end in itself without any relation to anything existing outside it – that is, the absolute status granted to pure mental activity, which is the foundation of everything which has later in a precise sense been called western culture, and against which the fiercest criticism of idealism has been directed – that apotheosis had its origin in this theoretical concept of Aristotle's.[16]

This apotheosis also leaves its imprint on his ethics, in that the latter gives precedence to the so-called dianoetic virtues – the virtues residing in pure contemplation and self-reflection without regard to action – over all other virtues. Thinking, unlike praxis, is sufficient unto itself. It is as if the separation of physical and mental work, which is connected to the process of the division of labour and in which mental work has gained preponderance over physical labour, has now been reflected ideologically (one would have to say) by metaphysics. That which has now proved the dominant principle, namely λόγος, and with it the people who are dispensed from physical work, is justified as the higher entity in and for itself, while no consideration is given to the necessary dependence of mind on that over which it rules and from which it has severed itself. That this marks a crucial historical turning point in ancient philosophy has often been pointed out, and you do not need me to present it to you as a great discovery. It means, however, that the glorification of pure theory as against praxis in the *polis* – a praxis which had been regarded as the highest category by the Pythagoreans and still played a decisive role in Plato – originated at a time (and Aristotle was, after all, the teacher and contemporary of Alexander the Great) when the possibility of autonomous political activity by the individual had been reduced to a minimum, and when the individual was thus thrown back willy-nilly on reflection. Political praxis, as it had been carried on in accordance with traditional Greek – that is, Athenian or Attic – democracy, was no longer possible. And out of this necessity, this deprivation, the metaphysicizing of theory, which was taken to be the principle of the divinity itself, made not only a virtue, but the highest virtue. Accordingly, the object of divine thought could only be divine thought itself, because, as pure thought, it abided within itself.[17] You will be reminded here of the later Hegel's definition of logic as a game the world spirit plays with itself[18] – and I would remind you that for Hegel, very much as for Aristotle, metaphysics and logic were really the same thing.[19] But I can only indicate this idea here, and must save its more detailed elaboration for the next lecture.

LECTURE THIRTEEN

13 July 1965

Today I should like to bring to an end my exposition of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, and the reflections on it that we have been pursuing together. I would remind you that the object of divine thought, according to Aristotle, can only be divine thought itself. What is quite remarkable about this thesis is that – despite the fact that I have told you *ad nauseam* that subjective reflection, reference to the subject of knowledge, does not play any part in his philosophy, at least as a theme – this thesis in fact represents the extreme point reached by subjective idealism through subjective reflection. For in idealism it is the case that if everything is finally reducible to mind, then the content of mind, that which itself is not mind, the not-I, nevertheless *is* mind; and that consequently the absolute, which corresponds in Aristotle to the divine principle, can have nothing other than itself as its content. The argumentation used by Aristotle to reach this conclusion is significantly different from that which I have indicated to you here. It is – how shall I say? – statically, hierarchically ontological, and *not* dialectical. It maintains that the value or validity of thinking depends on its content; but since the highest content which thought could have is the divine mind itself, then the content of the divine mind is – the divine mind! Accordingly, in the highest thoughts, subject and object coincide, just as they do later in absolute idealism; that is to say, the thought and the thinking are held to be the same. I would point out in passing that in this thesis, put forward with a certain innocence by Aristotle, there is manifested a paradox or an absurdity which disappears in the more sophisticated presentation of these ideas at the height

of German idealism. We should not be persuaded, however, that it has ceased to exist; and we come across it, indeed we positively collide with it, when we meet these infinitely complex and difficult speculative ideas in their elementary form in Aristotle. For in his case we are obliged to ask the question which must be addressed to all idealism: what does mind, or thinking, or knowledge really amount to, if it only thinks itself? Does this not make thought itself, and thus the absolute which thought is supposed to be, one single, immense tautology?

This moment recurs later, as I said, in idealism; but in Aristotle it is open to view in all its crassness. And the god who actually thinks nothing but himself is not wholly unlike the navel-gazer we can see downstairs in this building, in the form of the statue of the so-called sage,[1] who gives us the feeling that he represents being and reflects on being; and that what being says to him is only: being, being, being. I should say in fairness that this joke is not my own, but goes back to an admittedly somewhat different formulation of Hegel's. In a polemic against Jacobi he remarked that the thought which immersed itself in the concept of being reminded him of the Tibetan rite of the prayer-wheel, in which the worshippers constantly say nothing but 'om', 'om', 'om'.[2] I don't wish to be disrespectful towards Aristotle, but if for a moment one steps outside the intellectual edifice – I almost said, the cathedral – which is his thought, such ideas do enter one's mind. In his work this notion is expressed in the absolutely idealist formulation that the thinking of god – Hegel would say: the thinking of the world spirit – is a thinking of thinking or, to use the supreme formulation of this principle in Aristotle: the *νόησις νοήσεως*, the thinking of thinking.[3] Now the scientist in Aristotle was clearly not too comfortable on this summit of his thought, and he justified the idea of the *νόησις νοήσεως* by saying that the beatitude of god lay in his self-contemplation – a motif which became crucial to the whole of medieval theology. Ideas such as that human beings are created as finite and sinful creatures because God wants to be loved in freedom, for his own sake as the absolute, by finite and fallible beings, are transparently related to this motif. But this interpretation of divine thought as *νόησις νοήσεως* is so extraordinarily fertile because – and this is perhaps still more important than the conception of the absolute it contains – it amounts to something like a guide to the beatific life or a guide to reason, since, in keeping with the Aristotelian principles of analogy and teleology, the human mind should approximate itself to the divine spirit as closely as it possibly can. Now, this idea already contains the whole programme of philosophy as self-reflection. One might almost say that since Aristotle philosophy in general has been the implementation of just this *νόησις νοήσεως* that he ascribes to the

divine principle as the primal image of all philosophy. One might embark here, incidentally, on some reflections along the lines of Feuerbachian enlightenment, to the effect that the idea that the divinity derives happiness from self-contemplation contains a quite impermissible anthropomorphism – moreover, a narcissistic and thus a psychological anthropomorphism. Following up Feuerbach's motif, one might argue that the force of egoism, the stunting of human beings which prevents them from loving and makes them capable of loving only themselves – one might argue that this narcissistic tendency, this diversion of the capacity of love onto the self, is here projected onto the divinity in order to endow it with absolute metaphysical justification, whereas one might ask what sort of a divinity it is which, instead of loving its creatures, loves only itself. But great minds have not been much troubled by this for the past few thousand years.

All the same, this idea does contain a moment which is very important for the concept of philosophy – the model of self-reflection. If divine thought is regarded as the thinking of thinking, then precisely the *intentio obliqua* which does not appear as such in Aristotle's thought – that the essential principle of philosophy does not lie in its thinking about objects or about what is different from itself, but in reflecting *on itself* – is anticipated as a metaphysical principle.[4] To that extent one might say that this *intentio obliqua*, which is only carried out much later in the history of philosophy, is already prefigured dialectically, *in intentione recta*, in this definition of the absolute as the thinking of its own thought. Moreover, for the professor of physics which Aristotle also was, this metaphysics also yielded an immediate profit – if you will once more permit me such a slovenly manner of speech. The remarkable thing is that this immense sublimation of the divine spirit, which really amounts to nothing other than its self-reflection, represents a kind of unburdening of the empirical world. In my *Metakritik der Erkenntnistheorie*, using the example of Husserl's philosophy, which takes up many motifs from antiquity, I tried to characterize this phenomenon as the sacrifice of the empirical.[5] That is to say that through this very contentment with his own self-contemplation, God abandons the world. In Aristotle's *Metaphysics* this abandonment is expressed in the doctrine that although all creation, all matter, all finitude moves towards the absolute principle, that principle does not act directly on the world, does not go outside itself. God does not turn the world towards himself; rather, teleology is brought about by the mere existence of god, as a kind of structurally logical hierarchy. This marks a clear boundary between Aristotle's thought and theology, in that the former is turned towards the world, towards existence. If I might give you a further perspective

on the history of metaphysics: you will not find it hard to recognize this motif, that the unmoved mover remains outside movement, in the much later theory of deism, which amounted to an attempt to reconcile the old theological heritage with the scientific Enlightenment. However, although, for Aristotle, the highest good is also the highest purpose, towards which everything strives and everything moves, this is only the case within the context of his hierarchical thinking, which distinguishes various gradations of purpose – and not in the sense of a divine intervention or influence.

I would remark in passing that the whole of philosophy abounds with formulations such as that the highest good is at the same time the highest purpose. If you open any book on any metaphysical philosopher you will always – especially when you get towards the conclusion – hear such things as: the highest purpose is also the highest good, or: perfect beauty is also perfect truth, or: in the absolute, existence and essence prove to be the same; and so forth. For the moment I would only urge you, when you come across such general metaphysical equations in your studies of the history of philosophy, to be slightly on guard, and to derive from them a certain mistrust of metaphysics. For if philosophy really is the capacity for differentiation, the ability to distinguish in thought, instead of reducing everything to an abstract formula, then, to be sure, one would expect philosophy to relate its highest categories to one another and not leave them isolated; but if they are all to be one, that would give rise to something like the night for which Hegel took Schelling to task – the night in which all cats are grey.[6] It is a kind of evidence against the substantiality of ontology – against the claim that ontology really does have access to the essences it purports to isolate – that it is never able to sustain these essences separately, but in the end posits them all as one, without being able to maintain their separateness within this oneness. One of the few thinkers of the rationalist or metaphysical type who noticed this, incidentally, was Lessing, who, as far as I know, was the first representative of that tradition to oppose, and polemically attack, this notion of oneness, this undifferentiated identity of the highest principles.[7] Traditional philosophy gives us serious grounds to mistrust it, I believe, whenever it resolves everything into one, into identity, in a kind of grand finale, since it thereby forgoes the very concreteness which its results ought to have.

And, unless I am mistaken, it was not the least of Hegel's motives in developing his dialectic that he attempted both to retain an ontological basic structure and to do justic to differences – although, in the end, everything turns out to be the same in his philosophy too. In my opinion it is very difficult to distinguish the postulation of absolute

identity from actual uniformity, indeed monotony, in which nothing differs from anything else – an all-ness of thought which actually says nothing at all. At any rate, the physicist Aristotle can credit himself with the fact that there is no creative activity of God, no intervention in the world's course in his *Metaphysics*. In this, through the extraordinary tension and sublimation of the metaphysical concept in his thought, he is entirely a philosopher of the Hellenist enlightenment. And one almost finds oneself entertaining the blasphemous idea that the Epicurean theory of the absolute detachment of the gods, who let human existence pass before them as a kind of spectacle[8] – a theory which appeared not long after Aristotle – is itself a Peripatetic legacy not very far removed from this conception of Aristotle's. I would point out, incidentally, that the systematic division that was made, even in antiquity, and precisely in the Hellenistic period, between the four great schools – the Platonic Academy, the Aristotelian Peripatetics, Stoics and Epicureans – was itself a kind of administrative compartmentalization. In reality, the transitions within such an epoch in which, for social reasons, certain ideas necessarily impressed themselves on thinkers of all shades, were incomparably more fluid than this schoolroomish division might lead us to expect. Later, too, in patristic philosophy and, above all, in the transitions between ancient and Christian philosophy, these schools were not distinguished nearly as sharply as schoolroom usage suggests. I believe that if one were to elaborate systematically the elements in Aristotle that I have just described, perhaps slightly anachronistically, as Hellenistic, the differences between the two specifically Hellenistic schools, Stoicism and Epicureanism, would diminish. Now, Ladies and Gentlemen, with this historical reflection – no, reflection is too presumptuous a term – with this historical note I will bring to an end what I wanted to say to you about Aristotle.

One could, fully in keeping with what I have sketched for you, write a history of the whole of metaphysics on the basis of Aristotle. The task would be to analyse what became of his categories – and for what reasons, whether immanent philosophical ones or others imposed from outside. Here, of course, one needs to be aware that it would be a crude and primitive approach to assume that there are, on the one hand, social modifications to thought and, on the other, something like an internal development of its categories. This brings us to a proposition relating to the history of philosophy, or a theory of intellectual history, that I should like to develop somewhat, although I cannot pursue it too far. It is that social motifs – in this case the powerlessness of the individual, the retreat into private life, all the

moments we call Hellenistic – do not influence thought from outside, but that, in a way which is difficult to pin down and which has not been analysed in principle up to now, they impinge on the immanent coherence of thought itself, making themselves felt in the internal argumentation of the individual philosopher. If a theoretician of intellectual history were to attempt to understand this highly remarkable connection, which establishes within a philosophy a logic which is in curious harmony with social experiences imposed from outside, without that philosophy having to adapt itself externally to them, that would be an extremely important task. Perhaps there is someone among you who will seriously take up this question. Using the example of a number of Aristotelian categories, I have set out for you in paradigmatic or exemplary form (as one says today) what became of those categories. But as I have promised to hold a series of lectures on the concept and problems of metaphysics, and have neither the intention nor the time to give you an entire history of metaphysics, I cannot pursue this question further. Instead I think I should use the last lectures to express some reflections on metaphysics which are located at the opposite historical extreme: that is, reflections on metaphysics which seem to me timely and unavoidable today. You will understand that in doing so I shall have to adopt a more hypothetical and sometimes indicative approach than in the account I have given you up to now. However, I think I can promise that you will find the ideas I shall present to you in the next lectures fully developed in my book, of which I am beginning to get an overview.[9] But before I pass on to those questions, I should like to consider one further matter of general principle.

Please cast your minds back to what I said earlier[10] about the history of metaphysics, a history prefigured in Aristotle, which I presented as an attempt to rescue categories which were originally theological, but to do so by means of a rational critique, that is, by reason. It could therefore be said that metaphysics is a translation of theological conceptions into categories of reason, that it is a conceptualization of those conceptions. This could perhaps be more fully demonstrated using Plato's doctrine of Ideas, since he was closer to theology than the much more empirical and scientific Aristotle. And if it were demonstrated that, through these mechanisms of conceptualization, conceptual thought was installed as the authority responsible for metaphysics and the absolute, that would imply that conceptual thought and the concept itself had become, as it were, the legal basis of metaphysics. That conclusion, that metaphysics had been turned into thinking, could also be drawn from the thesis of the thinking of thinking, of metaphysics as the concept which had become aware of itself. Now, that is indeed

the case, and has been the case in almost all ontologies, and is especially so in what are called rationalist philosophies, in which you can observe over and over again that the structure of being is declared to be identical to the structure of thought. Ontology as the doctrine of the basic constitutive concepts of being really means only that the basic structures of thought are elevated to categories of being. This, too, is a principle that was first expressed by Hegel, with a trenchancy and radicalism that I can indicate by citing his proposition that logic is at the same time metaphysics.[11] But what I should like you to see is that this hypostasis of the pure forms of thinking as the forms of being is already implied in the transition from theological thinking to metaphysical speculation. For by attaching metaphysics firmly to the categories of thought, thought sets itself up as the justification of metaphysics and, by claiming jurisdiction over it, implicitly asserts that it is itself metaphysics – even if it does not yet overtly admit as much. So if the question of metaphysics is raised today, I would say – and this may prepare you for the matters which are going to occupy us – that the basic question in discussing metaphysics is the one concerning the legitimacy of this equation. If one thinks about metaphysics today – and we have no choice, we have lost our innocence: metaphysics can no longer be anything other than a *thinking* about metaphysics – this presupposes a kind of critical self-reflection of thought, in the sense that, through such self-reflection of thought and of the pure forms of thought, one asks oneself whether thought and its constitutive forms are *in fact* the absolute. For, overtly or latently, that is really the thesis of the whole metaphysical tradition. Perhaps it would not be immodest of me to refer in this context to the first chapter of *Metakritik der Erkenntnistheorie*, entitled 'Kritik des logischen Absolutismus' (Critique of logical absolutism).[12] In it I attempt to do what I have just sketched for you, but in the opposite direction, by posing the question of the absolute validity of the logical forms themselves, and calling that validity into question in an immanent analysis carried out from a dialectical standpoint. And if the pure forms of thought, which are manifested most consummately in pure logic, are not the absolute they understand themselves to be, the conclusion to be drawn would be that thought itself, as something conditioned and enmeshed in conditionality, cannot be made into the absolute it has always claimed to be in traditional metaphysics. In my book I did not draw this conclusion as explicitly as I am doing now, and that is why I am bringing that text to your attention, as a kind of transition to the matters we are about to consider.

The method I shall adopt in the ideas I am about to develop is, however, quite different. I told you that in these last lectures I would

like to start from extreme positions. And so I shall now consider – as far as can be done with any claim to general validity – the possible status of what might be called *metaphysical experience* today. What is meant by metaphysical experience you will, of course, only gather more precisely from what I am about to explain in some detail. I will not be giving away a big secret – and will perhaps just provoke a laugh – if I tell you that, for me, there seems to be no possible treatment of the question of metaphysics other than the dialectical one. Now, a dialectical treatment cannot suppose – and I come here to the specific nature of the experience I wish to talk about – that the immutable is true and substantial while the transient is inferior and despicable, a mere mode or deception of the senses, as which it has been tirelessly denounced by philosophers since Plato. If we start from an awareness that, for us, the equation of the immutable with the good, the true and the beautiful has been simply refuted, then the content of metaphysics is changed. And what I want to explain to you first is the historical compassion which prevents one from presupposing such an immutability, and thus changes the contents of metaphysics. In the light of what we have experienced in our time – and I am aware that, in the face of these experiences, the form of a lecture, and the attempt even to touch on such things in the language of philosophy and from the vantage point of a lectern, has something unseemly, ridiculous, even shameless about it (yet one cannot get away from it) – these experiences, I say, change the content of metaphysics. The mutual indifference of the temporal world and ideas, which has been asserted throughout metaphysics, can no longer be maintained. There are isolated motifs scattered in the history of ideas which hint at this. And, curiously enough, they are to be found less in the history of philosophy, if you leave aside certain elements in Hegel, than in heretical theology – that is to say, in mystical speculation, which has always been essentially heretical and has always occupied a precarious position within institutional religions. I am thinking here of the mystical doctrine – which is common to the Cabbala and to Christian mysticism such as that of Angelus Silesius – of the infinite relevance of the intra-mundane, and thus the historical, to transcendence, and to any possible conception of transcendence. The supposition of a radical separation, *χωρισμός*, between the intra-mundane realm and the transcendental, which is one of the keystones of the metaphysical tradition, is highly problematic, since it is constantly confronted with evidence showing that it has picked out its eternal values, its immutabilities, from the mutable and from experience, and has then abstracted them. And if a metaphysics were consistent, it would refrain from using apologetics to keep such evidence at bay. A thinking

which is defensive, which attempts to cling to something in the face of compelling objections, is always doomed. The only way a fruitful thinking can save itself is by following the injunction: 'Cast away, that you may gain.'

I mean by this that a metaphysics which fulfilled its own concept, a concept which (even though this may not be admitted) always consists of constellations of forms and contents, concepts and what they comprise, would have radically to assimilate the *relevance of the temporal* to its own concept. It would have to realize that it has been separated only apparently and arbitrarily from its instrument, concepts, and is constantly brought back to them. I should like to say that in our time the primacy which Sartre accords to existence over being and its concept reveals an extraordinarily uncompromising awareness of this state of affairs. The only fault lies in the fact that, precisely from this precedence of existence over essence, Sartre has created a new kind of ontology, a doctrine of essences. To express it crudely in terms of the history of philosophy, he has sought to be at the same time an extreme nominalist and a Heideggerian, two things which cannot be made to agree. But I can only indicate this briefly here. This assimilation of the element of content means that metaphysical experience, or the concept of metaphysics – both in one – present themselves quite differently today. And as a *sign* of this – the word symbol would be wretchedly inadequate, since we are concerned with the most symbolic thing of all – I will take Auschwitz. Through Auschwitz – and by that I mean not only Auschwitz but the world of torture which has continued to exist after Auschwitz and of which we are receiving the most horrifying reports from Vietnam – through all this the concept of metaphysics has been changed to its innermost core. Those who continue to engage in old-style metaphysics, without concerning themselves with what has happened, keeping it at arm's length and regarding it as beneath metaphysics, like everything merely earthly and human, thereby prove themselves inhuman. And the inhumanity which is necessarily present in such an attitude must also infect the concept of a metaphysics which proceeds in this way. It is therefore impossible, I would say, to insist after Auschwitz on the presence of a positive meaning or purpose in being. Here, too, though from a totally different context, I would like to say quite candidly that I am entirely of one mind with Sartre, from whose outlook I am otherwise worlds apart. The affirmative character which metaphysics has in Aristotle, and which it first took on in Plato's teaching, has become impossible. To assert that existence or being has a positive meaning constituted within itself and orientated towards the divine principle (if one is to put it like that), would be, like all the principles of truth, beauty and

goodness which philosophers have concocted, a pure mockery in face of the victims and the infinitude of their torment. And taking this as my reference point, I would like to reflect with you on what I would describe as the completely changed status of metaphysics.

LECTURE FOURTEEN

15 July 1965

At the end of the last lecture I attempted to explain why temporal elements decisively affect our thinking about metaphysics, and have a bearing on metaphysical experience itself. And I should like to say to you straight away that it would be mistaken to take these comments in a purely subjective sense – as meaning that it is more difficult to have metaphysical experiences under present conditions. That would be a complete misunderstanding of what I wish to communicate to you in words which inevitably are far too insipid. Naturally, the subjective difficulty also exists, but given the intertwinement between subjective experience and the objective in this sphere, the two cannot be separated as neatly as it might appear to a naive, unreflecting consciousness, which says that all this just depends on how one happens to feel towards metaphysics today, but changes nothing at all in its objective contents. My thesis is directed against precisely this attitude, and you will only understand me correctly if you take what I have to say in the strong and far from innocuous sense in which it is meant. You will have noticed from my analyses and expositions of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* how far this whole metaphysics is filled by the affirmative side – forgive me, something can hardly be filled by a 'side' – how fundamental the affirmative moment is to this whole conception of metaphysics. You will therefore have seen how far the theory that, even without a divine influence, being is teleologically orientated towards the divine by its own nature – how far that implies that what is meaningful. From this Aristotle draws the conclusion – I mention this to make fully clear the metaphysical problem which

concerns me here – that matter, ὕλη, as that which is represented by possibility, must be endowed with some kind of purposiveness; and he argues this even despite the fact that it is in some contradiction to his own doctrine of possibility as wholly abstract and indeterminate. In face of the experiences we have had, not only through Auschwitz but through the introduction of torture as a permanent institution and through the atomic bomb – all these things form a kind of coherence, a hellish unity – in face of these experiences the assertion that what is has meaning, and the affirmative character which has been attributed to metaphysics almost without exception, become a mockery; and in face of the victims it becomes downright immoral. For anyone who allows himself to be fobbed off with such meaning moderates in some way the unspeakable and irreparable things which have happened by conceding that somehow, in a secret order of being, all this will have had some kind of purpose. In other words, it might be said that in view of what we have experienced – and let me say that it is also experienced by those on whom it was not directly perpetrated – there can be no one, whose organ of experience has not entirely atrophied, for whom the world *after* Auschwitz, that is, the world in which Auschwitz was possible, is the same world as it was before. And I believe that if one observes and analyses oneself closely, one will find that the awareness of living in a world in which that is possible – is possible *again* and is possible *for the first time* – plays a quite crucial role even in one's most secret reactions.

I would say, therefore, that these experiences have a compelling universality, and that one would indeed have to be blind to the world's course if one were to wish *not* to have these experiences. In view of them, the assertion of a purpose or meaning which is formally embedded in metaphysics is transformed into ideology, that is to say, into an empty solace which at the same time fulfils a very precise function in the world as it is: that of keeping people in line. No doubt metaphysics has always had its ideological aspects, and it is not difficult to demonstrate in detail in what ways the great metaphysical systems have functioned ideologically. But unless I am mistaken something like a qualitative leap has taken place at this point. That is to say that although the old metaphysical systems transfigured the existing order by insisting on this moment of meaning, they always had the moment of truth at the same time; they tried to understand that which is, and to gain certainty about the enigmatic and chaotic. And one could always demonstrate in the older metaphysics, no less than in their ideological character, this moment of truth, this increasing power of reason to understand what is opposed to it, and not to be content with mere irrationality. This can be seen most splendidly in the metaphysics

of St Thomas Aquinas, which is an attempt to bring Christian doctrine into agreement with speculative thought, and therein has the potential to transform what is merely posited and inculcated dogmatically into a kind of critique – however positive this critique may have been in the Thomist philosophy. That is now finished. Such an interpretation of meaning is no longer possible. And I believe I have already said[1] that it seems to me an achievement of Jean-Paul Sartre's that should not be overlooked – although I regard his philosophy as very incoherent and not really adequate as a philosophical structure – that he was the first to formulate this realization without any embellishment. In this he went far beyond Schopenhauer who, of course, was a pessimist in the usual sense and vehemently opposed the affirmative character of metaphysics (as you probably know), especially in its Hegelian form. Nevertheless, in his work he turned even this negativity into a metaphysical principle, the principle of the blind Will which, because it is a metaphysical principle and therefore a category of reflection, contains the possibility of its own negation by human beings. Thus, he also posits the idea of the denial of the Will to Live,[2] a denial which, in view of what has been and continues to be perpetrated on the living and can increase to an unimaginable degree, is an almost comforting idea. I mean that in a world which knows of things far worse than death and denies people the shot in the neck in order to torture them slowly to death, the doctrine of the denial of the Will to Live itself has something of the innocence for which Schopenhauer criticized the theodicies of philosophers.

After the Lisbon earthquake, Voltaire, who had been a follower of Leibniz, abandoned Leibniz's interpretation of the world as the best of all possible worlds, and went over to the empiricism of the most progressive figure of that time, Locke.[3] Admittedly, Leibniz's dictum is not so optimistic as it seems, but refers only to the optimum, the minimum optimum. But what, in the end, is such a limited natural catastrophe compared to the natural catastrophe of society, spreading towards totality, the actuality and potentiality of which we face today – when socially produced evil has engendered something like a real hell? And that situation affects not only metaphysical thought, but, as I showed you in relation to the moment of meaning, the content of metaphysics itself. And perhaps I may add at this point that there seems to me to be hardly anything more contemptible, hardly anything more unworthy of the concept of philosophy, of what philosophy once wanted to be, than the mood, especially widespread in Germany, which amounts to a belief that, just because the absence of meaning is unbearable, those who point out that absence are to be blamed. This mood leads people to draw from the postulate that life in a world

without meaning cannot be endured, the conclusion that (because what should not be cannot be) a meaning must be constructed: because, after all, *there is* a meaning. If I may reveal to you what I really meant by the 'Jargon of Authenticity',[4] I was not just criticizing this or that linguistic cliché – I should not have taken those quite so tragically. What I was really attacking – and if you pick up that little book I would ask you to be quite clear on this point – is precisely the supposition of a meaning on the sole grounds that there must be one since otherwise one could not live: this supposition of a meaning as a *lie*. And in Germany this supposition seems to me to have slipped into the language to a worrying degree, so that it is no longer made explicitly in thought. That is the reason why I attacked a certain linguistic form so energetically in that book.

Briefly, therefore: the traditional compatibility between metaphysical thought and intra-mundane experience has been shattered. As I indicated by the comparison between Voltaire's situation and our own, there has been a kind of switch from quantity to quality. The millionfold death has acquired a form never feared before, and has taken on a very different nuance. Nuance – the word alone is a disgrace in face of what one would like to say and for which language truly lacks words; it actually cannot be said. And that is the strongest proof of how much these things can now be understood only in material terms. Today something worse than death is to be feared. Perhaps I might draw your attention in this context to an essay on torture by Jean Améry, an author otherwise entirely unknown to me, in the latest issue of *Merkur*.[5] The philosophical backbone of the essay, existentialism, does not accord with my own views, but the author does quite admirably express the changes in the rock strata of experience which have been brought about by these things. The change I have in mind can also be expressed, perhaps most simply, by saying that death, in the form it has taken on, no longer accords with the life of any individual. For it is a lie to say that death is an invariant at all times; death, too, is a quite abstract entity; death itself can be a different thing in very different times. Or one might say, if you will not take my literary references amiss, that there is no longer an epic or a biblical death; no longer is a person able to die weary, old and sated with life. Another aspect of the situation I am trying to indicate to you is that old age, with categories such as wisdom and all that goes with it, no longer exists, and that old people, in so far as they are condemned to become aged and too weak to preserve their own lives, are turned into objects of science – the science of gerontology, as it is called. In this way age is seen as a kind of second minority, so that something like a programme of euthanasia carried out by some

future form of inhumanity, of no matter what provenance, becomes foreseeable. Thus, the reconciliation of life, as something rounded and closed in itself, with death, a reconciliation which was always questionable and precarious and, if it existed at all, was probably a happy exception – that reconciliation is out of the question today.

I would say that the approach adopted in *Being and Time* – and here I'd like to make a few more comments on the 'jargon of authenticity' – is perhaps nowhere more ideological than when its author tries to understand death on the basis of 'Dasein's possibility of Being-a-Whole',[6] in which attempt he suppresses the absolute irreconcilability of living experience with death which has become apparent with the definitive decline of positive religions. He seeks, in this way, to rescue structures of the experience of death as structures of *Dasein*, of human existence itself. But these structures, as he describes them, only existed within the world of positive theology, by virtue of the positive hope of resurrection; and Heidegger fails to see that through the secularization of this structure, which he at least tacitly assumes in his work, not only have these theological contents disintegrated, but without them this experience itself is no longer possible. What I really hold against this form of metaphysics is the surreptitious attempt to appropriate theologically posited possibilities of experience without theology. I hasten to add, to avoid misunderstandings, however unlikely, that in view of the historical state of consciousness my remarks should not, of course, be construed as a recommendation of theology, simply on the grounds that, under the protection of religion, it was allegedly easier to die. Now, if one is speaking of the form of death which exists under the absolute controllability of people, including their mass annihilation, one will have to say that from an intramundane standpoint the change signifies that the process of adaptation to which people are subject is posited as *absolute* – just as torture is an extreme form of adaptation. Words such as 'brainwashing' already indicate that by these horrifying means, which include the electric shock treatment of the mentally ill, human beings are to be standardized by force. Any slight difference, any deviation they still possessed in relation to the dominant tendency – that too must be eradicated.

In other words, the change that we are experiencing in metaphysics is on the most fundamental level a change in the self and its so-called substance. It is the liquidation of what the old metaphysics sought to encompass by a rational doctrine of the soul as something existing in itself. Brecht has characterized this experience, though in a very uncertain and ambiguous way, with his formula: 'A man's a man'.[7] I would just point out (but will not be able to go into this in detail in these lectures) that it is here, in the question of the liquidation

of the self or the ego, in the question of depersonalization, that the most unfathomable problems of metaphysics are concealed; for this ego itself, as the incarnated principle of self-preservation, is involved in the context of social guilt right to its innermost core. And in its social liquidation today the self is only paying the price for what it once did by positing itself; repaying the debt of its guilt. This is a horizon of metaphysical speculation that I can only touch on here, since one cannot speak at all seriously about these things without knowing at least whether the concept of the person itself, into which, for so many – for example, Martin Buber, who died recently – the metaphysical substance has withdrawn and concentrated itself, is not precisely the node which needs to be removed in order to liberate that which might be different in human beings. One should not, therefore regard the liquidation of the ego that we are witnessing today as absolutely evil and negative, since to do so would probably be to make into the principle of good and bad something which itself is entangled in evil, and which bears within it an historical dynamic which prevents it from being hypostatized. For people chained to the blind principle of self-preservation under the prevailing social conditions of production, however, this liquidation of the ego is what is most to be feared. And in the present situation, in order to recognize the dialectic between the ego and its disintegration that I have just touched upon, or to gain any insight into present conditions, what is called for is precisely that unyielding and unerring strength of the ego in face of the predominant tendency which is obstructed by the historical tendency and which is realized in fewer and fewer people now. What meets its end in the camps, therefore, is really no longer the ego or the self, but – as Horkheimer and I called it almost a generation ago in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*[8] – only the *specimen*; it is, almost as in vivisection, only the individual entity reducible to the body or, as Brecht put it,[9] the torturable entity, which can be happy if it has time to escape that fate by suicide. One might say, therefore, that genocide, the eradication of humanity, and the concentration of people in a totality in which everything is subsumed under the principle of self-preservation, are *the same thing*; indeed, that genocide is absolute integration. One might say that the pure identity of all people with their concept is nothing other than their death – an idea which, most surprisingly and remarkably, though with a quite different, reactionary accent, is anticipated in the theory in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* by which Hegel equates absolute freedom with death.[10] I do not need to engage polemically with the denunciation of the French Revolution which Hegel had in mind at that point; but it is the case that the early Hegel, with his unparalleled speculative

power, had an inkling of the fact that absolute self-assertion and the absolute negation of all that lives, and thus, finally, genocide, are the same thing, at a time – more than one hundred and fifty years ago – when nothing of that kind was foreseeable within the actual historical perspective. In this connection, a formulation – reported by Kogon in his book on the 'SS state' – which was said to have been used by SS henchmen against earnest Bible scholars moments before their end, made an indelible impression on me. They are said to have told them: 'Tomorrow you shall wind from this chimney as smoke to the heavens.'[11] That is no doubt the most exact formulation of the satanic perversion of the metaphysical idea and of the substance of metaphysics itself that we are forced to witness today.

When I said that these experiences affect everyone, and not only the victims or those who narrowly escaped them, I did not mean only that the experiences I have tried to characterize are of such terrible violence that no one whom they have touched, even from a distance, so to speak, can ever escape them – as Améry says very convincingly in his essay that no one who has once been tortured can ever forget it again, even for a moment.[12] By saying that I also referred to something objective, and, again, my intention in pointing this out is that you should not simply equate the things I am speaking of today with the subjectivity of the person who experiences them. A situation has been reached today, in the present form of the organization of work in conjunction with the maintenance of the existing relations of production, in which every person is absolutely fungible or replaceable, even under conditions of formal freedom. This situation gives rise to a feeling of the superfluity and, if you like, the insignificance of each of us in relation to the whole. That is the reason, located in the objective development of society, for the presence of the feeling I have referred to, even under conditions of formal freedom. I am trying, inadequately as ever, to express these changes for you today, because I have the feeling that to speak of metaphysics without taking account of these things would really be nothing but empty verbiage. In my view, these experiences have such deep objective reasons that they are actually untouched even by political forms of rule, that is, by the difference between formal democracy on the one hand and totalitarian control on the other. That, at least, is how matters have appeared up to now. But we must also be well aware that, just because we live under the universal principle of profit and thus of self-preservation, the individual has nothing more to lose than himself and his life. At the same time – as Sartre has shown in his doctrine of the absurdity of existence – the individual's life, though it is all he has, has become, objectively, absolutely unimportant. Yet what he must know to be meaningless is forced

on him as the meaning of his life; indeed, a life which is really no more than the means to the end of his self-preservation is, by that very fact, bewitched and fetishized as an end. And in this antinomy – on the one hand the debasement of the individual, of the self, to something insignificant, his liquidation, and on the other, his being thrown back on the fact that he no longer has anything but this atomized self which lives our life – in this contradiction lies the horror of the development which I regard it as my duty to present to you today.

I once said that after Auschwitz one could no longer write poetry,[13] and that gave rise to a discussion I did not anticipate when I wrote those words. I did not anticipate it because it is in the nature of philosophy – and everything I write is, unavoidably, philosophy, even if it is not concerned with so-called philosophical themes – that nothing is meant quite literally. Philosophy always relates to tendencies and does not consist of statements of fact. It is a misunderstanding of philosophy, resulting from its growing closeness to all-powerful scientific tendencies, to take such a statement at face value and say: 'He wrote that after Auschwitz one cannot write any more poems; so either one really cannot write them, and would be a rogue or a cold-hearted person if one did write them, or he is wrong, and has said something which should not be said.' Well, I would say that philosophical reflection really consists precisely in the gap, or, in Kantian terms, in the vibration, between these two otherwise so flatly opposed possibilities. I would readily concede that, just as I said that after Auschwitz one *could not* write poems – by which I meant to point to the hollowness of the resurrected culture of that time – it could equally well be said, on the other hand, that one *must* write poems, in keeping with Hegel's statement in his *Aesthetics*[14] that as long as there is an awareness of suffering among human beings there must also be art as the objective form of that awareness. And, heaven knows, I do not claim to be able to resolve this antinomy, and presume even less to do so since my own impulses in this antinomy are precisely on the side of art, which I am mistakenly accused of wishing to suppress. Eastern-zone newspapers even said I had declared my opposition to art and thereby adopted the standpoint of barbarism. Yet one must ask a further question, and this is a metaphysical question, although it has its basis in the total suspension of metaphysics. It is, in fact, curious how all questions which negate and evade metaphysics take on, precisely thereby, a curiously metaphysical character. It is the question whether one can *live* after Auschwitz. This question has appeared to me, for example, in the recurring dreams which plague me, in which I have the feeling that I am no longer really alive, but am just the emanation of a wish of some victim of Auschwitz. Well, the bleaters

of connivance soon turned this into the argument that it was high time for anyone who thought as I did to do away with himself as well – to which I can only respond that I am sure those gentlemen would like nothing better. But as long as I can express what I am trying to express, and as long as I believe I am finding words for what otherwise would find none, I shall not, unless under extreme compulsion, yield to that hope, that wish. Nevertheless, something said in one of the most important plays by Sartre, which for that reason is hardly ever played in Germany, deserves to be taken immensely seriously as a metaphysical question. It is said by a young resistance fighter who is subjected to torture, who asks whether or why one should live in a world in which one is beaten until one's bones are smashed.[15] Since it concerns the possibility of any affirmation of life, this question cannot be evaded. And I would think that any thought which is not measured by this standard, which does not assimilate it theoretically, simply pushes aside at the outset that which thought should address – so that it really cannot be called a thought at all.

LECTURE FIFTEEN

20 July 1965

I do not wish to recapitulate or sum up what I said in the last lecture, but would remind you that we arrived at the idea that the question whether it is still possible to live is the form in which metaphysics impinges on us urgently today. Without being a follower of Spengler one might well compare this situation to that of the philosophy of late antiquity, in which, in response to the same question, people fell back on expedients such as ataraxy, that is, the deadening of all affects, just to be capable of living at all. I cannot undertake a critique of Stoicism here. There is undoubtedly much which impels us towards the Stoic standpoint today, as appears very clearly in some motifs of Heidegger, especially in his early work. But I would say that even this standpoint, although it emphatically embraces the idea of the freedom of the individual, nevertheless has a moment of narrow-mindedness in the sense that it renders absolute the entrapment of human beings by the totality, and thus sees no other possibility than to submit. The possibility of seeing through this situation as a context of guilt concealed through blinding, and thus of breaking through it, did not occur to that entire philosophy. Stoicism did, it is true, conceive for the first time the idea of the all-encompassing context of guilt, but it did not discern the moment of necessary illusion in that context – and that, I would say, is the small advantage that we, with our social and philosophical knowledge, enjoy over the Stoic position. It should be said, at any rate, that the guilt in which one is enmeshed almost by the mere fact of continuing to live can hardly be reconciled any longer with life itself. Unless one makes oneself wholly insensitive one can

hardly escape the feeling – and by feeling I mean experience which is not confined to the emotional sphere – that just by continuing to live one is taking away that possibility from someone else, to whom life has been denied; that one is stealing that person's life. Similarly, a society which in its absurd present form has rendered not work, but people superfluous, predetermines, in a sense, a statistical percentage of people of whom it must divest itself in order to continue to live in its bad, existing form. And if one does live on, one has, in a sense, been statistically lucky at the expense of those who have fallen victim to the mechanism of annihilation and, one must fear, will still fall victim to it. Guilt reproduces itself in each of us – and what I am saying is addressed to us as subjects – since we cannot possibly remain fully conscious of this connection at every moment of our waking lives. If we – each of us sitting here – knew at every moment what has happened and to what concatenations we owe our own existence, and how our own existence is interwoven with calamity, even if we have done nothing wrong, simply by having neglected, through fear, to help other people at a crucial moment, for example – a situation very familiar to me from the time of the Third Reich – if one were fully aware of all these things at every moment, one would really be unable to live. One is pushed, as it were, into forgetfulness, which is already a form of guilt. By failing to be aware at every moment of what threatens and what has happened, one also contributes to it; one resists it too little; and it can be repeated and reinstated at any moment.

It is not my style to justify philosophy just because it is my job, if one may put it so paradoxically. I am aware, heaven knows, how dubious it is to occupy oneself with philosophy in a world like the one in which we live. But – since one always seeks justification for what one does – there is, perhaps, a certain justification for occupying oneself with philosophy in that, as the one form of knowledge which has not yet been departmentalized, split into branches, reified, it seems to me to represent the only chance, within the boundaries of this departmentalized world, of making good at least a part of what, as I have tried to explain to you, is otherwise denied. If one is not oneself capable at each moment of identification with the victims, and of alert awareness and remembrance, philosophy, in the necessary forms of its own reification, is perhaps the only form of consciousness which, by seeing through these matters and making them conscious in a more objective form, can at least do *something*, a small part of that which we are unable to do. And it must be admitted that to do this in a universal way would by far overtax the strength of any individual person. On the other hand, it must be said – when circling around the problems of metaphysics in this connection, as I am doing now – that

the world in which we live arouses a kind of mistrust towards philosophy from a different point of view from the one I have set out up to now. The fact is that the deeper philosophy grows and the further it is removed from the surface of the merely existent, the harder it becomes to free oneself of the feeling that, through its depth and remoteness from mere existence, philosophy is also growing remote from the way things really and actually are, *comment c'est*, as Beckett puts it.[1] One has the feeling that the depth of philosophical reflection, which is necessary as a resistance to all the illusion with which reified consciousness surrounds us, at the same time leads away from the truth, since one sometimes suspects that this same existence which it is the inalienable impulse of philosophy to penetrate and go beyond, is the only thing which exists and is worth reflecting upon *at all*. The considerations concerned with the crisis of the concept and of meaning, and the impossibility of restoring meaning to existence, which I set out in the last lectures, point in exactly this direction. And I believe that you need only to apply these considerations to the question I am presenting to you at this moment and you will quite easily see the problem that, on the one hand, any construction of a meaning, however constituted, is forbidden to us, but that, on the other, the task of philosophy is precisely to *understand*, and not simply to reflect, what happens to be, or to copy it, to use Kant's expression. This has placed philosophy in a true quandary. One sometimes has the feeling that the prevalent positivist science is right in capturing only the most superficial and trivial and thus the most external relationships with its classifying procedures, whereas essence, once disclosed, aims at depth. As a metaphysical thinker, that is, someone who cannot do otherwise than seek to understand, one is sometimes overcome by the eerie suspicion that understanding itself is an illusion that one ought to be rid of, and that precisely the superficial mind which merely registers facts, which one resists with every fibre of one's being, may in the end be right. One must, as it were, include common sense and human triviality in metaphysical meaning; one must incorporate it in speculation as the principle which ensures that the world merely is as it is and not otherwise, if the depth of speculation is not to be false, that is, a depth which confers an *illusory* meaning.

On the other hand, however, the joy of thought, which motivates us to think on metaphysical matters in the first place and to raise the questions I have discussed in the course of these lectures, is simply the joy of elevation, the joy of rising beyond what merely is. And one of the most painful thoughts which can afflict someone who engages in philosophy is that, in giving way to this joy of philosophizing – in

refusing to be bargained out of truth by mere being – one is being lured into a demonic situation by this very truth. If the pedestrian replacement of knowledge by the mere registering, ordering and summarizing of facts were to have the last word against the elevation of thought, truth itself would really be a chimera, and there would be no truth, for truth would be no more than the practicable summarizing and arranging of the merely existent. The suspicion I am expressing here and which, I would say, is an indispensable *moment* of philosophical speculation, is that trivial, positivist awareness may today be closer to the *adaequatio rei atque intellectus* than sublime consciousness. I believe that the only way out of this dilemma would be to reflect on the idea of truth itself, and to grasp truth, not as an *adaequatio*, not as a mere measuring against factual circumstances, but as a procedure adopted towards a being of a quite different nature and dimension, and tied to a quite different procedure of consciousness than mere registration. But in face of this pedestrian or positivist motif that mind really consists in nothing other than counting the feet of the millipede – and I can say that everything I think is just one single resistance to that conception of mind – the impulse opposed to it can probably only survive by adopting the principle: renounce, that you may gain. That is to say, one will not survive by preserving some so-called higher spheres, or what I would prefer to call nature reserves, which reflection is not allowed to touch, but by pushing the process of de-mythologizing, or enlightenment, to the extreme. Only in this, if at all, is there any hope that the philosopher, through his self-reflection, will not end by consummating triviality, the consummation of which is absolute horror. For no matter how one may view the works of Hannah Arendt, and I take an extremely critical view of them, she is undoubtedly right in the identification of evil with triviality.[2] But I would put it the other way round; I would not say that evil is trivial, but that triviality is evil – triviality, that is, as the form of consciousness and mind which adapts itself to the world as it is, which obeys the principle of inertia. And this principle of inertia truly is what is radically evil. I would say, therefore, that if metaphysical thinking today is to have any chance, and is not to degenerate into claptrap about a 'new protectedness' [*neue Geborgenheit*][3] and suchlike nonsense, it will have to cease being apologetic and pointing to something one can hold onto and never lose, and think against itself. And that means that it must measure itself against the ultimate, the absolutely unthinkable, to have any right to be a thinking at all.

Ladies and Gentlemen, in the last lecture I spoke about Auschwitz and said that because of the things which happened there – for which I used only the name Auschwitz, although, of course that name stands

for something unthinkable beyond the unthinkable, namely, a whole historical phase – metaphysics has been changed in its innermost motifs. I could, if you like, give this a moral-philosophical twist and say that Hitler has placed a new imperative on us: that, quite simply, Auschwitz should not be repeated and that nothing like it should ever exist again. It is impossible to found this imperative on logic – it has that in common with the Kantian imperative. When Kant states that his own imperative is simply given, that assertion doubtless contains all kinds of grimly authoritarian and irrationalist elements, but also – as I tried to explain to you in my lectures last semester[4] – an awareness that the sphere of right action does not coincide with mere rationality, that it has an 'addendum'.[5] I believe that an attempt to state as a general law why Auschwitz or the atom bomb or all those things which belong together here should not be repeated would have something utterly feeble about it because it would transfer into the sphere of rationality, which is ultimately the secondary sphere of mind, the right to a jurisdiction which it can only usurp. It is also the case – and this does belong within that sphere – that as soon as one attempts to apply logic here one is drawn into an insoluble dialectic. Consider one of the dreadful semi-colonial wars which are so characteristic of our time, in which one party – and one can always toss a coin to decide which one it is – tortures and commits dreadful atrocities, so that the other is also forced to torture, as it claims, to prevent its opponent from doing so. I do not wish to explore the validity or otherwise of such considerations, but just to say that as soon as one attempts to provide a logical foundation for a proposition such as that one should not torture, one becomes embroiled in a bad infinity; and probably would even get the worst of the logical argument, whereas the truth in this proposition is precisely what falls outside such a dialectic. And I do not think you will misunderstand this statement as advocating a form of irrationalism or a belief in some natural law directly accessible to intuition. All that is far from my intention. What I wish to point out is this practical moment, which does not coincide with knowledge but is constitutive of moral philosophy. The extra-logical element to which I am appealing – to make this quite clear and to rule out any irrationalism – is really that which is conjured away by philosophy and rationalism. But what they conjure away is not irrational moments or values, as is claimed, but the converse: it is quite simply the moment of aversion to the inflicting of physical pain on what Brecht once called the torturable body[6] of any person.

If I say to you that the true basis of morality is to be found in bodily feeling, in identification with unbearable pain, I am showing you from a different side something which I earlier tried to indicate

in a far more abstract form. It is that morality, that which can be called moral, i.e. the demand for right living, lives on in openly materialist motifs. The metaphysical principle of the injunction that 'Thou shalt not inflict pain' – and this injunction is a metaphysical principle pointing beyond mere facticity – can find its justification only in the recourse to material reality, to corporeal, physical reality, and not to its opposite pole, the pure idea. Metaphysics, I say, has slipped into material existence. Precisely this transition of metaphysical questions and, if I might state it so grandly, of metaphysics itself to the stratum of the material, is what is repressed by the conniving consciousness, the official yes-saying of whatever ilk. As a child, I believe, one still knows something about this stratum – with the dim knowledge children have of such things. It is the zone which later materialized literally in the concentration camps; as a child one had an inkling of it in subliminal experiences – as when the dog-catcher's van drove by, or suchlike things: one knew that that was the most important thing of all, that was what really mattered, the zone of the carcass and the knacker. And this unconscious knowledge – that that was the most important thing to know – is, no doubt, hardly less significant than infantile sexuality, which, as Freud has demonstrated, is extremely closely related to this sphere and has a very great deal to do with it. I would say that this feeling that the most wretched physical existence, as it confronts us in these phenomena, is connected to the highest interests of humanity, has hardly been thought through properly up to now, but has been only skirted by thought. I believe the education we undergo as students is perhaps the only place where we find out anything about these matters – in anatomy in the study of medicine. And the terrible excitement which that zone arouses in students in their first semester – all this seems to point to the fact that that is where the truth is hidden, and that the most important thing of all is to divest ourselves of the civilizing mechanisms which, again and again, blind us to that sphere. It is almost as if philosophy – and most of all the great, deep, constructive philosophy – obeyed a single impulse: to get away from the place of carrion, stench and putrefaction. And just because of this distance, which gains its depth from that most wretched place, philosophy is no doubt in perennial danger of itself becoming something just as thin, untrue and wretched. I would remark in passing that the reflections I am presenting to you, however fragmentary they may be, may perhaps help you to understand why the dramas of Beckett, which, as you know,[7] seem to me to be the only truly relevant metaphysical productions since the war, constantly end up in this sphere. And the cheap jibe that Beckett can never get away from urns, refuse bins and sand-heaps in which people vegetate

between life and death – as they actually vegetated in the concentration camps – this jibe seems to me just a desperate attempt to fend off the knowledge that these are exactly the things which matter.

If one realizes that everything we call culture consists in the suppression of nature and any uncontrolled traces of nature, then what this culture finds most unbearable are those places where it is not quite able to control natural manifestations, where they intrude persistently into its own domain, as in the case of the dark stratum I just spoke about. It might be said that culture banishes stench because it itself stinks – which Brecht once formulated in the truly magnificent and inspired statement that humanity up to now had built itself an immense palace of dogshit.[8] I believe that culture's squalid and guilty suppression of nature – a suppression which is itself a wrongly and blindly natural tendency of human beings – is the reason why people refuse to admit that dark sphere. And if one really wants to cure philosophy of its ideological, dissembling character, which has reached an almost unendurable level today, then this is probably the *τόπος νοητός*, the point of recognition, where that transformation should be achieved. If what I have tried to explain – in extreme terms – about the concept of culture is true, and if it is the case that philosophy's only *raison d'être* today is to gain access to the unsayable, then it can be said that Auschwitz and the world of Auschwitz have made clear something which was not a surprise to those who were not positivists but had a deep, speculative turn of mind: that culture has failed to its very core. This was also stated by Marx in the magnificent formulations in his drafts for *Capital* which he later suppressed, in which he spoke of the narrow-mindedness of all culture up to that time.[9] The same idea was, of course, expressed by Nietzsche who, because his attention was fixated on the cultural superstructure, peered more deeply into it than any other. The reason can be seen most clearly in the fact that philosophy, art and rational science have not really impinged on human beings, to whom they are necessarily addressed as their ideal subject. I recall a visit to Bamberg, when the question was raised whether the spectacle of the indescribably beautiful and intact town, partly medieval and partly Baroque, had had even a slightly beneficial influence on the people living there. If I only mention the word 'Bamberg', I think the question answers itself.[10]

But when I speak of culture, more is at stake than its failure in relation to human beings, for the autonomy which culture has acquired cannot be cancelled simply by demanding that it should now address itself to human beings, that it should be something for them or give something to them. Culture, especially in its great manifestations, is not some kind of social, pedagogical institution, but has its truth – if

it has any – only within itself. And it can only fulfil what might be its meaning for human beings by *not* thinking of them but by being purely and consistently formed within itself. However, such is the blindness of the world's course that any such tendency is generally held against culture as a lack of love, a failure to adapt in the specific way people require. But, leaving that aside, I believe that untruth is also lodged in the autonomous zones of mind. And if I give such prominence to what can be criticized in the products of the objective mind, in a way which may make some of you uncomfortable, I do so because I believe it essential, in liberating human beings from the veil of ideology, to make them aware of the moment of untruth precisely where it mistakes itself for truth, and mindlessness for mind. We see this perhaps most clearly in the area which, many years ago, directly after my return from America, I called the resurrected culture,[11] a culture which was rehashing its traditional values of truth, beauty and goodness as if nothing had happened. For this whole sphere of resurrected culture is itself precisely the refuse, the rubbish from which, as I said earlier, culture is trying to escape. This resurrected culture resembles the ruins it has cleared away; having removed them it then reinstalled itself on them in the wretchedly makeshift way which is symbolically revealed by the outward image of our rebuilt cities. This culture has now become *wholly* the ideology which, through the division between mental and physical work, it has always *partly* been. In face of this, one is caught in an antinomy; for anyone who pleads for the preservation of this culture makes himself an accomplice of its untruth and of ideological illusion in general; but whoever does not do so and demands the creation of a *tabula rasa*, directly promotes the barbarism over which culture had elevated itself and which the mediations of culture had actually moderated. Not even silence leads out of this circle, since he who keeps silent, who says nothing at all – and, heaven knows, the temptation to do that is strong enough – not only attests to his incapacity to say what needs to be said, but interprets this subjective incapacity as permitting a serene detachment with regard to objective truth. The abolition of culture as perpetrated in the eastern bloc, that is, culture's transformation into a mere instrument of power, only combats like with like, since culture has always been enmeshed with power. But this abolition is not, itself, better than culture, but even worse, since it strangles even the element of promise and hope which culture had contained and which went beyond the ever-sameness of control, and turns it back into direct oppression – while trying to convince people that this state of direct oppression is freedom. In pointing to this cultural and philosophical antinomy, therefore, I believe I have also expressed a political one.

LECTURE SIXTEEN

22 July 1965

I am afraid you may be thinking[1] that I have adjourned the discussion of metaphysical subjects by enquiring into the possibility of saying anything about those subjects. But that enquiry has not been into a particular subject, of whatever kind, as happens in the current idealist theories, but into culture itself. I appear to be measuring metaphysics by the state of culture, making the answers to so-called metaphysical questions depend on a consciousness of the historico-cultural situation, whereas, according to current notions, which endow metaphysics with an absolute truth transcending all human conditionality, no such constitutive relationship should be attributed to that kind of consciousness. I think I owe it to you, therefore, to say something about the intertwinement between what is commonly called culture and metaphysical questions. You will have noticed that at some crucial points in my argument – and the discussion I am carrying on at present is what people call a methodological discussion – I have *not* drawn the currently accepted, epistemological conclusion from the intra-cultural experiences of metaphysics: that while the consciousness of the absolute depends on the given state of cultural consciousness, the absolute itself is untouched by it. I think it may be useful here, while we are enquiring into the possibility of metaphysics, to provide a decisive clarification of this point, so that you do not have the impression that I am evading the crucial issue or trying to muddy the waters with inconsistent thinking. My position is as follows: such a question – how the things which have happened were possible – not only has an epistemological or nosological influence on the question

about the nature of metaphysics but really and *directly* affects the metaphysical answers. I believe, in other words, that the metaphysical thesis of the inherent meaning of the world, or of a cosmic plan underlying everything which happens, must be called into question at the very moment when a meaningful connection can no longer be established between what has happened and the metaphysical ideas. The moment one falls back on the wholly abstract notion of the world's inscrutable ways – and the attribution of inscrutable ways to anything has always been calamitous – the assumption of metaphysical meaning itself (and not just our consciousness of it) is shattered. For I believe that we have nothing except our reason; that we have no option but to measure by our concrete experience; and that within the constellations which now define our experience all the traditional affirmative or positive theses of metaphysics – I think I can put it most simply like this – simply become blasphemies.

There are many people who, in face of the resulting despair, take refuge in theology. I think it should be said that the demand this places on them and on their concept of the absolute – the implication that these things[2] could be located within the meaning of the absolute itself – effectively demonizes the absolute. This possibility was already implicit in dialectical theology as the doctrine of the 'wholly other', which turns God into an abyss.[3] It then irrupted, with overwhelming force, into the work of Kafka, where traditional theological categories are measured against experience in a way which turns them into their opposite, a sinister mythology or demonology.[4] That is what I had in mind. And for that reason I ask you to understand that the connections between culture and metaphysics which I now propose do not relate to the spectacles we look through or the glass window behind which we are trapped,[5] but that the events I have referred to relate directly to reality at its most essential level. They bring about a switch from quantity to quality, in that while such horrors have always been present, and theological justification has always found it desperately difficult to come to terms with them, what earlier appeared mysterious and unfathomable only in individual cases has now become so much a part of the objective and universal course of the world that, in face of the preponderance of this objective order, any attempt at harmonization with the so-called cosmic plan or providence necessarily degenerates into lunacy. The theology of crisis – the name given to the dialectical theology going back to Karl Barth's commentary on the Epistle to the Romans[6] – detected the fateful intertwinement of metaphysics and culture with that against which they abstractly and impotently protested. It is undoubtedly the enormous merit of all these thinkers – Emil Brunner,[7] Ebner,[8] Friedrich Gogarten[9] and some

others apart from Barth (although there were others whose thought took a sinister turn[10]) – to have recognized that the immanence of culture, and the amalgamation of cultural categories and ideas with metaphysical ones, has the tendency to deprive these ideas themselves of their objective truth, to reduce them to the level of the subject, or to mind (*Geist*), as the ancestor of this movement, Kierkegaard, called it. Kierkegaard also said that such tendencies 'mediate' the ideas, although, if you will forgive me the pedantry, he entirely misunderstood the Hegelian concept of mediation, which is a mediation *within the extreme itself*. Kierkegaard understood this concept of mediation from outside, as a kind of bridge between the absolute and the finite, contingent human mind. This intertwinement of self-deceiving culture and an inner decay of the metaphysical ideas was registered with extraordinary honesty and rigour by the dialectical theologians. But (as is demonstrated in the still unpublished book of Hermann Schweppenhäuser[11]), they were denied the fruits of their insight, or remained trapped in a subjectivist position – the position they most vehemently opposed – by believing that the answer lay in the notion of the absolutely different and indeterminate, which they opposed to the decay of metaphysics. This concept of the absolutely other, they thought, was what was needed. What can be said about this concept of the absolutely other is that either it remains entirely indeterminate and abstract, so that it cannot perform what it is supposed to perform; or it takes on determinants which are themselves subject to the criticism of these theologians, since they are determinants of immanence; or, finally – and this is the path taken by most of these thinkers – this content is summoned up from outside, in a dogmatic and arbitrary leap, so that the dialectic which forms the core of this theological standpoint is at the same time revoked by it. The fact is that the principle of the absolute spirit, which is a curiously indifferent determinant existing between transcendence and the quintessence of the human mind as its own most comprehensive totality, tirelessly destroys what it purports to express. It ceaselessly absorbs into itself what it seeks to formulate as the absolute, which is supposedly impervious to such assimilation. For this reason – and on this point Hegel, if you like, needs to be taken beyond himself – its supreme concept, the absolute, in which everything is supposed to come to rest, becomes dialectical within itself, so that spirit, in becoming absolute for itself, is at the same time, by virtue of everything that is, absorbed into the mind as a human entity, thus destroying the transcendence or absoluteness of the idea which it asserts.

I believe that the first conclusion to be drawn from this, which was *not* drawn by the dialectical theologians who, despite the doctrine of

the absolutely other, continued to use the traditional words of theology without interruption – is that noble, elevated words – and things such as Auschwitz cannot be thought except in words, if I may repeat the point – can no longer be used. This is not only for the reasons I have already set out – that lofty words have become simply incommensurable with experience – but for the, if you like, far more devilish reason that it is characteristic of evil today to appropriate the most noble and elevated words for its own use. It is practically the trademark of totalitarian movements that they have monopolized all the so-called sublime and lofty concepts, while the terms they use for what they persecute and destroy – base, insect-like, filthy, subhuman and all the rest – they treat as anathema. And the dissimulating tissue or spell I have spoken of is so tightly woven that anyone who refuses to conform, and thus truly stands for otherness, is almost always disparaged as base, while ideals have, to an almost inconceivable degree, become a screen for vileness. And one of the most important goals (apart from those I have already mentioned) that I set myself in my text on the 'jargon of inauthenticity', if I might allude to it again, was to analyse this mechanism, and to show concretely how the sublime, elevated traditional words have become a cover for baseness, exploitation, oppression and evil. One would need to be a very superficial and, if you like, a very nominalistic linguistic philosopher to deny that this experience of being unable to take certain words into one's mouth – which you can all have and which was probably first registered, though in a very different way, in Hugo von Hofmannsthal's 'Chandos' letter[12] – also says something about what the words stand for. I believe that one of the crucial points on which the theory I advocate, and of which I can present you at least some sizeable fragments in these lectures, differs from the currently prevalent one, is my view that the historical-philosophical fate of language is at the same time the historical-philosophical fate of the subject matter to which it refers. This is supported, incidentally, by a viewpoint which was by no means foreign to German idealism, and especially to Wilhelm von Humboldt: that language constitutes thought no less than thought language. This insight has in the meantime been trodden so flat by nominalism that few people can remember it, although any reflection on thought can show you to what degree thought is as much mediated by language as vice versa. Karl Kraus's entire work can be understood as demonstrating that the fate of language is the history of the decay of the contents embodied in language, so that the decline of language within bourgeois society is for him an index of what has become of the great ideas themselves.

I can perhaps clarify what I am saying here, and what is constitutive of the standpoint towards metaphysics that I am trying to outline

for you in these last lectures, by telling you a story about something which happened, I believe, last year. I was on holiday in company with a writer whom I value highly for his moral integrity; he had spent many years in a concentration camp – a Jew, one of the persecuted – and had had the strength to record and objectify the things he had seen in the camps. And he is one of the few to whom we owe it that, thanks to his report, we can render the only service to the victims of which we are still capable: not to forget them.[13] I went walking with this man – we were in high mountains – and when the talk turned to Beckett he revealed an extremely violent affect against that writer, giving vent to the comment: 'If Beckett had been in a concentration camp he probably would not write these despairing things; he'd write things which gave people courage.' I believe that the confusion manifested in this remark – the subjective motivation of which I fully understand and respect after what that man had gone through – throws light on the specific character which ideology has taken on in dealing with metaphysical concepts today. There is an American saying that there are no atheists in the trenches; the old German proverb that danger teaches us to pray points in the same direction – and, fundamentally, this heroic man had argued in a very similar way. This argument is illogical because the situations in which people are forced to think 'positively' simply in order to survive are themselves situations of compulsion, which force people back on pure self-preservation, and on thinking only what they need to in order to survive in such a situation, to a point where the *truth content* of what they think is hopelessly undermined and utterly destroyed. It is possible that, had Beckett been in a concentration camp, he would not have written *The Unnamable* or *Endgame*; but I do not think it possible that this would have made what he wrote better or truer. The idea you will come across again and again in this context, that one has to give people something, has to give them courage – all these things are conditions which *restrict* the thinking of truth, but which may well bring down on someone who thinks the truth the odium of inhumanity, as I demonstrated to you earlier. But I also think that this mode of thinking, this demand placed on thought, does an injustice to the people in whose honour it is ostensibly made. Although this demand is seemingly made out of a charitable concern for the victims, in fact it reduces them to the objects of a thinking which manipulates and calculates them, and assumes in advance that it is giving them what they need and want. By the evaluation manifested in such ostentatiously noble injunctions, the people they pretend to serve are in reality debased. They are treated by metaphysics in fundamentally the same way as by the culture industry. And I would

say that the criterion to be applied to any metaphysical question today is whether it possesses or does not possess this character of connivance with the culture industry. I recall, by contrast, that when, many years ago, immediately after the war, while we were still in America, Horkheimer and I read together Kogon's book on the 'SS state',[14] and although it was the first to give us a full idea of what had happened, the reaction of both of us was to experience the reading as something immensely liberating. And I am democratic enough to believe that what we experienced could be the same for all who concern themselves with these things, except that most people are so in thrall to current notions that they lack the courage for such an experience. If there is any way out of this hellish circle – and I would not wish to exaggerate that possibility, being well aware of the weakness and susceptibility of such consciousness – it is probably the ability of mind to assimilate, to think the last extreme of horror and, in face of this spiritual experience, to gain mastery over it. That is little enough. For, obviously, such an imagination, such an ability to think extreme negativity, is not comparable to what one undergoes if one is oneself caught up in such situations. Nevertheless, I would think that in the ability not to feel manipulated, but to feel that one has gone relentlessly to the furthest extreme, there lies the only respect which is fitting: a respect for the possibility of the mind, despite everything, to raise itself however slightly above that which is. And I think that it really gives more courage (if I can use that formulation) if one is *not* given courage, and does not feel bamboozled, but has the feeling that even the worst is something which can be thought and, because it falls within reflection, does not confront me as something absolutely alien and different. I imagine that such a thought is probably more comforting than any solace, whereas solace itself is desolate, since it is always attended by its own untruth.

There is a passage in Kant, in the theory of the dynamically sublime in the *Critique of Judgement*, where he speaks of the feeling of the sublime. It is a remarkable passage, one of those in which Kant no longer uses the rococo diction of the eighteenth century, but takes on, even in his language, the tone of the great German and English lyric poetry which emerged about 1780. In it he speaks of the feeling of the sublime as a peculiar vibration between the powerlessness felt by the empirical person in face of the infinitude of natural forces, and, on the other hand, the joy of mind, as the essence of freedom, in being superior to and stronger than this natural power.[15] Compared to the spacious grandeur which such a theory still has in Kant we are now, heaven knows, crowded together on a tiny island. And what I am trying to express today certainly does not presume to reclaim for

the self even a remnant of the autonomy and dignity which Kant was able to assert. But something of it still remains, though impalpable and extremely confined – and lies perhaps in the fact that the possibility of any change depends on the ability to become aware of the ultimate negativity, which is the negativity located in the fundamental strata and not just in ephemeral surface phenomena. Perhaps changes can only be made today through thoughts which do not directly aim at change. And it is characteristic that whenever one seriously expresses thoughts which do not address the question: 'Yes, but what am I supposed to *do*, here and now?' – one is regularly met with a howl of rage[16] (it can also be a silent howl) which respects no demarcation lines, political or otherwise, simply because it is unbearable *not* to give oneself up to some praxis or other. This is rationalized, and very well rationalized – it's difficult to say anything against it – by the argument: 'Well, is the world supposed to stay as it is, with all its horrible possibilities? Should one not do something against it?' I honour this need; I would be the last to dare to say anything against it. I only ask you to consider, Ladies and Gentlemen, whether the compulsion to do something here and now, and the tendency to fetter thought which it contains, does not bring thought to a standstill precisely where it ought to go further, in order to reach the place where something can really be changed. When I once said – in an ironic and melancholy sense – that this is the time for theory, I meant only that. The spell which binds us today consists not least in the fact that it ceaselessly urges people to take *action* which they *believe* will break the spell; and that it prevents the *reflection* on themselves and the circumstances which might *really* break it. I believe that there is a precise correlation between these two phenomena: on the one hand, the rage which comes over people in face of – shall we say? – reflection without consequences, and, on the other hand, the moment of liberation contained in such reflection. Those who appeal for action, for the sake of human beings, cheat them of their right, even if they believe the opposite – depriving them of their own possibility, their humanity. I give the same answer to those who accuse me of a 'lack of love for human beings', because I give no guidelines for praxis and offer no consolation. I warn them that when there is talk of a lack of love there is almost always a desire that this love be somehow directed towards evil. And in face of that, Strindberg's words in *Black Banners* are undoubtedly true: 'How could I love good if I did not hate evil?'[17]

If one really understands the world of today as one of total entrapment, in the way I have tried to set out for you, I do not know how one could be uncritical, how one could adopt an attitude of unqualified love in face of what is. But, of course, by confessing this one makes

oneself the target of all the instincts and affects which are ready to be unleashed, with a great feeling of moral justification, against anything which tries to stretch out its head or its feelers even a little way. The desire for the existing culture to be swept away and an absolutely new start to be made has been very strong in Germany since the catastrophe. And I believe that the question of the position of metaphysics today has much to do with this desire – in that there has been a belief that, if only the debris of this culture could be finally cleared away, access could be gained to the original truth to which metaphysics points and which, according to this view, has been merely concealed by culture. This demand for a new beginning places the metaphysical thinker in a somewhat precarious position; he is rather like the women who picked over the rubble in the first years after the war. You are so young that most of you will probably not have heard of those women, who were once a familiar sight. The idea of a new start was extraordinarily compelling. Such tendencies had existed even before Hitler. There is, however, a curious ambivalence in this: on the one hand, critical thought – ideas of the kind I have set out for you in these lectures – is branded as destructive and the pack is let loose on it; but at the same time the concept of destruction is monopolized by the same people who have used it negatively against others. I am thinking here of Herr Heidegger, who believed himself the true, that is, the positive, destroyer, who, by demolishing all the waste products of civilization, all the alienated, reified thinking, would open the way to the rightly prized authenticity of things. However, it was proved by subsequent events – irrevocably, I would say – that this attempt to demolish culture, this destruction carried out in the hope of gaining direct access to the absolute once everything that was mere *θέσει* had disappeared, led directly to barbarism and fascism. Now there is much to be criticized in culture (and I do not think that I could be suspected of adopting an apologetic or affirmative stance towards it) – not in its so-called degenerate manifestations but in its actual concept. But while culture has undoubtedly failed, through its own fault, and is being punished for that, the straightforward barbarism which is brought into being through its failure is always even worse. It is, I would say, a metaphysical fallacy into which I should like to prevent you from falling to believe that because culture has failed; because it has not kept its promise; because it has denied human beings freedom, individuality, true universality; because it has not fulfilled its own concept, it should therefore be thrown on the scrap-heap and cheerfully replaced by the cynical establishment of immediate power relationships. One of the most dangerous errors now lurking in the collective unconscious – and the word error is far too weak and

intellectual for it – is to assume that because something is not what it promises to be, because it does not yet match its concept, it is therefore worse than its opposite, the pure immediacy which destroys it. On these grounds too, therefore, for reasons arising from the dialectical nature of culture, the abstract separation of culture from metaphysics which is taken for granted today cannot be endorsed.

LECTURE SEVENTEEN

27 July 1965

I spoke in the last lecture about the interconnection of metaphysics and culture, and said that the spectacular failure of culture today had radically undermined the possibility of metaphysics. But I would now like to add – not only to prevent misunderstanding but because completeness of thought requires it – that, on the other hand, the failure of culture does not give thought a kind of free passage to some natural state. It cannot do so because the failure of culture stems from its own naturalness, if I might put it like that; it is the result of its own persistent character as a natural entity. This culture has failed because it has clung to mere self-preservation and its various derivatives in a situation in which humanity has simply outgrown that principle. It is no longer confined by direct necessity to compulsive self-preservation, and is no longer compelled to extend the principle of mastery over nature, both inner and outer nature, into the indefinite future. On the other hand, it is idle and futile for thought to attempt now to appropriate metaphysics as a collection of pure categories which are immediate to consciousness, since knowledge can never disown its own mediateness, or, in other words, its dependence on culture in every sense. Philosophy is itself a piece of culture, is enmeshed in culture; and if it behaves as if it were rendered immediate by some allegedly primal questions which elevate it above culture, it blinds itself to its own conditions and truly succumbs to its cultural conditionality; in other words, it becomes straightforward ideology. There is no knowledge which can repudiate its mediations; it can only reflect them. Both the alleged primal experiences, and the threadbare

categories of culture as something man-made, are inalienably mediated and have their own negativity in this mediation. As long as culture lives on in a world arranged like ours, in which, whether in South Africa or Vietnam, things happen of which we know and only with difficulty repress the knowledge that they happen – in such a world culture and all the noble and sublime things in which we take delight are like a lid over refuse. But nature, in so far as we believe we can share in its original qualities independently of culture, is no more than a projection of the cultural desire that everything should remain unchanged; that we should stay in the good, untrue old days, in the 'aeon',[1] to speak with Schelling, in which, as Kafka put it, no progress has yet taken place.[2]

That, I believe, is the framework within which one should think about the complex of ideas I have spoken about in these last lectures, in which I no longer took Aristotle's text as my starting point but directly presented some of my own reflections. I have already spoken repeatedly about this complex, which concerns the question of death. Death juts into culture, into the network of civilization, as something entirely alien, which cannot be mastered even with the best connections, and in face of which one cannot cut a powerful figure. And because, if I may put it like this, culture has not integrated death – or, when it has done so, it has made itself as ridiculous as it is shown to be in Evelyn Waugh's novel *The Loved One*,[3] for example – philosophy has used death, expressly or tacitly, as the gateway through which to break into metaphysics. This has not just happened since Heidegger, by the way; it has always been said that death is the true spur to metaphysical speculation, that the helplessness of people in face of death provides the impetus for thoughts which seek to penetrate beyond the boundaries of experience. The metaphysics of death seems to me in principle impotent – but not in the sense that one should not reflect on death. Curiously, Heidegger sought to use reflection on death to discourage, precisely, reflection on death,[4] and it is one of the quaintest features of his philosophy that, on the one hand, it gains its concept of authenticity, and thus its central speculative motor, through reflecting on what he calls the structure of death, but, on the other, he was furious with anyone who, as he contemptuously put it, 'brooded' on death:[5] as if what he did was even slightly different from such brooding; indeed, as if any thought about death – which, of course, is something closed off and impenetrable to thought – could possibly be anything other than brooding. I bring this point to your attention only to show you how inconsistent his thought is, and how much, even on such a central matter, it is organized by privilege and the need for control. What appears to me to be the impotence of

the metaphysics of death is not the fruitlessness of brooding, which Heidegger criticized, or the belief that in the face of death only a posture of tight-lipped readiness, or some such thing, was seemly. Incidentally, very similar formulations are to be found in Jaspers; in their cultivation of the heroic possibilities of death these two seemingly so antithetical thinkers got along very well. Heidegger's metaphysics is impotent, either because it necessarily degenerates into a kind of propaganda for death, elevating it to something meaningful, and thus, in the end, preparing people to receive the death intended for them by their societies and states as joyfully as possible – just as Professor Krieck[6] declared at this university during the Third Reich that only the sacrificial victims would make 'you', meaning the students, free; or because – leaving aside this aspect of the death metaphysics, which justifies death as the meaning of existence – any reflections on death are of such a necessarily general and formal kind that they amount to tautologies, like the definition of death as the possibility of the absolute non-being of existence, which I quoted in *The Jargon of Authenticity*,[7] or another, less well-known formulation of Heidegger's, in which he solemnly announces that, when we die, a corpse is left behind.[8]

I believe that this insufficiency of consciousness in face of death, its inability to extract the alleged meaning from it, not only has to do with the absolute inaccessibility of what is being talked about. I believe that if we leave aside the truly unfathomable question whether one can talk meaningfully about death at all, something else is in play, which is really connected with consciousness, and perhaps with the present state of consciousness, with history. Perhaps I might remind you once again – and this is probably one of the strongest arguments against the attempt to wring a metaphysics from death – that although nature, in the form of death, juts into society and culture as something not yet integrated, nevertheless the experience of death, the side which it turns towards us, the living, is undoubtedly determined in part by society. Dying, if not death, is certainly a social phenomenon, and if anyone took the trouble to investigate how people die, that person would find as many mediations of culture in this side of death which is turned towards us as in any other phenomena. But what I mean is something different, that human consciousness clearly is not capable of withstanding the experience of death. I am unsure whether we are dealing here with a kind of biological fact which extends back beyond our human and conscious history, or whether it is something historical. At any rate, it is the case that, in contrast to the other *animalia* known to us, humans are clearly the only ones which in general have a consciousness of the fact that they must die. But it seems to me – and I suspect that for reasons connected with the social arrangements

our mental organization is not equal to this knowledge – that although, with this knowledge, we have, if you like, elevated ourselves so far above nature that on this crucial point we can reflect on our natural origin, on the other hand, we are still so governed by nature on this same point, so attached to our interest of self-preservation, of self-perpetuation, that we can only have this experience in a curiously abstract form. I'd like to be very cautious here: if we were to bring vividly to mind, at each moment, that we must die . . . In any case, this is not a discovery of mine; in Book 4 of Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Representation* there is a passage in which he notes with surprise how untroubled people are, in the general course of their lives, by the thought of their mortality.[9] He explains this by the veil of Maya, and thus by the *principium individuationis*. I would say, rather, that there is a kind of internal antagonism in this, that people are, as it were, unequal to their own minds – an antagonism, moreover, which, if you consider the actual arrangement of the world in relation to the potentials over which human beings now have control, is being incessantly reproduced and intensified. Our consciousness has clearly remained too weak to withstand the experience of death; too weak because it is too much in thrall to the biological life of which consciousness is itself a kind of derivative, a diverted energy. Because consciousness imagines itself, in its forms, in the forms of pure thought, to be something eternal, it fortifies itself against anything which might remind it of its own unsteady floor, its own frailty. One might add to this an idea which Ernst Bloch has expressed again and again with extraordinary emphasis in our time;[10] apart from the motif of utopia, with which it is intimately connected, it is perhaps the decisive motif of Bloch's metaphysics: that in the world in which we exist there is not a single human life which remotely matches what each of us *could* be. It is, incidentally, an old thought, conceived in the Enlightenment by Helvétius, although in him it was still accompanied by the illusion that education was all that was needed to change this and to make us, if I might put it like this, equal to our own possibility, to attain an identity between our potentiality and our actuality.[11] We know now, of course, that the mechanisms preventing us from doing so extend deeply into the organization of the very self which Helvétius, and the Enlightenment thinkers in general, believed could be changed and perfected simply by becoming conscious. I would say that only if we were truly ourselves, only if the infinite possibility which is radically contained in every human life – and you may think me an old-fashioned Enlightenment thinker, but I am deeply convinced that there is no human being, not even the most wretched, who has not a potential which, by conventional bourgeois

standards, is comparable to genius – only if such a state were reached, in which we were really identical to that which we are not but which we deeply know we could become, though we may want to believe the contrary – only then might we have the possibility of being reconciled to death. Only then, probably, would we be equal to the experience of death, and as long as that possibility is attributed to any other condition, it is merely a lie. So deeply, I would say, is the metaphysics of death, unlike the distorted version of it concocted by a static ontology, bound up with history and with the deepest strata of humanity's historical life.

The metaphysics of death, as practised today, is, it seems to me, much more a vain solace for the fact that human beings have lost what may at earlier times have made death endurable: the unity of experience. I would say, in general, that the problematic feature of all the resurrected metaphysical systems, which one would probably need to destroy to be free to reflect on these matters without ideology, is that they act as a kind of substitute; and that what is most deeply suspect in the popular metaphysical systems of today is that they always convey the message, even if peripherally and as if from far off, that things are not really so bad. That is to say, they try to reassure people about certain essentialities which, precisely, have become problematic. I am referring here, above all, to *time*. There can be little doubt that the awareness human beings have of time, and the very possibility of a continuous experience of time, has been deeply disrupted. And it seems to me to be a precise response to this situation, though actually a mere reflection of it, that the current metaphysical systems are now attempting to rescue this conception of time, which is no longer accessible to experience, and to present temporality as a constituent of existence itself. These systems therefore have a tendency to conjure up what is no longer experienced. And that is the true reason – which goes much deeper than a superficial, so-called sociological interpretation – why the current metaphysical thinkers sympathize in this curious way with archaic conditions no longer important to society, especially with agrarian conditions or those of a simple, small-town barter economy. The so-called epic death, which is presented in Heidegger's doctrine of death as a necessary moment of the 'wholeness of existence', and which is really at the root of all these death metaphysics, is no longer possible, because such a wholeness of life no longer exists. In my Introduction to Walter Benjamin's *Schriften*[12] I attempted to express the idea that a concept such as 'the life's work' has become problematic today because our existence has long ceased to follow a quasi-organic law immanent to it, but is determined by all kinds of powers which deny it such an immanent

unfolding; and that a belief in such a wholeness of life, to which death might correspond as something meaningful, already has the character of a chimera. But I should like to go further. It has doubtless become obvious by now that the notion of wholeness is a kind of ersatz metaphysics, because it attempts to underpin the assertion of meaningful being or meaningful life with the positivist credentials of something immediately given, as in *Gestalt* theory. But I should like to go a step even beyond that. For it might be asked whether that kind of epic wholeness of life, the biblical idea that Abraham died old and sated with life, whether this wishful image of a life stretching out in time so that it can be narrated, and rounded off in its own death, was not always a mere transfiguration. I cannot escape the suspicion that wherever such a harmony between a self-contained life and death appears to have existed in the past, the life of those to which the harmony is attributed was subjected to so inordinate a burden, was, as one is apt to say today, so alienated from them, that they did not even get so far as to perceive the heterogeneousness of death, and integrated themselves with death out of a kind of weakness. Consequently, the idea of a complete life, meaningful within itself, must probably be abandoned with the conception of the epic death – for catastrophes always have the power to draw into themselves remote realities and events from the distant past. If mortally weary people take an affirmative view of death, it is most likely the case that death relieves them of a burden. The reason for the allegedly positive relationship to death taught by these metaphysics is none other than the one which comes forcibly to mind today, and which I already mentioned: that the life in question amounted to so little that there was little resistance to its ending.

It is remarkable, all the same, that we are so little able to incorporate death, since, in view of our continuing state of non-identity with ourselves, the opposite might be expected. And even the power of the instinct of self-preservation – if one wishes to speak of an instinct here; Freud did sanction it by introducing the concept of the ego-drives[13] – seems to me insufficient to explain it, if it is taken on its own. As far as I am able to observe these matters, it is the case that it is precisely the people who are not old and frail who put up no resistance to death, who experience it as contingent and, in a curious way, accidental. If a very large number of people fall victim to accidents today, in comparison to earlier times, this seems to me to indicate something structural in the experience of death: that to the precise extent that we are relatively autonomous beings aware of ourselves, we experience death, or even a serious illness, as a misfortune which comes upon us from outside. At the same time, however, it is also the

case that, when people die very old, their great age often does not appear as something joyous. I am speaking here of the intramundane aspects of death, which reflection on death cannot ignore, but in which it has shown itself curiously uninterested up to now. I am not speaking here of the discomforts associated with old age in the epic ideal. But, as far as my experience extends, there is also something immeasurably sad in the fact that, with the decline of very old people, the hope of *non confundar*, of something which will be preserved from death, is also eroded, because, especially if one loves them, one becomes so aware of the decrepitude of that part of them which one would like to regard as the immortal that one can hardly imagine what is to be left over from such a poor, infirm creature which is no longer identical with itself. Thus, very old people, who are really reduced to what Hegel would call their mere abstract existence, those who have defied death longest, are precisely the ones who most strongly awaken the idea of absolute annulment. Nevertheless, this experience of death as something fortuitous and external – rather like an illness one has been infected with, without knowing its source – does contain a moment connected with the autonomy of mind. It is that, because the mind has wrested itself so strongly from what we merely are, has made itself so autonomous, this in itself gives rise to a hope that mere existence might not be everything.

If one does not cling to the thesis of the identity of subject and object taught by idealism; if the subject, mind, reflecting itself critically, does not equate itself to, and 'devour', everything which exists, it may happen that the mind, which has become as unidentical to the world as the world has become to it, takes on a small moment of not-being-engulfed-in-blind-contingency: a very paradoxical form of hope, if you like. And the very curious persistence of the idea of immortality may be connected to this. For this idea seems to me to manifest itself more substantially where consciousness is most advanced than in the official religions. Even as a child I was surprised how little attention was paid to these last things – just a few pages in a Protestant hymn-book, for example – whereas one would expect them to be the only ones which mattered to a religion. I would remind you here of the magnificent passage in Marcel Proust depicting the death of the writer Bergotte, who was Anatole France, in which, in a truly grandiose, regenerative, mystical speculation, the writer's books, displayed by his deathbed, are interpreted as allegories of the fact that, on account of its goodness, this life was not wholly in vain.[14] You will find something similar in the writings of Beckett, who is, of course, anathema to all affirmative people and in whose work everything revolves around the question what nothingness actually contains; the

question, one might almost say, of a topography of the void. This work is really an attempt so to conceive nothingness that it is, at the same time, not *merely* nothingness, but to do so *within* complete negativity.[15] But that, too, should be said with extreme gentleness and circumspection. And it is perhaps no accident that in the passage of Proust I have just referred to the writer chooses a formulation which bears a curious resemblance to those of Kafka, with whom he has nothing directly in common. I attempted to explore this connection in the 'Kleine Proust-Kommentare' in the second volume of *Noten zur Literatur*,[16] and I do not want to speak of it now. But the less people really live – or, perhaps more correctly, the more they become aware that they have not really lived – the more abrupt and frightening death becomes for them, and the more it appears as a misfortune. It is as if, in death, they experienced their own reification: that they were corpses from the first. Such an experience was expressed in the most diverse passages of Expressionist poetry, by Benn[17] and Trakl, taking a curiously identical form in writers otherwise at opposite poles. The terror of death today is largely the terror of seeing how much the living resemble it. And it might therefore be said that if life were lived rightly, the experience of death would also be changed radically, in its innermost composition.

That is probably the most extreme speculation by which I can demonstrate, at least as a possibility, the link I am trying to explain in these last lectures between the historical, immanent sphere and what are called the great metaphysical categories. Death and history form a constellation. Hamlet, the first wholly self-aware and despondently self-reflecting individual, experienced his essence as something absolutely transitory. In him the absolute experience of the individual as the self, and the experience of its absolute transience, that the rest is silence, coincided. By contrast, it is probably the case today that, because the individual actually no longer exists, death has become something wholly incommensurable, the annihilation of a nothing. He who dies realizes that he has been cheated of everything. And that is why death is so unbearable. I will close by pointing out that in this fact that the horizon of death has been displaced in the curious way I have just indicated, what I might call the good side of the decline of the individual is manifested. It is that the experience of the nullity of the individual reveals not only our ego-weakness, not only our functionalization, but also takes away something of the illusoriness and guilt which have always persisted in the category of individuation, up to the threshold of this age.

LECTURE EIGHTEEN

29 July 1965

Ladies and Gentlemen, when one of these lecture series reaches its end, it seems to be a natural law – or an unnatural one – that one has not remotely covered the ground one had intended to. That is the case with me. That is to say, I have been able to present you only fragments of what is contained in the manuscript 'Reflections on Metaphysics' on which I have been basing the second half of the series,[1] and have not got nearly as far as I had hoped. That is due in part to the difference between the forms of written and spoken expression. When one writes, one is obliged to present the matter as clearly and precisely as possible, and can permit oneself extreme concentration for the sake of clear expression. When one is talking to living people it would be absurd, and professorial in the bad sense, to cling to the fiction that one can express pure thought, and one must do one's best, following one's own innervations, to make things clear to the people one is talking to. This does, however, have the disadvantage that when people like you come to listen to a person like me, you will almost inevitably be disappointed, as you will expect from what I write to hear something much more pithy than is possible in a spoken lecture. In short, one is, in educated language, in an aporia; in less educated language: however you do it, it's wrong. And so, in full awareness of this fragmentariness, I would say to you today that what I have told you, in the form I have told it, can do no more than encourage you to think further on it for yourselves, and especially to free yourselves from a collection of clichés and ideas which have been foisted on you. To expect these lectures to have given you a comprehensive account of how or in what

form metaphysics, or its opposite, is possible today would be a foolish presumption. And I should like to make it quite clear that I have no such pretension.

I spoke at different points about the concept of metaphysical experience,[2] and perhaps it would not be a bad thing to say a few more words about it in this last lecture. What I mean by metaphysical experience certainly cannot be reduced to what are called primal religious experiences. The reason is simply that if one spends a little time studying the stratum of theology which claims to have access to such primal experiences – that is, in crude terms, the mystical stratum, which places such primary experience higher than any codified theology – one becomes aware of something very peculiar and, I must say, very surprising. It is that mystical texts, and descriptions of fundamental mystical experiences, by no means have the primary, immediate quality one might expect, but are very strongly mediated by education. For example, the intricate interrelationships between gnosticism, Neo-Platonism, the Cabbala and later Christian mysticism give rise to an area of historicity which is equal to anything in the history of dogma. And it is certainly no accident that the corpus in which the documents of Jewish mysticism are brought together more or less disconnectedly, the Cabbala, bears the title of tradition. Far less emphasis is put on a primary, immediate vision than one imagines; far more attention is paid to the τόποι of so-called religious experience than to pure subjectivity than might be supposed. What the reasons might be I do not want to discuss; that is really a matter for the philosophy of religion. I shall content myself with one observation, that almost all the mystical speculations which exist find their support in so-called sacred texts, which in the eyes of mystical-metaphysical thinkers become symbolic in the sense that they mean something quite different from what is said in them. For example, in the famous interpretation of the first chapter of Genesis, as set out in the book 'Sohar', the history of the creation of the world is interpreted as a history of the inner process of creation which took place within the divinity itself.[3] This is, incidentally, the model for the speculations of Schelling which, in a later phase, became famous under the name of positive philosophy.[4] I do not wish to say anything about the truth of these matters; but I should like at least to make you aware of a problem.

Through our philosophical and, above all, our academic education – as long as it is based on the model, however latent, of the natural sciences – we have become tacitly accustomed to an irreconcilable antithesis between tradition and cognition. It is no accident that the most vehement invective against tradition is to be found in the two philosophers who mark the beginning of what is called modern

philosophy, Descartes and Bacon, who emancipated themselves from tradition. It is, however, questionable (and I shall only raise the question here) whether the idea underlying this position – that tradition, what is not known at first hand, should be spurned in face of the immediacy of lived experience – whether this motif, which we take almost for granted, is really so valid, in view of the fact that many such traditional elements are unknowingly contained in knowledge we regard as *not* traditional, but as pure, autonomous cognition. One might be inclined to think that the subject supposedly capable of cognition as a kind of *actus purus*, as a piece of pure actuality – and this, implicitly, is the epistemological ideal of the whole of modern philosophy – is an abstraction which does not correspond to any actual subject of cognition; and that the traditional, that is, the historical moment, not only permeates supposedly authenticated knowledge far more deeply than is generally admitted, but actually makes that knowledge possible. One might even suppose that the moment which I have repeatedly brought to your notice under the heading of the mediatedness of thought, is contained in this traditional moment, in the implicit history which is present within any cognition. And it is probable (at any rate, I should like to think so today) that the crucial threshold between this and positivist thinking lies in the question whether thought is aware of this inalienable traditional moment contained within it, whether knowledge reflects it within itself or whether it simply denies it – which is not to assert, of course, that knowledge should simply abandon itself to this traditional moment. The criticism which has been levelled at tradition has its reasons and its legitimacy, heaven knows. But it is also naive in believing that it can divest itself entirely of this moment. The truth probably lies in a kind of self-reflection which both recognizes the inalienable presence of the traditional moment within knowledge, and critically identifies the dogmatic element in it – instead of creating a *tabula rasa* on both sides, as now, and thus succumbing either to dogmatism or to a timeless and therefore inherently fictitious positivism. You will perhaps understand that, for this reason, I am unwilling to attach metaphysical experience to religious experience as firmly as is generally asserted; I am unwilling to do so, above all, because this kind of experience, as handed down by very great figures of Catholicism, such as St John of the Cross, hardly seems to be accessible any longer, given the assumptions regarding the philosophy of history under which we live today. On its actual truth content I will hold my peace.

A more decisive contribution to these matters, I believe, is made by Marcel Proust, whose work, as a precipitate of experience and an exploration of the possibility of experience, should be taken extremely

seriously from a philosophical point of view. I would mention in passing that the separation between art and so-called scholarship in the sphere in which we are now moving is entirely without substance and is a mere fabrication of the division of labour. I mean – the idea that Herr Bollnow should be qualified to contribute seriously to a discussion on metaphysics while Marcel Proust should not – well, I would just mention that idea to you without commenting further. I do not wish to reproduce Proust's theory of metaphysical experience to you here. I would just point out that perhaps one of the clearest manifestations of what I am concerned with here is the way in which certain names can vouch for that experience. In Proust they are the names of Illiers and Trouville, Cabourg and Venice.[5] I myself have had a similar experience with such names. When one is on holiday as a child and reads or hears names like Monbrunn, Reuenthal, Hambrunn, one has the feeling: if only one were there, at that place, that would be it. This 'it' – what the 'it' is – is extraordinarily difficult to say; one will probably be able to say, following Proust's tracks here too, that it is happiness. When one later reaches such places, it is not there either, one does not find 'it'. Often they are just foolish villages. If there is still a single stable door open in them and a smell of a real live cow and dung and such things, to which this experience is no doubt attached, one must be very thankful today. But the curious thing is that, even if 'it' is not there, if one does not find in Monbrunn any of the fulfilment which is stored up in its name, nevertheless, one is not disappointed. The reason, if I am interpreting it correctly, is that – and you must forgive me if I ramble a bit in this lecture, in just the way that Kant forbids[6] – one is, as it were, too close, one is inside the phenomenon, and has the feeling that, being completely inside it, one cannot actually catch sight of it.[7] Once, many years ago, in *Minima Moralia*, I wrote about thanking and gratitude, which have their dignity – and I did not mean dignity in the idealist sense – because the giving of thanks is the only relationship that consciousness can have to happiness, whereas the person who *is* happy is too close to it to be able to have any standpoint towards it within consciousness.[8] At such moments one has a curious feeling that something is receding – as is also familiar from an old symbol of happiness, the rainbow – rather than that one has really been done out of it. I would say, therefore, that happiness – and there is an extremely deep constellation between metaphysical experience and happiness – is something within objects and, at the same time, remote from them.

But as I mention this example to you, I become aware of how extraordinarily precarious such speculations are. I have just picked out a stratum of these experiences quite arbitrarily; another, perhaps

far more crucial one, is the experience of *déjà vu*, the feeling: When did I see that before? that can be induced by a certain type of children's book. In such experiences one succumbs to the conditions of the empirical world; one succumbs to all the fallibility which attaches to one's own psychology, one's wishes, one's longing. All metaphysical experiences – I should like to state as a proposition here – are fallible. I would say, in general, that all experiences which have to be lived, which are not mere copies or reconstructions of that which is in any case, contain the possibility of error, the possibility that they can completely miss the mark. And, in much the same way as I indicated earlier with regard to the concept of tradition, it may be one of the ψευδῆ, the deceptions in which scientific-idealist thinking has enmeshed us, that we believe a piece of knowledge to rank higher the less it is liable to failure, to disappointment. It might well be that, according to this criterion, everything which really matters would be excluded as unworthy of being known; whereas in truth – so it seems to me – only what can be refuted, what can be disappointed, what can be wrong, has the openness I have spoken of,[9] that is, it is the only thing which matters. It is in the concept of openness, as that which is not already subsumed under the identity of the concept, that the possibility of disappointment lies. And I should like to say that within the meaning of these reflections on the possibility of metaphysics there lies a peculiar affinity to empiricism. For empiricism, with its emphasis on empirical sources, implies an element of metaphysics at least in the sense that the *essential* knowledge is seen as that which does *not* coincide with concepts, but which, as it were, falls accidentally into my lap, and thus always includes the possibility that it *might not* do so. Such knowledge therefore has an inherent fortuitousness, from which it derives an element of meaning which, according to the prevalent logic, is excluded precisely by the concept of the accidental. Fallibility, I would say, is the condition of the possibility of such metaphysical experience. And it seems to attach most strongly to the weakest and most fragile experiences.

On the other hand, however, from the extreme doubtfulness of what I have just said, a doubtfulness which, I believe, is indispensable to thought if it wants to be anything at all, you might gain a critical insight which, from the opposed standpoint, sounds highly heretical. You all know that the critical theory of society, and especially its popularized form in the modernistic vulgar theology of today, is fond of adducing the Hegelian and Marxian concept of *reification*, and that, for it, only what is entirely exempt from reification can be counted as knowledge or truth. But if you bear in mind the peculiarly fallible and unavoidably problematic nature of metaphysical experience that

I have described, the concept of reification may, in a complementary way, take on a meaning which is far from purely derogatory. It is a meaning in which, as in Marx, the whole of idealism is contained, in that the assumption is made that even that which is not I, which is not identical, must be able to resolve itself entirely, as it were, into the actual, present I, into the *actus purus*. That none of this is plain sailing, that these questions are not so simple – Hegel undoubtedly had an inkling of this in his later phase. And the traits of reactionary harshness we find so disturbing in Hegel are certainly connected to the realization that the moment of the complete dissolution of all objectivity in what might be called the living subject also contains a deceptive element, in the absolute presence of the subject in that which it is not. When I said earlier that pure mystical experience is a somewhat dubious matter, that it is far less pure and inward and far more concretely objective than one would expect from its concept, I was referring to this same deception.

What I am saying to you appears to be in sharp contradiction to the idea that cognition should necessarily be fallible if the resulting knowledge is to be worthy of being thought. And I would not presume, and certainly not in the miserably few minutes we have left, to resolve this contradiction. I would say, however, that precisely the polarity I am referring to – that, on the one hand, it is a condition of metaphysical experience that it can miss the mark, that it can be quite wrong; and that, on the other, it requires an objective moment, antithetical to it and incapable of being assimilated to it – that these two motifs together form the dialectical figure, the dialectical image,[10] through which alone one can, perhaps, gain awareness of what is meant by the concept of metaphysical experience. The objective categories of theology are not only – as it appears from Hegel's early theological writings published by Herman Nohl[11] – residues of the positive moment which are then resolved into subjectivity, into life, in a process of increasing, dialectical identification, but actually complement the weakness of immanent dialectics: they reclaim, in a sense, what is not assimilated by the dialectic and would, as the merely other, be devoid of any determination. Thus, not only the ossified society, but also the moment of the *primacy of the object* which I have repeatedly mentioned,[12] was precipitated in the objectivity of the metaphysical categories. And between these two moments – on the one hand the flashes of fallible consciousness which I illustrated by the example of place names, and on the other the primacy of the object – there seems to me to exist a curious constellation. True, it is one which is discharged abruptly at certain moments, rather than being a merely contemplative entity which could be grasped as a kind

of categorial structure of a so-called matter of fact. If everything objective is volatilized by consciousness – and this applies especially to metaphysical objects – thought regresses to the subjectivism of the pure act. It then finally hypostatizes the mediation carried out by the subject itself, as a kind of pure immediacy. This may help to explain the quite significant fact that Kant, who attempted in the *Critique of Practical Reason* to interpret metaphysical ideas as a full participation of the subject, indeed, as nothing other than pure reason itself, finally moved almost imperceptibly to a position where he sought for that subjectivity precisely the objective correlatives that he had previously criticized and radically excluded. It is a remarkable fact that, in this way, even the concept of the highest good and the concept of humanity are resurrected in the *Critique of Practical Reason*.[13] But despite all this it has to be said that, in the course of advancing enlightenment, the possibility of metaphysical experience is tending to become paler and more desultory. If one reads Proust today, the accounts of such metaphysical experience, which play such an enormous role in his work – although even there they are far more bare and limited than one might expect – have a Romantic moment through which they are already exposed to criticism. It is as if the joy of finding that somewhere some such thing as life were possible at all – and this is the counter-motif to reification – had lured the subject of the experience into directly equating these surviving traces of the life with the meaning of life itself.

As a result, one will have to pursue metaphysical experience into a stratum which originally was extremely alien to it. For in reality it now survives only negatively. I would say – and this must be understood very strictly and made into a kind of canon for metaphysical thinking itself – that the form in which metaphysical experience still manifests itself with any compelling force today is not that which has made itself suspect as a sphere of Romantic wishing, but is the experience which leads to the question: Is that all? It is the experience which, if I might speak for once like an existentialist, perhaps bears the greatest resemblance, among the 'situations' we pass through,[14] to the situation of fruitless waiting: that is no doubt the form in which metaphysical experience manifests itself most strongly to us. It made an unforgettable impression on me when my composition teacher, Alban Berg, told me more than once that what he regarded as the crucial and most important parts of his own work, and the ones he liked best, were the bars in which he expressed situations of fruitless waiting. He experienced these things so deeply that they reached the threshold of consciousness, although, heaven knows, that is not required of an artist. But the authenticity of even this is not guaranteed,

for where there is no longer any life, where immediacy has been so truly abolished as in the world in which we exist, the temptation is doubly strong to mistake the remnants of life, or even the negation of the prevailing condition, for the absolute.

We reach here, if you like, the crucial distinction between the considerations I have been presenting to you and the Hegelian philosophy to which these considerations owe so much. It lies in the fact that Hegel's philosophy contains a moment by which that philosophy, despite having made the principle of determinate negation its vital nerve, passes over into affirmation and therefore into ideology: the belief that negation, by being pushed far enough and by reflecting itself, is one with positivity. That, Ladies and Gentlemen, the doctrine of the positive negation, is precisely and strictly the point at which I refuse to follow Hegel. There are other such points, but in the context of this discussion this is the one to which I should refer. One might be inclined to think that if the present situation is really experienced as negatively as we all experience it, and as only I have taken it upon myself, as a kind of scapegoat, to express it (that is the only difference separating me from other people), one might think that by *negating* this negativity one had already attained the positive; and that is a very great temptation. And when I told you that the form of determinate negation is the only form in which metaphysical experience survives today, I myself was moving at least in the direction of that idea. But this transition is not itself compelling: for if I said that the negation of the negation is the positive, that idea would contain within itself a thesis of the philosophy of identity and could only be carried through if I had already assumed the unity of subject and object which is supposed to emerge at the end. If, however, you take seriously the idea I put forward earlier today, that the truth of ideas is bound up with the possibility of their being wrong, the possibility of their failure, you will see that this idea is invalidated by the proposition that, merely by negating the negation, I already have the positive. In that case[15] one would be back in the sphere of false, deceptive and, I would say, mythical certainty, in which nothing can be wrong and in which, probably for that reason, everything one said would be all the more hopelessly lost. For thought there is really no other possibility, no other opportunity, than to do what the miner's adage forbids: to work one's way through the darkness without a lamp, without possessing the positive through the higher concept of the negation of the negation, and to immerse oneself in the darkness as deeply as one possibly can. For one thing is undoubtedly true: I told you that, where there is no longer life, the temptation to mistake its remnants for the absolute, for flashes of meaning, is extremely great – and I do not wish to take

that back. Nevertheless, nothing can be even experienced as living if it does not contain a promise of something transcending life. This transcendence therefore *is*, and at the same time *is not* – and beyond that contradiction it is no doubt very difficult, and probably impossible, for thought to go.[16]

In saying that, Ladies and Gentlemen, I have the feeling that I have reached the point where the insufficiency of my own reflections converges with the impossibility of thinking that which must nevertheless be thought.[17] And all I hope is that I may have given you at least an idea of that convergence.

EDITOR'S NOTES

Abbreviations

Adorno's writings, when translated, are quoted from the English-language editions. When no English translation is available, the references are to the German editions, *Gesammelte Schriften* (edited by Rolf Tiedemann in collaboration with Gretel Adorno, Susan Buck-Morss and Klaus Schultz, Frankfurt/Main 1970–) and *Nachgelassene Schriften* (edited by Theodor W. Adorno Archiv, Frankfurt/Main 1993–), when included there. The following abbreviations are used:

GS 1	*Philosophische Frühschriften*, 3rd edn, 1996
GS 3	Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialektik der Aufklärung. Philosophische Fragmente*, 3rd edn, 1996
GS 5	*Zur Metakritik der Erkenntnistheorie/Drei Studien zu Hegel*, 4th edn, 1996
GS 6	*Negative Dialektik/Jargon der Eigentlichkeit*, 5th edn, 1996
GS 8	*Soziologische Schriften I*, 4th edn, 1996
GS 9.1	*Soziologische Schriften I. Erste Hälfte*, 4, 1975
GS 10.1	*Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft I: Prismen/Ohne Leitbild*, 2nd edn, 1996
GS 10.2	*Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft II: Eingriffe/Stichworte/Anhang*, 1977
GS 11	*Noten zur Literatur*, 4th edn, 1996
GS 20.1	*Vermischte Schriften I*, 1986
GS 20.2	*Vermischte Schriften II*, 1986
NaS I.1	*Beethoven. Philosophie der Musik*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, 2nd edn, 1994

NaS IV.4 *Kants 'Kritik der reinen Vernunft'* (1959), ed. Rolf Tiedemann, 1995

NaS IV.10 *Probleme der Moralphilosophie* (1963), ed. Thomas Schröder, 1995

NaS IV.15 *Einleitung in die Soziologie* (1968), ed. Christoph Gödde, 1993

Lecture One

1 Adorno is referring to *Negative Dialectics*, written between 1959 and 1966; in his lecture series in the summer semester of 1965 he is thinking in particular of 'Meditations on Metaphysics' (Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E.B. Ashton, London 1990, pp. 361ff; cf. GS 6, pp. 354ff), on which he was working intensively in May 1965 and to which he referred in Lectures 13–18, held in July 1965 (see n. 9 below).

2 Apart from the discussion in 'Meditations on Metaphysics', Adorno deals with Kant's attitude to metaphysics above all in Lectures 4 and 5 in the series *Kants 'Kritik der reinen Vernunft'* of 1959 (cf. NaS IV.4, pp. 57ff). The most lucid account of Kant's renewal of the foundations of metaphysics known to the Editor is to be found in an early lecture by Horkheimer, from the winter semester 1925/6 (cf. Max Horkheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Alfred Schmidt and Gunzelin Schmidt Noerr, vol. 10: *Nachgelassene Schriften 1914–1931*, 2. *Vorlesung über die Geschichte der deutschen idealistischen Philosophie [u. a.]*, Frankfurt/Main 1990, pp. 24ff); Adorno is likely to have taken over Horkheimer's account without questioning it.

3 Cf. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale, Harmondsworth 1961, p. 58 (although the term is translated here as 'afterworld'); a direct equation between metaphysics and the 'backworld' is to be found, for example, in *Human, All Too Human*: 'When we hear the subtle talk of the metaphysicians and backworldsmen, we certainly feel that we are the "poor in spirit"; but we also feel that ours is the heaven of change, with spring and autumn, winter and summer, while theirs is the backworld, with its grey, frosty, endless mists and shadows' (Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 2, Munich 1993, p. 386). Regarding this metaphor of Nietzsche's which Adorno was fond of quoting see NaS IV.4, p. 165 and pp. 382f, and NaS IV.15, p. 38, and finally Theodor W. Adorno, *Philosophische Terminologie. Zur Einleitung*, ed. Rudolf zur Lippe, vol. 2, 5th edn, Frankfurt/Main 1989, p. 162.

4 Cf. GS 9.1, p. 446 – Adorno also cites this statement by the test subject in 'Theses against occultism' in *Minima Moralia*, trans. Edmund Jephcott, London 1974, pp. 238–44; dealing primarily with occultism in contemporary society, the 'Theses' nevertheless contain nothing less than Adorno's theory of the relationship of occultism to metaphysics, of the 'contamination of mind and existence, the latter becoming itself an attribute of mind' (ibid., p. 243). Adorno's aphorism 'Occultism is the

metaphysic of dunces' (ibid., p. 241) has meanwhile appeared in the *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie* as an example of his 'radical antagonism' to occultism, which, in fact, the authors find rather too radical (cf. H. Bender and W. Bonin, 'Okkultismus', in *Hist. Wb. Philos.*, vol. 6, Basle, Stuttgart 1984, col. 1144f).

5 See Lecture 4.

6 Most probably an allusion to the book by Heimsoeth (present in Adorno's library), which deals with the dispute over universals under the title 'Das Individuum'; cf. Heinz Heimsoeth, *Die sechs großen Themen der abendländischen Metaphysik und der Ausgang des Mittelalters*, 4th edn, Darmstadt 1958, pp. 172ff.

7 See Lecture 6, p. 38 above

8 See Part 1 of the *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* of 1830: 'Thoughts can be called . . . *objective* thoughts and these include the forms which are considered in ordinary logic and are used only as forms of *conscious* thought. *Logic* therefore coincides with *metaphysics*, the science of *things* couched as thoughts which were supposed to express the *essences* of *things*' (trans. from Hegel, *Werke in 20 Bänden*, Frankfurt/Main 1969–71, vol. 8, pp. 80f). Or in the Introduction to 'The Objective Logic': 'The objective logic . . . takes the place . . . of former metaphysics which was intended to be the scientific construction of the world in terms of thoughts alone' (*Hegel's Science of Logic*, trans. A.V. Miller, London/New York 1969, p. 63).

9 Adorno seldom expressed himself as explicitly on the systematic importance of this motif as in the lectures on 'Aesthetics' of 1958/9. Here he spoke of the necessity of gaining access to 'something like a philosophical prehistory of concepts which, in our view [i.e. his and Horkheimer's] should replace mere verbal definitions, which are always arbitrary and non-binding'; as an example he mentions 'the theory of art as mimetic behaviour, developed in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*' (Theodor W. Adorno Archiv, Vo 3539f). The lecture series on *Philosophische Terminologie*, held by Adorno over two semesters in 1962 and 1963, is his most extensive treatment of the 'prehistory' of philosophical concepts (cf. Adorno, *Philosophische Terminologie. Zur Einleitung*, 2 vols, Frankfurt/Main 1973, 1974). For other aspects of his idea of philosophical prehistory cf. Rolf Tiedemann, '"Nicht die Erste Philosophie sondern eine letzte". Anmerkungen zum Denken Adornos', in Theodor W. Adorno, *'Ob nach Auschwitz noch sich leben lasse'. Ein philosophisches Lesebuch*, Frankfurt/Main 1997, pp. 16f.

10 Adorno dealt with Comte's 'law of three stages' again in *Introduction to Sociology*, the lecture series held in the summer semester of 1968 (cf. Adorno, *Introduction to Sociology*, trans. Edmund Jephcott, Cambridge 2000, p. 131).

11 Comte characterizes the transition from fetishism to polytheism as follows: 'The transformation of fetishes into gods endows each thing with an abstract peculiarity, instead of the life attributed to it. This makes it susceptible to animation by a supernatural power. Each god assumes a

quality common to many fetishes, and such a concept demands a metaphysical manner of thinking' (Auguste Comte, *Die Soziologie. Die positive Philosophie im Auszug*, ed. Friedrich Blaschke, Leipzig 1933, p. 193).

12 On Aristotelianism in Islamic philosophy and the revival of Aristotle in the Christian Middle Ages, cf. Otfried Höffe, *Aristoteles*, Munich 1996, pp. 269ff; on the former especially Ernst Bloch, 'Avicenna und die Aristotelische Linke', in E. Bloch, *Das Materialismusproblem, seine Geschichte und Substanz*, Frankfurt/Main 1972 (Gesamtausgabe vol. 7), pp. 479ff.

13 On the closing of the school of Proclus in Athens by an edict of Justinian in AD 529 one should consult Zeller, who was also Adorno's favourite authority in other matters of Greek philosophy (cf. Eduard Zeller, *Die Philosophie der Griechen in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung* [henceforth 'Zeller,'] 3. Teil, 2. Abt., *Die nacharistotelische Philosophie*. 2. Hälfte, Hildesheim, Zurich, New York 1990 [2nd reprint of the 5th edn], pp. 915f); for more details on the Persian exile chosen by Simplikios and six other philosophers see Ueberweg–Praechter (cf. Friedrich Ueberweg, *Grundriß der Geschichte der Philosophie, 1. Teil: Die Philosophie des Altertums*, 12th edn, ed. Karl Praechter, Berlin 1926, pp. 634f).

14 As a means of 'noting' what metaphysics was, as understood by Adorno, the reader is referred definitively to Lecture 33 in *Philosophische Terminologie*, his most concise 'explanation of the term metaphysics', which also defines its subject matter (cf. Adorno, *Philosophische Terminologie*, vol. 2, pp. 160ff).

Lecture Two

1 No transcriptions of the lectures on 13 and 18 May have been preserved; instead the brief notes on which Adorno based the lecture are reproduced.

2 This passage connects with the discussion of the formalization of the concept of metaphysics at the end of the first lecture (pp. 8f above).

3 This characterization of the 'usual definition' of metaphysics already contains a clear allusion to Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, to which two-thirds of the lecture are devoted: the science which investigates the ultimate ground or cause of existing things (cf. *Aristotle's Metaphysics*, trans. John Warrington, London 1956, p. 54 [*A* 2, 982 b 8f]) is intrinsically a 'fundamental science', and in Aristotle's terminology is called the 'primary science' (cf. ibid., pp. 155ff [*E* 1, 1026 a 24]). *Πρώτη οὐσία*, 'primary substance', is used by Aristotle as a synonym for *εἶδος*: 'By "form" I mean a thing's essence and primary substance' (ibid., p. 181 [*Z* 7, 1032 b 1f]): metaphysics, according to Aristotle, is the science of forms; according to Adorno, it 'is essentially concerned with concepts, and with concepts in a strong sense' (p. 5 above).

4 Adorno always had a strong interest in gnostic ideas, although he mentioned this mainly in conversations; when he was trying to persuade Hans Jonas to give a lecture on Marcionian gnosticism in 1959, he characterized his interest in the philologist from Sinope: 'Moreover, Valentinus' gnosticism is just as important to me as Marcion's, in which only a very specific motif interests me specially: the denunciation of the demiurge' (Letter to Hans Jonas, 12.10.1959). If it is remembered that the question 'whether one can still live after Auschwitz' (cf. *Negative Dialectics*, p. 362) is central to the 'Meditations on Metaphysics', the connection with the accusation of the 'just', cruel and malevolent God by Marcion is obvious enough.

5 With the doctrine of the 'divinity as a coming-to-be' in his late metaphysics, from the early 1920s, Scheler parted company with the personal concept of God he had advocated earlier, in his Catholic phase: 'Man – a brief festival in the immense span of universal evolution – *signifies* . . . something with regard to the becoming of the *divinity itself*. His history is not a mere spectacle for an eternally perfected divine spectator and judge, but is woven into the evolution of the divinity itself' (Max Scheler, *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 9: *Späte Schriften*, ed. Manfred Frings, Bonn 1995, pp. 101f). With the idea of the 'becoming of God', Scheler returned to mystical speculation:

> It is the old idea of Spinoza, Hegel and many others: primal being becomes aware of itself in the same act by which man sees himself as founded in it. We only need to reformulate this idea, which up to now has been presented in far too one-sided and intellectualist a way, to mean that man's knowing himself to be founded is a consequence of the active commitment of the centre of our being to the ideal demand of the deity, and the attempt to accomplish it, and in this accomplishment to help to engender for the first time the evolving 'God' as the increasing interpenetration of spirit and urge. (ibid. p. 70)

However, the doctrine of the evolving God is only fully developed in Scheler's notes on metaphysics published from his posthumous papers, which remained a fragment and of which Adorno cannot have known; cf. the sections 'Weltwerden' and 'Deitas' in 'Manuskripte zur Lehre vom Grunde aller Dinge' in Scheler, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 11: *Schriften aus dem Nachlaß*, Bd. II: *Erkenntnislehre und Metaphysik*, ed. Manfred S. Frings, Berne, Munich 1979, pp. 201ff.

6 Adorno was thinking above all of speculations he had found in the 'Weltalter' fragments, which he discussed in the winter semester 1960/1, for example, the sentence: 'Scarcely had the first steps been taken in reuniting philosophy with nature when the great age of the physical world had to be acknowledged, and the fact that, far from being the last thing, it was the first, from which all others, even the development of divine life, took their beginning' (Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, *Die Weltalter. Fragmente, in den Urfassungen von 1811 und 1813*, ed. Manfred Schröter, Munich 1946, p. 9). While Adorno saw the

traditional doctrine 'that what has become cannot be true' advocated in the 'Weltalter' fragments (Theodor W. Adorno, marginal note at ibid., p. 4), he noted in the margin beside the sentence quoted: 'Turning point: God as something which evolves' (ibid., p. 9). And below the keywords in his lecture notes we read: 'the past in God = the absolute as a *process*. Distinction between moments *within* the absolute' (Theodor W. Adorno Archiv, Zur Einleitung in die 'Weltalter', *Stichworte*, Bl.1).

7 'This concept' appears to refer to metaphysics as the doctrine of the enduring, in which, according to Adorno's fundamental critique, metaphysics and epistemology converge: 'With this substitution of the enduring for the truth, the beginning of truth becomes the beginning of deception' (GS 5, p. 25; cf. NaS IV.4, pp. 45ff and *passim*).

8 The sentence interrupted by this insertion is continued in the first sentence of the 'Notes for Lecture Three'; see p. 12 above.

9 One exception, however, is Heidegger, who in the summer semester of 1931 gave a lecture on 'Wesen und Wirklichkeit der Kraft' concerning Book Θ of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, subsequently published (cf. Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe, II. Abt., Bd. 33: Aristoteles, Metaphysik Θ 1–3*, 'Von Wesen und Wirklichkeit der Kraft', ed. Heinrich Hüni, 2nd edn, Frankfurt/Main 1990).

10 Wolfgang Köhler (1887–1967), a representative of the Berlin school of Gestalt theory. Adorno discusses the relationship of Gestalt theory to Kant's concept of synthesis, though without addressing the problem of psycho-physical parallelism, in Lecture Nine on the *Critique of Pure Reason*; cf. NaS IV.4, pp. 153f.

11 In the manuscript this is followed by a sentence which should possibly be read as: 'Phil[osophische] Fragen hängen weitab von dem ab was einem [einen?] schwant [trennt?], die Hexenfeuer [?]' (Theodor W. Adorno Archiv, Vo 107882v). The reading of the sentence is extremely uncertain, and its meaning entirely unclear; the German editor has therefore omitted it from the text.

Lecture Three

1 The idea of substituting constellations and *models* for verbal definitions had been fundamental to Adorno's philosophy since his inaugural lecture in 1931; cf. GS 1, p. 341 and Rolf Tiedemann, 'Begriff Bild Name. Über Adornos Utopie der Erkenntnis', in *Frankfurter Adorno Blätter II*, Munich 1993, pp. 103ff.

2 'Inductive metaphysics' refers, above all, to philosophers of the second half of the nineteenth century, such as Fechner, Lotze or Eduard von Hartmann, who sought to arrive at speculative propositions on the basis of the inductive procedures of the natural sciences. According to Marx it is 'the absolute general law of capitalist accumulation' which 'corresponds' to 'an accumulation of misery' (Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1, trans. Ben Fowkes, Harmondsworth 1979, pp. 798f); the theory of

'relatively increasing misery' was created in order to rescue Marx's law of the increasing impoverishment of the proletariat, which appeared to be contradicted by the facts. As early as 1942, in *Reflexionen zur Klassentheorie*, Adorno had noted that 'the traditional construction of increasing misery' had 'fallen into ruin'; 'to patch it up with the makeshift concept of relative misery, as was done at the time of the revisionist dispute, could only suit social-democrat counter-apologists whose ears had been so dulled by their own clamour that they could not even detect the mocking echoes which the phrase "relative misery" sent back to them' (GS 8, p. 384). And in one of Adorno's last works, the lecture 'Spätkapitalismus oder Industriegesellschaft?' he writes laconically: 'Prognoses of the class theory, such as those of increasing misery or the collapse of capitalism, have not been fulfilled as drastically as they must be understood if they are not to be deprived of their content; talk of relative misery can only be comic' (GS 8, p. 355).

3 The two preceding sentences sum up Heidegger's fundamental ontology, as developed in *Being and Time*, and Adorno's critique of it, in the briefest formula; Adorno developed his critique in the first part of *Negative Dialectics* (cf. pp. 61ff).

4 What the name Luderbach stood for in Adorno's metaphysical experience is revealed in 'Meditations on Metaphysics', written a few days before the lecture:

> The course of history forces materialism on metaphysics, traditionally the direct antithesis of materialism. . . . The point of no return has been reached in the process which irresistibly forced metaphysics to join what it was once conceived against. Not since the youthful Hegel has philosophy – unless selling out for authorized cerebration – been able to repress how very much it slipped into material questions of existence. Children sense some of this in the fascination that issues from the flayer's zone, from carcasses, from the repulsively sweet odor of putrefaction, and from the opprobrious terms used for that zone. The unconscious power of that realm may be as great as that of infantile sexuality; the two intermingle in the anal fixation, but they are scarcely the same. An unconscious knowledge whispers to the child what is repressed by civilized education; this is what matters, says the whispering voice. And the wretched physical existence strikes a spark in the supreme interest that is scarcely less repressed; it kindles a 'What is that?' and 'Where is it going?' The man who managed to recall what used to strike him in the words 'dung hill' and 'pig sty' might be closer to absolute knowledge than Hegel's chapter in which readers are promised such knowledge only to have it withheld with a superior mien. (*Negative Dialectics*, pp. 365–6)

Also see pp. 116ff above, where Adorno takes up this idea again.

5 Cf. the section 'The Child's Question' in *Negative Dialectics* (pp. 110f).

6 This again refers to 'Meditations on Metaphysics', from which Adorno derived his last six lectures on metaphysics in an 'evolving variation'; see n. 1 above.

7 Hylozoism is the name given since the seventeenth century to the doctrine of the Ionian Pre-Socratics according to which life (ἡ ζωή) emerges from a basic substance (ἡ ὕλη) – water, air, fire etc.; on the critique of this by Aristotle (cf. *Metaphysics*, pp. 7ff [*A* 3ff, 983 a 24ff]) and Zeller's interpretation:

> In the earlier Ionian philosophers he censured . . . their neglect of the prime mover and the superficiality with which they made any element they chose into the basic substance, whereas, according to him, the sensible properties and the changes of bodies were conditioned by the opposition of the elements. The same applies to Heraclitus, insofar as he agreed with them in setting up a basic substance. (Zeller, 2. Teil, 2. Abt., *Aristoteles und die alten Peripatetiker*, Hildesheim, Zurich, New York 1990 [2nd reprint of 4th edn], p. 284)

8 Here Adorno probably gave references to the editions of Aristotle to be used – certainly to the recent translation of the *Metaphysics* by Paul Gohlke (see Lecture 4, n. 13) and possibly also to Zeller's history of ancient philosophy (see Lecture 1, n. 13).

Lecture Four

1 See Lecture 2, n. 3.

2 Adorno knew of the dispute between Plato and the Cynic Antisthenes primarily through Zeller:

> Whereas Plato derived a clearly realistic system from the Socratic demand for conceptual knowledge, Antisthenes drew from it an equally thoroughgoing nominalism: universal concepts, he maintained, were mere things of thought; he saw people and horses, not peopleness and horseness. From this standpoint he launched against his fellow disciples a polemic not lacking in coarseness, which was answered robustly enough from the other side. (Zeller, 2. Teil, 1. Abt., *Sokrates und die Sokratiker, Plato und die alte Akademie*, Hildesheim, Zurich, New York 1990 [2nd reprint of 5th edn], pp. 295f)

3 Cf. *Politeia*, Book 7; St. 514ff.

4 Locke's theory of the primary and secondary qualities of bodies is to be found in Book 2 of *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Ch. VIII, § 8ff:

> The power to produce any idea in our mind, I call quality of the subject, wherein that power is. . . . Qualities . . . are first such as are utterly inseparable from the body, in what estate soever it be. – These I call original or primary qualities of body. . . . Secondly, the power that is in any body, by reason of its insensible primary qualities to . . . produce in us the different ideas of several colours, sounds, smells, tastes etc. These

> are usually called sensible qualities. . . . These I call secondary qualities. (John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, vol. 1, New York 1959, p. 169)

5 For Adorno, who saw causality as replaced in a certain sense by 'participation' in Plato, the doctrine of μέθεξις was particularly important in the version in which it is put forward in the *Phaedo* (cf. *Negative Dialectics*, St. 99ff).

6 Recent Plato scholarship, as represented by a treatise by Christian Iber, for example, sees in the *Parmenides* dialogue a dialectical 'rescue' of the 'Many' in Plato against Parmenides's critique of Zeno: 'Many presupposes One and One produces Many. It is this double thesis which the *Parmenides* sets out to prove. Plato therefore agrees to a considerable extent with Zeno's critique of multiplicity, but regards the Eleatic's monistic conclusion as false' (Christian Iber, 'Platons eigentliche philosophische Leistung im Dialog "Parmenides"', in *Dialektischer Negativismus. Michael Theunissen zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Emil Angehrn et al., Frankfurt/Main 1992, p. 188).

7 The reference is to the section 'Überliefertes' from Part 3 of the 'Historischer Teil' of the *Farbenlehre* (*Theory of Colours*):

> Plato's attitude to the world is that of a blessed spirit who is pleased to sojourn in it for a while. Since he already knows it; he is not so much concerned with getting to know the world as with kindly imparting to it what he has brought with him, and what it needs so badly. . . . Aristotle's attitude, by contrast, is that of a man, a master-builder. Now that he is here he has to set about his business. He enquires about the soil, but only until he has found firm ground. (Goethe, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 10, Munich 1989, p. 573)

8 The text source incorrectly has 'Aristotle'.

9 Heidegger argues this in, for example, the Introduction to the 5th edition of 'What is Metaphysics?':

> Such thinking, which recalls the truth of Being, is no longer satisfied with metaphysics, to be sure, but it does not oppose and think against metaphysics either. To return to our image, it does not tear up the root of philosophy. It tills the ground and plows the soil for this root. Metaphysics remains what comes first in philosophy. What comes first in thinking, however, it does not reach. When we think the truth of Being, metaphysics is overcome. We can no longer accept the claim of metaphysics to preside over our fundamental relation to 'Being' or to decisively determine every relation to beings as such. ('Introduction to "What is Metaphysics?"', trans. Walter Kaufmann, in Heidegger, *Pathmarks*, Cambridge, Mass., 1998, p. 279)

And in 'Überwindung der Metaphysik' in his notes written between 1936 and 1946 we read:

> The truth of being decays necessarily as the culmination of metaphysics. Its decay is hastened by the collapse of the world shaped by metaphysics and the devastation of the earth originating in metaphysics. This collapse and this devastation have their fitting executor in metaphysical man understood as the rational animal, the working animal. . . . With the onset of this culmination of metaphysics begins the preparation, unrecognized by and inherently inaccessible to metaphysics, of a first manifestation of the duality of Being and existence. In this manifestation is concealed the first intimation of the truth of Being, which takes back into itself the precedence regarding the workings of Being. (Martin Heidegger, *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, Pfullingen 1954, pp. 72 and 78)

10 Cf. *Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith, London 1973, pp. 310ff (A 313ff, B 370ff).

11 Adorno repeatedly discusses Kant's twofold aim of critique and rescue in his lectures 'Kants "Kritik der reinen Vernunft"'; cf. NaS IV.4, pp. 54, 132f, 143 and *passim*.

12 Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, *A* 1, 980 a 21.

13 Cf. *Aristoteles, Die Lehrschriften*, hrsg., übertragen und in ihrer Entstehung erläutert von Paul Gohlke, Bd. V: *Metaphysik*, 3rd edn, Paderborn 1972, p. 35.

14 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, Tübingen 1963, p. 215.

15 This wording [German: *überhaupt erst das Thema*] appears in the original. An alternative reading which might seem plausible [*überhaupt nicht das Thema*] is incorrect, as seems to be proved by the formulation repeated in the penultimate sentence of this paragraph, concerning *die Ontologie, die hier* [i.e. in Aristotle] *erst thematisch ist*. 'Theme' and 'thematic', as used by Adorno in this context, are likely to be associated with the idea of a theme touched on for the first time but not yet developed.

16 See p. 16 above.

17 In the text source the German wording has been amended to clarify the sense.

18 This [*Liebe zur Weisheit*] is the original wording. It cannot be ruled out that the usual translation of *φιλοσοφία* represents a slip in this case, as the *σοφία* of the Socratic-Platonic tradition fails to express what Aristotle meant, knowledge in the sense of science; in that case Adorno would have wanted to say 'love of knowledge' or, better, 'striving for knowledge', an expression he uses at the end of the lecture (see p. 23 above).

19 Adorno may possibly be thinking of § 6 of *Being and Time*, in which Heidegger writes that Aristotle, in whose work 'the ancient ontology as developed by Plato turns into "dialectic"', 'no longer has any understanding' of it, 'for he has put it on a more radical footing and raised it to a new level [*aufhob*]' (Heidegger, *Being and Time*, pp. 47–8); while this does relate syntactically to the dialectic, it implicitly applies equally to ontology. Moreover, Adorno's and Heidegger's concepts of ontology are hardly compatible without further qualification. Whereas Adorno

understands it to mean a thinking which, like that of the Pre-Socratics, 'posits and presupposes the essential' and while he uses it in this sense when speaking of Heidegger's ontology, for Heidegger ontology is always something 'decomposed' by rationality which actually blocks the desired path towards 'Being itself'. Even in *Being and Time*, which was still relatively undecided on this issue, the 'title ontology' is 'explicitly devoted to the meaning of entities' (ibid., p. 32). 'Ontological interpretation,' and therefore Aristotle's as well, 'projects the entity presented to it upon the Being which is that entity's own, so as to conceptualize it with regard to its structure' (ibid., p. 359), to which conceptualization the truth of Being cannot be reduced, since, according to the 'Letter on Humanism', it calls rather for a thinking 'which is stricter than conceptual thought' (Heidegger, *Wegmarken*, Frankfurt/Main 1967, p. 187). Because Aristotle remained within the framework of discursive philosophizing, Adorno maintains, he fell victim to Heidegger's criticism as an ontologist; that Heidegger rejected discursivity and fell back on an archaic murmuring about Being is the persistent thrust of Adorno's critique of Heidegger.

Lecture Five

1 See the bibliographical reference, in Lecture 1, n. 13. Zeller's *Philosophie der Griechen in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung* was first published in 1844–52 in three volumes, and later editions in six volumes. Adorno owned the second edition of 1856–68. Zeller also wrote a *Grundriß der Geschichte der griechischen Philosophie* (1883), but this was not used by Adorno.

2 Cf. the beginning of Lecture 2 in Adorno's keywords, p. 10 and n. 3.

3 Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, pp. 51ff (*A* 1, 982 b 8f).

4 Cf. Zeller II.2, pp. 303ff.

5 Regarding the recent status of Aristotle scholarship on this point cf. Klaus Oehler, *Die Lehre vom noetischen und dianoetischen Denken bei Platon und Aristoteles. Ein Beitrag zur Erforschung der Geschichte des Bewußtseinsproblems in der Antike*, Munich 1962, and the review of Oehler's book by Ernst Tugendhat (Tugendhat, *Philosophische Aufsätze*, Frankfurt/Main 1992, pp. 402ff).

6 Adorno here follows Zeller, who always translates Aristotle's οὐσία as substance (*Substanz*) (cf. Zeller II.2, p. 305). Whereas, at the beginning of Book *A*, for example, Adolf Lasson and Eugen Rolfes followed Zeller in this, most other German translators prefer *Wesenheit* (essence, essentiality) (Hermann Bonitz) or *Wesen* (being, entity) (Paul Gohlke, Franz F. Schwarz); Gadamer follows Heidegger's usage and translates it by: 'Über das Sein geht die Untersuchung.' Adorno did not want, of course, to assert a 'derivation' in the etymological sense.

7 Husserl's expression; cf. GS 5, p. 128.

8 Adorno deals with this problem above all in Lecture 8 of *Probleme der Moralphilosophie*, cf. NaS IV.10, pp. 117ff.

9 Cf. Alexandre Koyré, *Descartes und die Scholastik*, Bonn 1923.

10 'Per *substantiam* nihil aliud intelligere possumus, quam rem quae ita existit, ut nulla alia re indigeat ad existendum' (*Oeuvres de Descartes*, publiés par Charles Adam & Paul Tannery, vol. VIII-1: *Principia Philosophiae*, Paris 1964, p. 24 [Pars Prima, LI]). 'By substance we can only understand a thing which so exists that it needs no other thing for its existence' (René Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy*, trans. Valentine Rodger Miller and Reese P. Miller, Dordrecht/Boston/London 1983, p. 23).

11 'Per substantiam intelligo id, quod in se est, et per se concipitur: hoc est id, cujus conceptus non indiget conceptu alterius rei, a quo formari debeat' ('By substance I understand what is in itself and is conceived through itself, i.e. that whose concept does not require the concept of another thing, from which it must be formed' (*The Collected Works of Spinoza*, trans. Edwin Curley, Princeton NJ 1985, p. 408 [*Ethics*, I, 3]).

12 Reference not traced.

13 In his brief notes Adorno gives as the reference *Kateg. 5* (Theodor W. Adorno Archiv, Vo 10789), i.e. Ch. 5 of *The Categories*, which begins: 'Substance, in its strictest, first, and chief sense, is that which is neither predicated of any subject, nor is in any; as "a certain man," or "a certain horse" ' (*The Organon, or Logical Treatises of Aristotle*, trans. Octavius Freire Owen, London/New York 1893, vol. 1, p. 6). Zeller also takes this as his basis when interpreting as follows:

> If the universal is not something existing for itself, it cannot be substance. . . . Originally, the term substance . . . was only properly applied to that which can neither be stated as a determination of the nature of something else, nor as something attached to something else as a derivative; in other words, to that which is only subject and never predicate. Substance is being in the original sense, the substratum by which all other existence is carried. But for Aristotle only the single being is of that kind. The universal, as he himself demonstrated against Plato, is not something existing for itself: everything universal, including the universality of the species, derives its existence only from the single being; it is always stated to be of something else, it refers only to a certain property, not to a 'this'. The single being alone belongs only to itself, is not carried by something else, is what it is through itself, and not merely by reason of some other being. (Zeller II.2, pp. 305ff).

14 The name of the dialogue is missing in the text source, probably because the transcriber was not familiar with it. In the *Theaetetus* Socrates (St. 152bff) speaks of the relativity of sense perceptions; but *Politeia*, St. 523bff may also be relevant.

15 The secretary seems also to have understood this title only partially, as the text source has the words: '. . . de la conscience'. Adorno frequently mentioned Bergson's first book in similar contexts.

16 Cf. the *Science of Logic*: 'In the sphere of the Notion there can be no other *immediacy* than one in which mediation is *essentially* and *explicitly* a moment and which has come to be only through the sublating of that mediation' (*Hegel's Science of Logic*, p. 631). Or: '. . . immediacy in general proceeds only from mediation, and must therefore pass over into mediation' (ibid., p. 800).

17 It is unlikely that Adorno was thinking of a specific proof which could be identified by page numbers; rather, the whole of the logic relating to concepts should be seen as such a 'proof'.

18 On the concept of the thing in Hume and Kant cf. Adorno's lectures on *Kants 'Kritik der reinen Vernunft'*, especially Lectures 9 and 10, NaS IV.4, pp. 143ff.

19 Cf. *The Categories*, Ch. 5, 2 a 15: 'But secondary substances are they, in which as species, those primarily-named substances are inherent, that is to say, both these and the genera of these species; as "a certain man" exists in "man", as in a species, but the genus of this species is "animal"' (Aristotle, *The Organon*, vol. I, p. 6). According to Zeller the expression δεύτεραι οὐσίαι only appears in Ch. 5 of *The Categories* (cf. Zeller II.2, p. 307, n. 1).

Lecture Six

1 See p. 8 *passim* above.

2 Cf. *Analytica posteriora*, Book I, Ch. 11, 77 a 8: 'one thing of the many' (Aristotle, *The Organon*, vol. I, p. 269).

3 On the Kantian concept of unity in diversity cf. Adorno's lectures on *Kants 'Kritik der reinen Vernunft'*, especially Lecture 13 (NaS IV.4, pp. 210ff).

4 See pp. 16f above.

5 Regarding Adorno's discussions of form and matter, ἐνέργεια and δύναμις, cf. Zeller II.2, pp. 313ff.

6 Cf. *Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, pp. 238ff (A 218ff, B 265ff).

7 Cf. p. 19 above.

8 At the 12th conference of German sociologists, held in Heidelberg on 15–17 October 1954, Adorno read a paper 'Zum Ideologie-Problem' (GS 8, pp. 457ff, under the title *Beitrag zur Ideologienlehre*); according to the proceedings, published in the *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie*, vol. 6, no. 3/4 (1953/4), Alfred Weber did not read a paper, but made several contributions to a 'round-table discussion on the problem of ideology'. The remarks by Weber to which Adorno refers, which unfortunately are reported only briefly by Leopold von Wiese, seem to have been made in this discussion. Only one reference to them, in a contribution to the discussion by Arnold Hauser, has survived ('But to come back to the example of the dispute over universals given by Herr Weber – it is probably the best example of how elements conditioned by existence

permeate thought. Nominalism, too, would never have come into being through its own intrinsic logic, had not the individual as such been striving to emancipate himself' [ibid., p. 395]).

9 Alfred Weber was born in 1868.

10 In 1965 Karl Heinz Haag (b. 1924), whose doctorate had been awarded by Horkheimer and Adorno in 1951, taught philosophy at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität in Frankfurt/Main, where he had qualified as a lecturer in 1956. His most recent publication had been a contribution to the Adorno Festschrift of 1963; it touches on Adorno's discussions many times, but does not contain the exact formulation in question (for similar formulations cf. Haag, 'Das Unwiederholbare', in *Zeugnisse. Theodor W. Adorno zum sechzigsten Geburtstag*, ed. Max Horkheimer, Frankfurt/Main 1963, pp. 152ff; also Haag, *Philosophischer Idealismus. Untersuchungen zur Hegelschen Dialektik mit Beispielen aus der Wissenschaft der Logik*, Frankfurt/Main 1967, pp. 7ff); it is also possible that Adorno was referring here to an oral contribution that Haag may have made at Adorno's advanced seminar in philosophy, which he attended regularly.

11 'The relationship of genesis to validity [*Genesis und Geltung*] is discussed frequently by Adorno, for example, at length with reference to Husserl in *Metakritik der Erkenntnistheorie* [cf. GS 5, pp. 79ff], and also in his introduction to *The Positivist Dispute in German Sociology* [trans. G. Adey and D. Frisby, London 1976], one of his most recent works' (NaS IV.4, p. 397). On genesis and validity in Kant cf. Lecture 15 on *Kants 'Kritik der reinen Vernunft'* (ibid., pp. 242ff).

12 Max Scheler (1874–1928) was appointed Professor of Philosophy at Frankfurt/Main as successor to Hans Cornelius early in 1928, but died there on 19 May the same year. Adorno briefly played with the idea of qualifying as a lecturer under Scheler, as we learn from a letter to Alban Berg of 14 May 1928:

> The question now is whether Max Scheler, freshly appointed to the Chair at Frankfurt, and of whom you must know through Franz Blei or through essays by Hermann Bahr, and who is certainly an exceptional man, will supervise my Habilitation. There are some reasons to suppose he will, as many of the influential people here will support me; but it is far from certain, as Scheler will bring his own candidates with him from Cologne. Whether my present, not exactly Scholerian work (an epistemology of psychoanalysis) will be suitable is still quite uncertain, and it would be highly inconvenient for me if this book, written primarily with this purpose in mind, should completely miss its objective and if I had to write something else – although with Scheler I could get by with fewer concessions. All the same, to be frank, I really worry very little about all this, and if my whole Habilitation – which for me is a social affair but not a practical or economic necessity – were to come to nothing, I should be heartily indifferent and even, au fond, glad. (Theodor W. Adorno and Alban Berg, *Briefwechsel 1925–1935*, ed. Henri Lonitz, Frankfurt/Main 1997, p. 169)

That Adorno always regarded Scheler as an 'exceptional man' is also shown by a dissertation report of 1965, in which he defends the philosopher against his critics: 'The wealth of philosophical experience which animates Scheler's work and which he strives to organize is dismissed too readily. The author ought to have recognized the obvious contradictions and rifts in Scheler's doctrine as reflections of objective ones, and interpreted them as such' (Theodor W. Adorno Archiv, 'Amtliche Schriften').

13 Adorno probably had in mind Scheler's switch to a materialist phenomenology, for which the eidetic sphere of Husserl's phenomenology, which was content to remain within the merely logical sphere, had been abandoned in favour of a 'renewal of *intuitive* Platonism . . . though one from which the Platonic reification of Ideas and all mythical adjuncts had been completely eliminated' (Scheler, *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 7: *Wesen und Formen der Sympathie. Die deutsche Philosophie der Gegenwart*, ed. Manfred S. Frings, Berne, Munich 1973, p. 310). Scheler sought to erect on intuitively perceived essences, which were strictly distinguished from the species of logic, a dualistic metaphysics, a 'realm of being' organized hierarchically on scholastic principles, to which finite things stood in a 'relationship of being' as 'participants' in the Platonic *μέθεξις*. 'Knowledge is a relationship of being,' he writes in *Die Wissensformen und die Gesellschaft*, using formulations he repeated in his last book, *Die philosophische Weltanschauung*, 'it is a relationship of *participation* by an existent in the *thus*ness (*Sosein*) of another existent, through which no change in this thusness is posited' (Scheler, *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 8: *Die Wissensformen und die Gesellschaft*, 3rd edn, Berne, Munich 1980, p. 203; also cf. vol. 9: *Späte Schriften*, p. 111). Such knowledge, which would represent a validity in itself, would indeed be separated from its genesis by a *χωρισμός*. However, the late Scheler seems to want to move away from this position again, as in texts published posthumously under the title *Zusätze aus den nachgelassenen Schriften*:

> 'Eternal truths' are . . . not assumed by us – even with regard to *the* truths which touch on genuine relationships of being. According to our doctrine, the supra-singular spirit has no *idea ante res* (which, as in the theistic system, would only realize its creative will), but actively produces the essentialities which are represented through the world only in and with the realization of the world in *absolute time*, so that temporality, not eternity, obtains . . . even in the realm of essentialities. (ibid., p. 289)

14 Cf. Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, trans. J.N. Findlay, vol. 1, *Prolegomena to Pure Logic*, London/New York 1970. Also see the discussions in Adorno's *Metakritik der Erkenntnistheorie* referred to in n. 11.

15 Günter Ralfs comments as follows on the relationship of genesis and validity in Aristotle from the philological viewpoint:

> Aristotle was convinced that the temporal genesis and development of human knowledge was the exact inverse of the metaphysical and logical relationship of things: what I first perceive sensibly in things, the *πρότερον πρὸς ἡμᾶς*, is, in the metaphysical structure of the phenomenon examined, the *ὕστερον φύσει* and *λόγῳ*; what is before our eyes points back to what it was originally. Aristotle therefore formulates the principle that the *πρότερον φύσει* is the *ὕστερον πρὸς ἡμᾶς* . . . ; i.e. the original being is perceived last. Aristotle therefore distinguishes between the origin and the grounds of knowledge. He thus arrives at the deep insight that the highest and first principles reveal themselves last, as principles, at the very end of the temporal development: the *πρῶτον λόγῳ* is the *ὕστερον χρόνῳ*. (Günter Ralfs, 'Was bedeutet die Aristotelische Formel *τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι*?', in Ralfs, Lebensformen des Geistes. Vorträge und Abhandlungen, ed. Hermann Glockner, Cologne 1964, p. 33)

16 Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, p. 58 (last sentence modified) (*A*, 983 b 27ff). Adorno also uses this quotation in the chapter on freedom in *Negative Dialectics*, p. 216.

17 Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, p. 346 (*Γ* 8, 1012 b 31); also cf. ibid., *Λ* 8 1073 a; *Physica* VIII 5, 256 b 13ff; *De anima* III 10, 433 b.

18 The unsatisfactoriness of Aristotle's solution to the problem of *τόδε τι* and *εἶδος* is formulated concisely by Haag:

> For Platonic idealism the Form, as the only entity susceptible to cognition, was at the same time the truly existent. Aristotle wanted to break with this. The *τόδε τι*, the res singularis, which did not coincide with the Form, was to be the truly real. But this intention could not be maintained. The particular was too radically estranged from the universal to mean anything on its own account. Only the *εἶδος* offered intelligible content. The unknownness of matter and of the individual compelled Aristotle to conceive them as determined by form, the structure of which they adopt. Their own meaning was thereby reduced to that of form. The problem of the synthesis of unity and diversity, the abolition of the Platonic chorismos, remained unsolved. (Haag, *Philosophischer Idealismus*, p. 8)

19 On the question of the substantiality of the *δεύτεραι οὐσίαι* cf. the passage quoted by Zeller in Lecture 5, n. 13 and its continuation:

> The genera can be called substances only derivatively, in that they represent the common essence of certain substances. This is more strongly the case the closer they are to the single substance, so that the species merit that name more than the genera. However, if the strict concept of the substance is applied they do not deserve it at all, as they are constituted by single beings, and because it is true of them as of any universal that they do not express a This but a Such, not substance but the constitution of substance. (Cf. Zeller II.2, pp. 306f)

20 At this point Adorno distances himself from Zeller, who expressly denied that the 'idea of mediation' was present in Aristotle:

> Form and matter require . . . no further mediation to form a whole, but are immediately united: form is the closer determination of matter indeterminate in itself, which directly absorbs the formal determination it lacks. When the possible becomes the real, the two do not stand opposite each other as two things, but possibility, considered in terms of its matter, is one and the same thing as that of which its form is the reality. (Cf. Zeller II.2, p. 323)

Lecture Seven

1 The following half-page is based largely on conjecture, as the text source contains a large number of gaps, at least some of which must be the result of a malfunction of the recording apparatus.

2 Adorno's fundamental critique of the question of the 'absolutely primary thing' and of the 'strong use of the concept of the first' can be consulted in the Introduction to *Metakritik der Erkenntnistheorie* (GS 5, pp. 12ff, especially pp. 15f).

3 An allusion to Marx's polemic *Misère de la philosophie. Réponse à la Philosophie de la misère de M. Proudhon*, published in 1847, which included the first systematic account of historical materialism; in the second part, especially, it comprised a critique of philosophy as practised by the Hegelian school, which Marx confronted with the sense of history which Hegel himself had possessed. Whereas Marx drew from the poverty of philosophy the conclusion that it should be replaced by history, for Adorno, who held fast to philosophy in a changed historical situation, the 'poverty of philosophy' consisted, as the following sentences demonstrate, in the objective compulsion linking thought to the discursive sphere, from which, nevertheless, it must detach itself if it is to become materialist in earnest; also see the references in the next note.

4 On the far-reaching consequences of this idea – that all philosophy 'by virtue of its procedures' necessarily 'pre-judges' in favour of idealism (GS 6, p. 531) – in Adorno's thought cf. the Introduction to *Negative Dialectics*, pp. 11ff; also cf. Tiedemann, 'Begriff Bild Name', p. 103.

5 Cf. Adorno's *Beitrag zur Ideologienlehre* (GS 8, pp. 457ff) and the revised version in the volume of the Institut für Sozialforschung, *Soziologische Exkurse. Nach Vorträgen und Diskussionen*, Frankfurt/Main 1956 (Frankfurter Beiträge zur Soziologie, Bd. 4), pp. 162ff.

6 In vol. 1 of *Logical Investigations*, which, however, was not published until 1900; cf. the reference in Lecture 6, n. 14.

7 But see Lecture 6, n. 13. Regarding Adorno's critique of the 'two-worlds theory' of the late Scheler, see *Negative Dialectics*:

> A sociology of knowledge . . . denies not only the objective structure of society but the idea of objective truth and its cognition. . . . Classification serves the *tel quel* localization of the mind. Such a reduction of so-called 'forms of consciousness' goes perfectly with philosophical apologetics. The excuse of the sociology of knowledge – that the truth or untruth of

> philosophical teaching has nothing to do with social conditions – remains undisturbed; relativism allies itself with the division of labor. The late Scheler did not hesitate to exploit this in his 'two-worlds theory'. (ibid., p. 198)

8 The formulation is quoted from Benjamin's notes for the *Arcades* project: 'A decisive rejection of the concept of "timeless truth" is in order. Yet truth is not only – as Marxism claims – a temporal function of knowledge, but is bound to a temporal core, which is contained both in the known and in the knowing subject' (Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Werke*, unter Mitwirkung von Theodor W. Adorno und Gershom Scholem hrsg. von Rolf Tiedemann und Hermann Schweppenhäuser, vol. 5, 4th edn, Frankfurt/Main 1996, p. 578).

9 Not identified as a quotation; but cf., for example, § 15 of *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendentale Phänomenologie*, in which the 'genuine reflection of the philosopher on what he *really aims at*' is described as follows: 'The sedimented conceptuality, which is taken for granted as the ground of his private and unhistorical work, is to be brought back to life in its hidden historical meaning' (Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, vol. 8, pp. VI, 72f).

10 See Lecture 4.

11 Three *Ethics* by Aristotle have been passed down: whereas the authenticity of parts of the *Magna Moralia* is disputed, the *Eudemian Ethics* is regarded as an early version of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, which contains the most extensive discussions.

12 In the dialogues *Protagoras* (St. 350 Bff) and *Laches* (St. 191 Dff); however, Aristotle himself defines ἀνδρεία more unambiguously in this sense: 'We see that the coward, the daredevil and the man of courage face the same situation, but how they face it is different. The first two represent too little and too much, while the third steers a middle course and therefore conducts himself correctly' (*Nicomachean Ethics*, III 10, 1116 a).

13 That a fundamental motif of Adorno's whole philosophy stems from this idea can be seen from a comparison with the opening of the central second part of *Negative Dialectics*:

> There is no Being without entities. 'Something' – as a cognitatively indispensable substrate of any concept, including the concept of Being – is the utmost abstraction of the subject-matter that is not identical with thinking, an abstraction not to be abolished by any further thought process. Without 'something' there is no thinkable formal logic, and there is no way to cleanse this topic of its metalogical rudiment. (ibid., p. 135)

Adorno sought, in the reflection of traditional philosophy, to take further the analysis of the 'strong philosophical concept' 'in the direction of nonconceptuality' (ibid.).

14 The relationship between form and content is the same, i.e. 'external' (see p. 46 above) in Kant, as Adorno repeatedly argues in his lectures, *Kants 'Kritik der reinen Vernunft'* (cf. NaS IV.4, pp. 79ff).

15 In his years at Oxford (1934–8) Adorno came across the influence of the school of Francis Herbert Bradley (1846–1924), the important Hegelian. The name of the 'Oxford philosopher' referred to here is not in the lecture transcript; Adorno probably named Geoffrey Reginald Gilchrist Mure, and was thinking of his book *A Study of Hegel's Logic* (Oxford 1950).

Lecture Eight

1 See pp. 19f above.

2 'I have therefore found it necessary to deny *knowledge*, in order to make room for *faith*. The dogmatism of metaphysics, that is, the preconception that it is possible to make headway in metaphysics without a previous criticism of pure reason, is the source of all that unbelief, always very dogmatic, which wars against morality' (*Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 29 [B XXX]).

3 The German lecture transcript has the words 'immer auch das' instead of 'immer auf das' and some omission marks. The amendment is based on Adorno's notes for the lecture (Theodor W. Adorno Archiv, Vo 10792). Also cf. the corresponding passage in Zeller:

> Just as . . . Plato had distinguished knowledge, as cognition of the eternal and necessary, from imagination or opinion, whose sphere is the accidental, so, too, did Aristotle. For him, as for Plato, knowledge arises from wonderment, from the derangement of commonplace ideas, and for him, too, its object is the universal and the necessary; the accidental cannot be knowledge, only opinion. (Cf. Zeller II.2, p. 162)

4 The Greek quotation is missing from the transcript; here it is taken from Adorno's lecture notes (cf. Theodor W. Adorno Archiv, Vo 10792); in Aristotle cf. Met. Θ 8, 1050 b 11f.

5 See p. 75 above.

6 In his *Formal and Transcendental Logic* of 1929 Husserl distinguishes between the contingent and the formal a priori; in defining the 'judicatively cognizing subjectivity' he encounters

> restrictive essential structures that fall under the heading of pure reason and, in particular, pure judicative reason. Such a subjectivity also involves as a presupposition a continual and essentially necessary relatedness to some hyletic components or other; as apperceptional foundations for the possible experiences that judging necessarily presupposes. Therefore, if we define the concept of form, as a principle, by the essentially necessary components of any rational subjectivity whatever, the concept hyle (exemplified by every 'Datum of sensation') is a form-concept and not what we shall define as the opposite of this, a contingent concept. On the other hand, there is no essential requirement that a judicatively cognizing subjectivity . . . be capable of sensing colors or sounds, that it be capable

> of sensible feelings having just such and such a differentia, or the like – though the concept of such matters too can be framed as apriori (as freed from everything empirically factual). Accordingly they too have their Apriori, which, however, is contingent and not an Apriori of pure reason; or, as we may also say, introducing an old word that tended blindly in the same direction, it is not an 'innate' Apriori. (Edmund Husserl, *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, trans. Dorion Cairns, The Hague 1969, p. 30)

7 Adorno is thinking of the 'apriori of the emotional' which Scheler advocated in opposition to Kant's 'equating of the aprioristic with the conceptual', of 'apriorism with rationalism':

> Our *entire* mental life, and not just objective cognition and thought as cognition of being, which has *pure* acts and laws of action in accordance with its own nature and content, and *independently* of the fact of human organization. The *emotional* aspects of mind, feeling, preferring, loving, hating and *willing*, also have an *original a-priori* content which they do not derive from 'thinking', and which ethics can identify quite independently of logic. There is an a priori 'ordre du coeur' or 'Logique du coeur', as Blaise Pascal aptly puts it. (Scheler, *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 2, Berne/Munich 1980, p. 82)

8 Adorno was probably thinking here of his teacher Hans Cornelius, as the next example cited, referring to the optical similarity series, seems to prove; cf. the reference to Cornelius's commentary on Kant in NaS IV.4, pp. 366f, n. 39.

9 Cf. the discussion on the possibility of synthetic a priori judgements, which nevertheless stem from experience, in Adorno's lectures, *Kants 'Kritik der reinen Vernunft'* (NaS IV.4, pp. 49f).

10 See the opening of the second part of *Negative Dialectics*, cited in Lecture 7, n. 13, and the ensuing discussion of the indissolubility of the 'something'.

11 On Kant's distinction, cf. the 'Postulates of empirical thought in general', according to which possibility and reality are 'categories of modality', which 'have the peculiarity that, in determining an object, they do not in the least enlarge the concept to which they are attached as predicates. They only express the relation of the concept to the faculty of knowledge': '1. That which agrees with the formal conditions of experience, that is, with the conditions of intuition and of concepts, is *possible*. 2. That which is bound up with the material conditions of experience, that is, with sensation, is *actual*' (*Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 239 (A 218f, B 265f). In other words, 'The postulate bearing on the knowledge of things as *actual* does not, indeed, demand immediate *perception*, and, therefore, sensation. . . . In the *mere concept* of a thing no mark of its existence is to be found' (ibid., pp. 242–3 [A 225, B 272]).

12 Cf. *Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, pp. 384ff (A 406ff, B 433ff).

13 See p. 66 above.

14 Cf. Fr. 1 of Anaximander of Miletus: 'The beginning and origin of existing things is ἄπειρον (the boundlessly indeterminate). But whereof existing things are become, therein also they pass away according to their guilt; for they render each other just punishment and penance according to the ordinance of time' (Diels/Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 6th edn, vol. 1, p. 89). Aristotle uses the term in *Metaphysics K* 10, 1066 a 35 (cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, pp. 367ff) and elsewhere; also cf. the *Physics*, which contains no reference to a substantial infinite.

15 Cf. *Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, pp. 409ff (A 444ff, B 472ff). Adorno discusses the third antinomy in *Negative Dialectics* (cf. pp. 244ff) and, above all, in the lectures *Probleme der Moralphilosophie* (cf. NaS IV.10, pp. 54ff).

16 See pp. 40f above. On the theory of the unmoved mover cf. esp. Klaus Oehler, *Der Unbewegte Beweger des Aristoteles*, Frankfurt/Main 1984.

17 Wilhelm Weischedel's main work, *Der Gott der Philosophen. Grundlegung einer philosophischen Theologie im Zeitalter des Nihilismus*, 2 vols, reprint of 3rd edn, Darmstadt 1994, is devoted to the connection between metaphysics and theology; on Aristotle cf. ibid., vol. 1, pp. 54ff.

18 The scholastic doctrine of the *analogia entis*, an official dogma of the Church since 1215, regulates the correspondences between God and that which He has created in terms of similarity and dissimilarity; the theorem contains in essence the core content of ontology as it developed from the Pre-Socratics, to reach a high point and a turning point in St Thomas Aquinas. Cf. e.g. Günther Mensching, *Thomas von Aquin*, Frankfurt/Main, New York 1995 (Reihe Campus Einführungen, Bd. 1087), pp. 94ff.

Lecture Nine

1 See p. 55 above.

2 In his *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature* of 1797 Schelling writes: 'with the removal of the problem of how matter is *originally* possible, the problem of a possible universe is also removed' (*Schellings Werke*, Munich 1956, p. 190). And:

> Objects themselves can be considered as products of *forces*, causing the phantasm of the *thing in itself*, which is supposed to be the cause of our representations, to vanish of its own accord. Indeed, what can have any effect on *mind* except mind itself, or something related to it by nature? It is therefore *necessary* to conceive of matter as a product of *forces*, since *force* is the only non-sensible aspect of objects, and mind can only encounter what is analogous to itself. (ibid., p. 226)

Cf. Kroner's interpretation: 'The notion of the forces by means of which matter is constructed is nothing other than an attempt by the mind

to reconstruct in thought the original synthesis produced in perception. The true concept of matter would be the one which re-established that perception' (cf. Richard Kroner, *Von Kant bis Hegel*, 2 vols in 1 vol., 2nd edn, Tübingen 1961, vol. 2, p. 25). On the changes undergone by the theory of matter in Schelling's natural philosophy cf. Kroner, ibid., pp. 23ff.

3 See the first of the 'Postulates of empirical thought in general': 'That which agrees with the formal conditions of experience, that is, with the conditions of intuition and of concepts, is *possible*,' referred to in n. 11 above.

4 On this 'most famous of Kant's formulations' cf. Adorno's ninth lecture on *Kants 'Kritik der reinen Vernunft'* (NaS IV.4, pp. 147f). On Kant's 'Copernican revolution', ibid., pp. 55f *passim* and *Negative Dialectics*, pp. 247f.

5 Cf. *Metaphysics Δ* 4, 1015 a 5ff: 'Nature . . . is attributed to those things . . . which are composed of matter and form. It consists of primary matter [*πρώτη ὕλη*] and the form or essence, and is the end [purpose] of all becoming' (Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, p. 9). Zeller, on whom Adorno bases his argument here, interprets *πρώτη ὕλη* as follows:

> If in a given case we abstract that which an object has yet to become from everything else, we obtain a certain matter which lacks a certain form, and thus contains only the possibility of that form. If we abstract from absolutely everything which is the result of becoming, if we imagine something objective which has not yet become anything, we obtain pure matter without any formal determination, something which is nothing but can become everything, the subject or substrate to which no conceivable predicate can be applied but is therefore equally receptive to them all. In other words, we obtain something which is everything in terms of possibility and nothing in terms of reality, pure potential being without any actuality.

He adds in a note:

> Aristotle calls this pure matter – which, however, never exists – *πρώτη ὕλη*, contrasting it to *ὕλη ἐσχάτη* (*ἴδιος, οἰκία ἑκάστου*), matter which is combined with a certain form without needing any further elaboration: *πρώτη ὕλη* is matter prior to elementary differences; the *ἐσχάτη ὕλη* of a sculpture, for example, is bronze or stone, while the *ἐσχάτη ὕλη* of the human being are the menstrual fluids [as the 'material cause']. (Cf. Zeller II.2, p. 319f)

6 Cf. Zeller:

> Matter as such, what was called primary matter, is devoid of form or determination, being that which precedes all becoming and shaping. It is the substratum endowed with none of the properties in which the form of things consists. It is thus also the unlimited or infinite, not in the spatial sense (for Aristotle does not admit the possibility of spatial infinity . . .),

> but in the broad sense of this term, where it refers to anything which is not limited or fixed by any formal determination, has attained neither conclusion nor perfection.

From the appended note: 'By ἄπειρον Aristotle means, firstly, the spatially unlimited, and he investigates the concept from this standpoint in . . . *Physics* III, 4ff. But since he now finds that in reality no infinite space can exist, the unlimited finally coincides for him with ἀόριστον or ὕλη' (Zeller II.2, pp. 321f). On the original concept of ἄπειρον in Anaximander see Lecture 8, n. 14.

7 Adorno is referring here to the definition of the 'Apollonian soul' and its 'ahistoricity', a central motif of Spengler, which is to be found, in some form, on all but a few pages of *The Decline of the West*. For example, cf. the discussion in the chapter on 'Music and Sculpture':

> The Hellenic temple is conceived and formed as a solid body. For the formal sensibility which produced it no other possibility existed. For this reason the history of the plastic arts of antiquity is that of an unceasing labour to perfect a single ideal, and to master the free-standing human body as the quintessence of pure objective presence. . . . It has never been remarked . . . how rare this genre is, an exception, anything but a rule. In fact, this sculptural art, which placed the naked body freely on a level plane and formed it from all sides existed only once, in antiquity, since this was the only culture which completely rejected any transcendence of sensible boundaries in favour of space. . . . This Apollonian sculpture is a pendant to Euclidean mathematics. Both repudiate pure space and see the a priori of perception in *bodily* form. This sculpture acknowledges neither ideas pointing into the distance nor personalities or historical events, but only the self-limited existence of bodies confined within their own surfaces. (Cf. Oswald Spengler, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes*, vol. 1, Munich 1920, pp. 310f)

8 Adorno is probably thinking of the famous issue of *Logos* devoted to Spengler, in which Karl Joël and Eduard Schwartz wrote on Spengler's treatment of philosophy and history; Ludwig Curtius, in an essay 'Morphologie der antiken Kunst', criticized the treatment of these subjects in *The Decline of the West*; cf. *Logos. Internationale Zeitschrift für Philosophie der Kultur*, ed. Richard Kroner and Georg Mehlis, vol. 9 (1920/1), pp. 133ff.

9 An allusion to *De consolatione philosophiae*, the main work, written in prison, of the Roman Neo-Platonist Boethius (480–525), who was also important as a translator and editor of Aristotle.

Lecture Ten

1 Published in 1938 in Leiden. See Adorno's review of the book, GS 20.1, pp. 240f.

2 For example, by Zeller:

> Aristotle generally mentions four kinds of grounds or causes: the material, the conceptual or formal, the prime mover and the final cause. However, on closer examination these four causes boil down to the first two. The concept of any thing cannot differ from its purpose, as all purposiveness aims at the realization of a concept. This concept, however, is also the moving cause, whether it sets the thing in motion from within as its soul, or whether its motion comes to it from outside. For even in the second case it is the thing's concept which brings about the motion, both in the works of nature and in those of art: only a human being can engender a human being; only the concept of health can impel the physician to work towards the bringing forth of health. Likewise, we will find pure form, the highest purpose of the world and the cause of its motion, combined in the highest cause or the divinity. But even in his explanation of nature Aristotle distinguishes only two kinds of causes, necessary and final causes, i.e. the effect of matter and the effect of form or the concept. It is only this difference, therefore, that we must regard as original. The distinction between the formal, effective and final causes is merely secondary; and even if all three are not always united in the single thing, in themselves, by their nature, they are one, and are only split apart in the realm of sensible phenomena: that which has become has several causes, but the eternal has only one, the concept. (Zeller II.2, pp. 327ff)

3 See Lecture 8, n. 14. Adorno also refers to Anaximander's 'saying' in GS 5, p. 32 and NaS IV.4, p. 332.

4 Adorno discusses the general crisis of causality today in the chapter on freedom in *Negative Dialectics*, pp. 265ff; also cf. NaS IV.4, p. 141 and pp. 212ff.

5 See p. 40 above.

6 On the Kantian concept of causality based on freedom cf. especially Lectures 4 and 5 in *Probleme der Moralphilosophie*, NaS IV.10, pp. 54ff.

7 Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, pp. 138ff. (*M* 6–9, 1080 a 12ff)

Lecture Eleven

1 The poet is Ovid; cf. the opening of *Metamorphoses*: 'Ante mare et terras et quod tegit omnia caelum / unus erat toto naturae vultus in orbe, / quem dixere Chaos: rudis indigestaque moles . . .' ('Before the land and sea were made / In all the world one only face of Nature did abide, / Which was called Chaos, a huge rude heap . . .' (Ovid, *Selected* works, London/New York 1939, p. 130).

2 Cf. Molière, *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, I, 7:

> MAÎTRE DE PHILOSOPHIE: Tout ce qui n'est point prose est vers; et tout ce qui n'est point vers est prose.
>
> MONSIEUR JOURDAIN: Et comme l'on parle qu'est-ce que donc que cela?
>
> MAÎTRE DE PHILOSOPHIE: De la prose.
>
> MONSIEUR JOURDAIN: Quoi? Quand je dis: 'Nicole, apportez-moi mes pantoufles, et me donnez mon bonnet de nuit', c'est de la prose?

MAÎTRE DE PHILOSOPHIE: Oui, Monsieur.

MONSIEUR JOURDAIN: Par ma foi! Il y a plus de quarante ans que je dis de la prose sans que j'en susse rien, et je vous suis le plus obligé du monde de m'avoir appris cela.

(Molière: *Oeuvres complètes* II. Textes établis, présentés et annotés par Georges Couton, Paris 1971, p. 730)

PHILOSOPHER: Whatever isn't prose is verse and anything that isn't verse is prose.

MR JORDAIN: And talking, as I am now, which is that?

PHILOSOPHER: That is prose.

MR JORDAIN: You mean to say that when I say 'Nicole, fetch me my slippers' or 'Give me my night-cap' that's prose?

PHILOSOPHER: Certainly, sir.

MR JORDAIN: Well, my goodness! Here I've been talking prose for forty years and never known it, and mighty grateful I am to you for telling me!

(trans. John Wood, London 1953)

3 Adorno discusses Augustine's philosophy of history in the text *Fortschritt*, cf. GS 10.2, pp. 620ff.

4 Regarding the gradual character of the Aristotelian concept of development cf. Ernst Bloch, who finds 'an element of the transient' within Aristotle's logic:

> the element of development, which for us cries out for the dialectic, does not proceed by leaps in Aristotle. Development contains no revolutionary element, but is exclusively evolutionary. . . . Development for him is a gradually evolving entelechy, Neptunic, forming like water over long, long periods, not Vulcanic, coming into being with sudden violence, abrupt transitions. Thus the dialectic is eliminated from Aristotle's concept of development. (Ernst Bloch, *Leipziger Vorlesungen zur Geschichte der Philosophie 1950–56*, vol. 1: *Antike Philosophie*, Frankfurt/Main 1985, p. 229)

5 In Schopenhauer's philosophy the concept of the urge or yearning (*Drang*) refers to 'the objectivity of the Will on the lowest rung'; he depicts the Will as 'a blind urge, a dark, dull drive, remote from anything directly perceptible'. But

> we are presented with the very peculiar phenomenon that the blind action of the Will, and the action illuminated by knowledge, cross over into each other's spheres in a very surprising way. . . . Knowledge in general, whether of reason or merely of perception . . . stems originally from the Will, forming part of the higher stages of its objectification as a mere μηχανή, a means of survival for the individual and the species, like any other organ of the body. (Arthur Schopenhauer, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 1, Darmstadt 1982, pp. 221ff)

Just as Schopenhauer establishes a lineage between urge and cognition, Scheler identifies an unconscious 'urge of feeling' even in plants which, through participating in the 'primal phenomenon of expression', represent 'a kind of yearning towards the highest principle'; plants, he maintains, have 'a certain physiognomy expressing their inner states, their urges of feeling . . . such as listlessness, vigour, luxuriance, poverty' (Max Scheler, *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 9, p. 15).

6 A problematic passage which cannot be emended with certainty. (Cf. Theodor W. Adorno Archiv, Vo 10461f).

7 In the winter semester 1964/5 Adorno was lecturing on 'the doctrine of history and freedom', cf. NaS IV.13 (in preparation).

8 Zeller concludes from the Aristotelian definitions of matter that

> one might think that matter could not be distinguished from form solely by a lack, by a not-being-there-yet, but must add to it something of its own. But we shall rate this significance of matter even more highly if we recall that the philosopher regards only the individual entity as something substantial in the full sense. If only the individual thing is substance, while form . . . is always something universal, and if the ground of the individual thing therefore resides in matter, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the ground of substantial being must also lie in matter, and that substance is not pure form, but only an entity composed of form and matter. Indeed, as substance is defined as the substratum (*ὑποκείμενον*), while matter is supposed to be the substratum of all being, matter alone, it seems, could claim to be recognized as the original substance of all things. This, however [Zeller goes on], Aristotle could not possibly concede. (Zeller II.2, p. 344)

9 This passage is based on an emendation in the edited text of which the editor is far from certain. (Cf. Theodor W. Adorno Archiv, Vo 10463.)

10 Cf. the Introduction to the *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*: 'World history is progress in consciousness of freedom – a progress which we have to recognize in its necessity' (Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 12, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, p. 32).

11 Cf. the preface to the *Philosophy of Right*: 'What is rational is actual and what is actual is rational' (*Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, trans. T.M. Knox, Oxford 1967, p. 10).

12 *Physica* III 1, 201 a 10; quoted in Zeller II, p. 351. 'The final coming-to-reality of something present merely as possibility, as far as it is such, is (evolutionary) change.' (Cf. Aristotle, *Philosophische Schriften in sechs Bänden*, vol. 6, p. 51.)

13 See p. 63 above and Lecture 9, n. 2.

14 Cf. the passages cited as support by Zeller II.2, p. 356, n. 2, esp. from the *Physics*; Zeller concludes:

> Aristotle imagines the effect of the mover [i.e. form] on the moved [i.e. matter] to be conditioned by a continuous *touching* of the two, and this condition seems to him all the more necessary since he maintains that the

> purely incorporeal also has its effect through touching: even thinking is supposed to assimilate what is thought through touching it; the thought thus stands in the same relation to the thinker as form to matter. And the divinity is supposed likewise to touch the world as the prime mover. (ibid., pp. 356f)

Lecture Twelve

1 Cf. pp. 80f above.
2 See Lecture 3, p. 14, and esp. n. 7.
3 See p. 36 above.
4 See p. 81 above.
5 On Heidegger's concept of historicity and Adorno's critique of it, cf. NaS IV.4, pp. 394f, n. 204, but esp. *Negative Dialectics*, pp. 128ff.
6 Cf. 'Wenn im Unendlichen', from *Zahme Xenien*: 'Und alles Drängen, alles Ringen / Ist ewige Ruh' in Gott dem Herrn.' [All yearning and struggle is everlasting peace in the Lord] (Goethe, *Sämtliche Werke. Briefe, Tagebücher und Gespräche*, hrsg. von Hendrik Birus [u.a.], I. Abt., Bd. 2: *Gedichte 1800–1832*, Frankfurt/Main 1988, p. 680).
7 On the inversion of dynamic and static with reference to Aristotle, Horkheimer writes:

> Movement as such, detached from its social context and its human aim, becomes the mere appearance of movement, the bad infinity of mechanical repetition. . . . It is no accident that in the basic text of western philosophy, Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, the idea of universal dynamism could be combined directly with an unmoved prime mover. The circumstance that the blind development of technology heightens social repression and exploitation threatens at each stage to turn progress into its opposite, total barbarism. (Horkheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 6, Frankfurt/Main 1991, pp. 140f)

8 Hardly anywhere more clearly than in *Metaphysics*, *Λ* 3, 1069 b 35ff; Gohlke's commentary on this is as follows:

> This must be followed by a demonstration that neither matter nor form comes into being as an ultimate raw material. Everything is transformed from something through something into something. It is transformed 'through' the prime mover, 'from' matter 'into' form. If not only the bronze sphere, but also bronze and sphericality, came into being, that would go on for ever. So there must be a stopping point somewhere. (*Aristoteles, Metaphysik*, übertr. von Paul Gohlke, p. 357)

9 See esp. Lecture 1, pp. 3f above.
10 See p. 53 above.
11 See pp. 30f above.
12 *Metaphysics*, *Λ* 7, 1072 b 15, 18ff contains argumentation on the life of the unmoved mover:

> It is a life which is always the noblest and the happiest that we can live. . . . Thought . . . must be thought of what is best in itself; i.e. that which is thought in the fullest sense must be occupied with that which is best in the fullest sense. Now thought does think itself, because it shares in the intelligibility of its object. It becomes intelligible by contact with the intelligible, so that thought and object of thought are one. (*Aristotle's Metaphysics*, p. 346). Also see Lecture 13, n. 3.

13 *τὸ γὰρ αὐτο νοεῖν ἐστίν τε καὶ εἶναι*; translated as: 'for thinking and being are the same thing' (Diels/Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, vol. 1, p. 231).

14 Cf. Theodor W. Adorno, 'Das Problem des Idealismus. Stichworte zur Vorlesung 1953/54', in *Frankfurter Adorno Blätter V*, Munich 1998. Karl Reinhardt's book *Parmenides und die Geschichte der griechischen Philosophie* (4th edn, Frankfurt/Main 1985) was especially important for Adorno's understanding of Parmenides, although it touches only peripherally on the proposition of the identity of thinking and being.

15 Cf. Zeller II.2, pp. 368f, n. 1:

> Aristotle states frequently and with great force that neither a *ποίησις* nor a *πρᾶξις* can be attributed to the divinity. . . . Rather, he says very generally that . . . both *πράττειν* and *ποιεῖν* must be seen as foreign to the divinity, that the perfection manifested in action (practical virtue) finds room only in human intercourse and among creatures subject to human passions . . . and that all action is a means to an end different to it, and cannot therefore be attributed to the divinity, for which there is no goal still to be attained.

16 For the recent position of Aristotle scholarship on this question cf. Joachim Ritter's essay of 1953, 'Die Lehre vom Ursprung und Sinn der Theorie bei Aristotle', in Ritter, *Metaphysik und Politik. Studien zu Aristoteles und Hegel*, Frankfurt/Main 1969, pp. 9ff.

17 A sharply divergent historical-philosophical interpretation is to be found in Horkheimer's essay 'Die gesellschaftliche Funktion der Philosophie' of 1940:

> Although Aristotle, in his *Metaphysics*, regards the self-contemplation of the soul, the theoretical attitude, as the highest happiness, he says explicitly that this happiness is only possible on a specific material basis, that is, under certain social and economic conditions. Plato and Aristotle do not believe, like Antisthenes and the Cynics, that reason is capable of constant development to a higher level in people who literally lead a dog's life, or that wisdom could go hand in hand with penury. For them, just conditions were a prerequisite for the unfolding of the intellectual powers of human beings, and this idea underlies the whole of western humanism. (Horkheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 4, Frankfurt/Main 1988, p. 346)

18 Not traced.

19 See Lecture 1, n. 8.

Lecture Thirteen

1 In the Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität in Frankfurt/Main the granite sculpture *Empedocles* (1954) stood in the entrance hall of the main building, in front of the Rector's office.

2 Cf. Remark 3 in Chapter 1 of the *Science of Logic*:

> With this wholly abstract purity of continuity, that is, indeterminateness and vacuity of conception, it is indifferent whether this abstraction is called space, pure intuiting, or pure thinking; it is altogether the same as what the Indian calls Brahma, when for years on end, physically motionless and equally unmoved in sensation, conception, fantasy, desire and so on, looking only at the tip of his nose, he says inwardly only *Om, Om, Om*, or else nothing at all. (*Hegel's Science of Logic*, trans. A.V. Miller, London 1969, p. 97)

3 Cf. Aristotle: 'Therefore, since the supreme intellect is the best thing in the world, it must think itself; its thinking is a thinking of thinking' (*Aristotle's Metaphysics*, p. 349). On this question Zeller writes:

> God is . . . the activity of absolute intellect, and to this extent he is that which is absolutely real and living, and the primal source of all life. But what is the content of this thinking? All thinking derives its value from what is thought, but divine thinking can derive it from nothing lying outside itself, and can have no content other than what is best; but it alone is the best. God therefore thinks himself, and his thinking is a thinking of thinking, so that in divine thinking, as cannot be otherwise for pure intellect, thinking and its object coincide absolutely. This immutable abiding of thinking in itself, this indivisible unity of the thinker and the thought, is the absolute bliss of God. (Zeller II.2, pp. 366f)

4 In his lecture series *Kants 'Kritik der reinen Vernunft'* Adorno attaches his own definition of philosophy to that of Aristotle when he says that philosophy 'is really concerned with the "thinking of thinking", as Aristotle has defined it – in which the thought processes of logic and the positive sciences must review themselves critically' (NaS IV.4, p. 127).

5 Cf. the paragraph with this title in 'Kritik des logischen Absolutismus':

> The necessity of the contingency of the factual in idealism is made by Husserl into the virtue of the purity of the idea. The ideas remain behind as the *caput mortuum* of a life deserted by spirit. The various material sciences are conceived in a totally empiricist way. . . . In his conception of 'absolutely strict regularity' he is too free with the 'thousands of accidents' which are not accidents. For the scientist, chance is the unwelcome residue which settles at the bottom of his concepts, while for the 'common man', whose name Husserl utters without any compunction, it is what befalls him and against which he is defenceless. The scientist fancies that he can prescribe laws to the world; the 'common man' must obey each law in practical terms. He can do nothing about this, and may rightly

> consider it fortuitous; but that the world is made up of those who are exposed to such accidents and others who, though they may not make the law, can console themselves with its existence, is no accident, but is itself the law of real society. No philosophy which considers the 'world's conception' should ignore this. For Husserl, however, the sacrifice of empiricism does not open unrestricted insight to such connections, but he simply repeats the shoulder-shrugging prejudice that it all depends on one's point of view. Knowledge of the factual need not be too punctilious, since it in any case bears the taint of fortuitousness. Reality becomes an object of mere opinion. This modesty is as false as its complement, the hubris of the absolute. (GS 5, pp. 92f)

6 Cf. the preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*: 'To pit this single insight, that in the Absolute everything is the same, against the full body of articulated cognition, which at least seeks and demands such fulfilment, to palm off its Absolute as the night in which, as the saying goes, all cows are black – this is cognition naively reduced to vacuity' (*Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller, Oxford 1977, p. 9).

7 Which text of Lessing's Adorno was thinking of here, and whether he was thinking of a particular text, has not been ascertained. Behind it is probably Lessing's realization that the 'gratuitous truths of history . . . can never become proofs of necessary truths of reason'; Lessing called this the 'wretched wide ditch . . . that I can never get across, no matter how often and earnestly I have attempted the leap' (Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Gesammelte Werke in 10 Bänden*, ed. Paul Rilla, vol. 8: *Philosophische und theologische Schriften II*, Berlin 1956, pp. 12, 14) – a ditch which, according to Ernst Cassirer, had been overleapt in *Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts* (*The Education of the Human Race*), with its discovery of the truth of the historical; as a young lecturer Adorno gave one of his first seminars on Lessing's last work on the philosophy of religion.

8 Cf. for example, the report by Hippolytos (AD *c.* 220) in his *Refutatio omnium haeresium*:

> Epicurus assures us that God is eternal and immortal, but that he troubles himself about nothing, in short, that there is neither solicitude nor fate, for everything takes place by itself (mechanically). The god abides in what he calls the World-Between . . . There he enjoys a feeling of supreme happiness in tranquil unconcern, has no difficulties himself and causes none to others. (*Griechische Atomisten. Texte und Kommentare zum materialistischen Denken der Antike*, ed. Fritz Jürss et al., Leipzig 1977, p. 333)

9 Adorno is referring to *Negative Dialectics*, especially the last section, 'Meditations on Metaphysics'; the first edition of the book came out in 1966. The 'reflections on metaphysics which seem [to Adorno] timely and unavoidable today', which are set out in the following pages, draw on the first five (of the total of twelve) 'Meditations on Metaphysics' (see Lecture 1, n. 1), a 'second intermediate copy' of which is dated

7.7.1965 (cf. Theodor W. Adorno Archiv, Ts 15813ff). Adorno probably drew on this intermediate copy for the notes on which he based the last lectures, which were given extempore: a kind of improvised variation on what had already been fixed in writing, which, after further revision, was finally published for the first time in *Negative Dialektik* the following year. The notes relate, with some omissions, to the text running from p. 361 to p. 376 in *Negative Dialectics*; whereas the lecture notes conclude with 'The *totum* is the totem' (cf. ibid., p. 376), Adorno had to end the lecture somewhat earlier through lack of time (see Lecture 18, n. 16).

10 See p. 20 *passim* above.

11 Cf. the quotations from the *Encyclopaedia* and the *Logic* in Lecture 1, n. 8.

12 Cf. Theodor W. Adorno, *Zur Metakritik der Erkenntnistheorie. Studien über Husserl und die phänomenologischen Antinomien*, Stuttgart 1956; now GS 5, pp. 48–95.

Lecture Fourteen

1 See p. 101 above.

2 Schopenhauer's 'doctrine of the denial of the Will to Live', which forms part of his system relating to moral philosophy, is to be found in Book 4 of *The World as Will and Representation*, in § 68 of vol. 1 and in Chapter 48 of vol. 2; also see Chapter 14 of vol. 2 of *Parerga and Paralipomena* (cf. Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, trans. E.F.J. Payne, New York 1958, vol. 1, pp. 378ff, vol. 2, pp. 603ff; *Parerga and Paralipomena*, trans. E.F.J. Payne, Oxford 1974, vol. 2, pp. 312ff).

3 On 1 November 1755 the Portuguese capital was devastated by an earthquake in which a quarter of its inhabitants lost their lives. Voltaire, deeply shaken, wrote his 'Poème sur le désastre de Lisbonne, ou examen de cet axiome: *tout est bien*':

> O malheureux mortels! ô terre déplorable!
> O de tous les fléaux assemblage effroyable!
> D'inutiles douleurs éternel entretien!
> ...
> Quel crime, quelle faute ont commis ces enfans
> Sur le sein maternel écrasés et sanglans?
> Lisbonne qui n'est plus eut-elle plus de vices
> Que Londres, que Paris, plongés dans les délices?
> Lisbonne est abîmée, et l'on danse à Paris.
> ...
> Ce monde, ce théâtre et d'orgueil et d'erreur,
> Est plein d'infortunés qui parlent de bonheur.
> ...
> Nos chagrins, nos regrets, nos pertes sont sans nombre.

> Le passé n'est pour nous qu'un triste souvenir;
> Le présent est affreux s'il n'est point d'avenir,
> Si la nuit du tombeau détruit l'être qui pense.
> *Un jour tout sera bien*, voilà votre espérance:
> *Tout est bien aujourd'hui*, voilà l'illusion.

Voltaire's 'Poème', which, with another 'sur la loi naturelle' was published as a book, was condemned and burned in 1759. Rousseau's 'Letter on Providence' is dated 18.8.1756; he later commented rather aptly on it in his *Confessions*:

> Struck by seeing that poor man, weighed down, so to speak, by fame and prosperity, bitterly complaining, nevertheless, against the wretchedness of this life and finding everything invariably bad, I formed the insane plan of bringing him back to himself and proving to him that all was well. Though Voltaire has always appeared to believe in God, he has really only believed in the Devil, because his so-called God is nothing but a malicious being who, according to his belief, only takes pleasure in doing harm. (Rousseau, *The Confessions*, trans. J.M. Cohen, Harmondsworth 1953, pp. 399f)

And: 'In the meantime Voltaire has published the reply that he promised me. It is nothing less than his novel *Candide* . . .' (ibid., p. 400).

4 Cf. Theodor W. Adorno, *The Jargon of Authenticity*, trans. Knut Tarnowski and Frederic Will, Evanston 1973.

5 Cf. Jean Améry, 'Die Tortur', in *Merkur* 208, vol. 19 (1965), pp. 623ff (Issue 7, July 1965); now in a revised version in Améry, *Jenseits von Schuld und Sühne. Bewältigungsversuche eines Überwältigten*, 2nd edn, Stuttgart 1980, pp. 46ff.

6 Cf. Ch. 1: 'Dasein's Possibility of Being-a-Whole, and Being-Towards-Death' of Division 2 on 'Dasein and Temporality' (Heidegger, *Being and Time*, pp. 279ff), 'The "end" of Being-in-the-world is death. This end, which belongs to the potentiality-for-Being – that is to say, to existence – limits and determines in every case whatever totality is possible for Dasein,' and 'When Dasein reaches its wholeness in death, it simultaneously loses the Being of its "there"' (ibid., pp. 276–7 and 281); also Adorno's critique in *The Jargon of Authenticity*, pp. 130ff.

7 Cf. Brecht, *A Man's A Man*, in *Baal, A Man's A Man and The Elephant Calf*, trans. Eric Bentley, New York 1964, pp. 117ff; on the status of the text of the play, written in 1924–6, cf. Brecht, *Gesammelte Werke in acht Bänden*, Frankfurt/Main 1976, vol. 1, pp. 363, n. and p. 4*.

8 Cf., for example, the chapter on the 'culture industry':

> Whenever the culture industry still issues an invitation naively to identify, it is immediately withdrawn. No one can escape from himself any more. Once a member of the audience could see his own wedding in the one shown in the film. Now the lucky actors on the screen are copies of the same category as every member of the public, but such equality only

> demonstrates the insurmountable separation of the human elements. The perfect similarity is the absolute difference. The identity of the category forbids that of the individual cases. Ironically, man as a member of a species has been made a reality by the culture industry. Now any person signifies only those attributes by which he can replace everybody else: he is interchangeable, a copy. As an individual he is completely expendable and utterly insignificant, and this is just what he finds out when time deprives him of this similarity. (Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming, London/New York 1997, pp. 145–6)

The reduction of the individual to the mere specimen of its species is one of the central ideas in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. In 'Elements of Anti-Semitism', where the theory of logic is traced right to the extermination camps, the formulation 'specimen' is, however, lacking:

> In the world of mass series production, stereotypes replace individual categories. . . . If, even within the framework of logic, the concept encounters the particular only on an external plane, everything which stands for difference in society is threatened. Everyone is either a friend or an enemy; there are no half measures. The lack of concern for the subject makes things easy for administration. Ethnic groups are forced to move to a different region; individuals are branded as Jews and sent to the gas chamber. (ibid., pp. 201f)

Regarding the text of the lecture see the parallel passage in *Negative Dialectics*: 'That in the concentration camps it was no longer an individual who died but a specimen – this is a fact bound to affect the dying of those who escaped the administrative measure' (ibid., p. 362), and especially the conclusion of the book: 'The smallest intramundane traits would be of relevance to the absolute, for the micrological view cracks the shells of what, measured by the subsuming cover concept, is helplessly isolated and explodes its identity, the delusion that it is but a specimen' (ibid., p. 408).

9 Cf. Brecht's poem 'On the Suicide of the Refugee W.B.': 'So the future lies in darkness and the forces of right / Are weak. All this was plain to you / When you destroyed a torturable body' (Brecht, *Poems 1913–1956*, ed. John Willett and Ralph Manheim, London 1976, p. 363).

10 Cf. the section 'Absolute Freedom and Terror':

> The sole work and deed of universal freedom is therefore *death*, a death too which has no inner significance or filling, for what is negated is the empty point of the absolutely free self. It is thus the coldest and meanest of all deaths, with no more significance than cutting off a head of cabbage or swallowing a mouthful of water. (*Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 360)

11 Cf. Eugen Kogon, *Der SS-Staat. Das System der deutschen Konzentrationslager*, 2nd edn, Berlin 1947. The quotation, also to be

found, though not attributed, in *Negative Dialectics* (cf. p. 362), has not been traced; however, a similar passage has been found: 'Someone called out to a Jew: "It's now 12 o'clock. At 12.05 you'll be with Jehovah!" It didn't take even five minutes' (translated from Kogon, *Der SS-Staat*, p. 94).

12 Améry describes being tortured:

> Now there was a cracking and splintering in my shoulders which I have not forgotten to this day. . . . Anyone who has been tortured remains tortured. The torture is burnt into him inextinguishably, even if no clinical or objective traces can be found. . . . Finally I became unconscious – and it was over for once. It is still not over. . . . You cannot rid yourself of torture any more than you can rid yourself of the question about the possibilities and limits of the power to resist it. (Améry, in *Merkur* 208, pp. 632, 634 and 636)

And at the end of the essay he writes:

> As far as any knowledge remains from the experience of torture beyond that of mere nightmare, it is that of a great amazement, and of being a stranger in the world, which cannot be compensated by any later human communication. Astonishment at the existence of the Other which asserts itself boundlessly in torture, and at what one can oneself become: flesh and death. That life is fragile, and that it can be ended 'with a mere needle' – that truism has always been known. But that a living human being can be made half-and-half the prey of death while still alive is only experienced under torture. The shame of such annihilation can never be effaced. Anyone who has been tormented remains defencelessly exposed to fear. *It* henceforth wields its sceptre over him. It – and also what is called *ressentiment*, which remains behind and has not even the chance to condense into a desire for revenge – and to be purged. From there, no one looks out onto a world in which the principle of hope holds sway. (ibid., p. 638)

That is the text to which Adorno refers. Améry later intensified it still further in a book version: 'Anyone who has been subjected to torture cannot again feel at home in the world. The shame of annihilation cannot be expunged. The trust in the world, which collapses partly with the first blow but only fully under torture, is never regained' (Améry, *Jenseits von Schuld und Sühne*, p. 73).

13 First in the essay 'Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft' of 1949:

> Even the most extreme awareness of calamity threatens to degenerate into chatter. Cultural criticism finds itself facing the last stage in the dialectic of culture and barbarism: to write a poem after Auschwitz is barbaric, and that corrodes even the knowledge which states why it has become impossible to write poetry today. The critical mind, as long as it remains comfortably ensconced in contemplation, . . . is no match for absolute reification. (GS 10.1, p. 30)

Adorno later came back repeatedly to his dictum, for the last time in 'Meditations on Metaphysics', where he seems to revoke it (cf. *Negative Dialectics*, p. 362); for an interpretation cf. Tiedemann, 'Nicht die Erste Philosophie sondern eine letzte', pp. 11ff.

14 On the proposition in question, cf. NaS IV.4, p. 400, n. 234.

15 Cf. Sartre, *Morts sans sépulture*, Tableau IV, scène III:

> HENRI: Est-ce que ça garde un sens de vivre quand il y a des hommes qui vous tapent dessus jusqu'à vous casser les os? Tout est noir. (*Il regarde par la fenêtre.*) Tu as raison, la pluie va tomber. ['Do you still feel alive while men beat you until they break your bones? It's very dark. (*He looks out of the window.*) You are right, it's going to rain.']
> (Jean-Paul Sartre, *La p . . . respectueuse . . . suivi de Morts sans sépulture. Pièce en deux actes et quatre tableaux*, Paris 1972, p. 210)

Lecture Fifteen

1 The title of Beckett's last novel (Paris 1961), frequently quoted by Adorno in *Aesthetic Theory*.

2 Cf. Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, Munich 1964.

3 An allusion to the book with the same title by Otto Friedrich Bollnow (Stuttgart 1956); cf. Adorno, *The Jargon of Authenticity*, p. 9f and *passim*.

4 See Lecture 11, n. 7.

5 On the category of the addendum cf. *Negative Dialectics*, pp. 226ff; also cf. Eckart Goebet, 'Das Hinzutretende. Ein Kommentar zu den Seiten 226 bis 230 der *Negativen Dialektik*', in *Frankfurter Adorno Blätter IV*, Munich 1995, pp. 109ff.

6 See Lecture 14, p. 108 and n. 9.

7 Here Adorno is referring to his essay on Beckett's *Endgame* (cf. GS 11, pp. 281ff). Adorno's interest in Samuel Beckett is now documented fully in *Frankfurter Adorno Blätter III* (Munich 1994).

8 Similarly in *Negative Dialectics*: 'It [culture] abhors stench because it stinks – because, as Brecht put it in a magnificent line, its mansion is built of dogshit. Years after that line was written, Auschwitz demonstrated irrefutably that culture has failed' (ibid., p. 366). The passage in Brecht has not been traced.

9 Not traced.

10 Not traced.

11 Cf. the essay 'Die auferstandene Kultur' of 1950, now GS 20.2, pp. 453ff.

Lecture Sixteen

1 One or more sentences appear to be missing at the start of the lecture; at any rate, the text source begins: '. . . *Ich meine damit konkret, Sie könnten denken . . .*'

2 For 'these things' read 'Auschwitz or the atomic bomb or all these things which cohere' (cf. p. 116 above).

3 The category of the 'wholly other' was introduced by the Marburg Protestant theologian Rudolf Otto (1869–1937), who defined the numinous, the *mysterium tremendum* and finally the divine itself with this term; however, the thing referred to as the *mysterium*,

> that is, the religious mystery, the genuine *mirum*, is, to express it perhaps most aptly, the 'wholly other', the *thateron*, the *anyad*, the *alienum*, the *aliud valde*, the alien and perplexing thing which falls outside the realm of the familiar and understood and thus outside the 'homely', setting itself up in opposition to it and therefore filling the mind with petrified amazement. (Rudolf Otto, *Das Heilige. Über das Irrationale in der Idee des Göttlichen und sein Verhältnis zum Rationalen* [1st edn 1917], Munich 1991, p. 31)

Otto finds moments of the wholly other especially in mysticism: 'Mysticism contains essentially and primarily a theology of the *mirum*, the "wholly other"' (ibid., p. 36). Horkheimer appears to have responded affirmatively to this category in his last years; at any rate, he did not object to the publication of a conversation on theology and critical theory with the title 'Die Sehnsucht nach dem ganz Anderen' (cf. Horkheimer, *Die Sehnsucht nach dem ganz Anderen. Ein Interview mit Kommentar von Hellmut Gumnior*, Hamburg 1970). However, all he actually said was: 'Critical theory contains at least one idea about the theological, the other' (Horkheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 7: *Vorträge und Aufzeichnungen 1949–1973*, Frankfurt/Main 1985, p. 398), and he spoke of 'the point on which Judaism is of such interest to me: the identification not with the *other* but with *the others*' (ibid., p. 401). Elsewhere, he describes theology as 'the expression of a yearning', 'a yearning for a state in which the murderer might not triumph over the innocent victim' (ibid., p. 389). Adorno would have subscribed to this.

4 Cf. Adorno's *Aufzeichnungen zu Kafka*:

> Kafka's theology – if one can speak of such a thing at all – is antinomian towards the same God whose concept Lessing had championed against orthodoxy, the God of the Enlightenment. But that is a *deus absconditus*. Kafka becomes an accuser of dialectical theology, which he is mistakenly believed to support. Its absolutely Other converges with the mythical powers. The entirely abstract, indeterminate God cleansed of all anthropomorphic and mythological qualities is transformed into the fateful, ambivalent and threatening God who instils nothing but fear and trembling. In the terror in face of the radically unknown, his 'purity', modelled on mind, which the expressionist inwardness in Kafka sets up as absolute, reinstates the ancient humanity entrapped in nature. Kafka's work records the striking of the hour when purified faith reveals itself as impure, demythologization as demonology. (GS 10.1, p. 283)

That Adorno had a no less critical attitude towards the restitution of the theology of the Enlightenment can be seen from his correspondence with Paul Tillich of 1964. Tillich had asked him: 'What do you think about the new phase of theology which – following Heidegger and Bultmann's philosophy of language – replaces all ontology with the "*word* of God"? With Heidegger they let language be as the "house of being", but without any "being" in the house!' (Theodor W. Adorno Archiv, Paul Tillich to Adorno, undated [c. early October 1965]). From Adorno's reply:

> The word-of-God theology in the sense you refer to, which, by the way, had been prepared by Heidegger since his 'turning point', I reject no less than you do. The mystical conception of language of which it is so reminiscent has meaning only in the context of a positive theology. Otherwise the philosophy of language becomes something like a fetishism of language. What is the word of God supposed to mean without God? No, that won't do, and not only will it finally lead to a resurrection of the liberal-secular moralization of theology, but these theologians will make common cause with the logical positivists, for whom language has a very similar function, namely to replace the subject. (9.10.1965, to Paul Tillich)

5 Probably an allusion to the metaphor used by Kleist to describe his acquaintance with 'the new, so-called Kantian philosophy' (cf. NaS IV.4, pp. 376f, n. 99).

6 Cf. Karl Barth, *Der Römerbrief*, 1st version 1919, 2nd version 1920; now 15th edn, Zurich 1989.

7 The text source reads 'Konstantin Brunn', but undoubtedly the Zurich Professor of Systematic and Practical Theology Emil Brunner (1889–1966) is meant; he was one of the co-founders of dialectical theology, and was also a participant, with Adorno and Horkheimer, in the so-called Frankfurt conversation of 1931 on the 'meeting' of Protestant theology with the proletariat and with secular culture; cf. 'Das Frankfurter Gespräch', in Paul Tillich, *Briefwechsel und Streitschriften. Theologische, philosophische und politische Stellungnahmen und Gespräche*, ed. Renate Albrecht and René Tautmann, Frankfurt/Main 1983, pp. 314ff).

8 Ferdinand Ebner (1882–1931), an Austrian primary school teacher and Catholic linguistic philosopher, was a member of the circle associated with the periodical *Der Brenner*.

9 Friedrich Gogarten (1887–1967), a Protestant theologian and pupil of Ernst Troeltsch. Since 1933 Gogarten had held a Chair at Göttingen.

10 Adorno is thinking primarily of Gogarten, who wrote in 1933 on the 'unity of Gospel and national character', arguing that 'we must strive, bound by God's words, to perceive in the great events of our days a new task which our Lord has set for our Church' (quoted by Erich Trier [review]: 'Friedrich Gogarten, Einheit von Evangelium und Volkstum?' Hamburg 1933, in *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* 3 [1934], p. 307 [vol. 2]).

11 Adorno is referring to Schweppenhäuser's doctoral thesis, not published until 1967, and especially to the last chapter, entitled 'Postscript' (cf. Hermann Schweppenhäuser, *Kierkegaards Angriff auf die Spekulation. Eine Verteidigung*, Frankfurt/Main 1967; 2nd, revised version, Munich 1993).

12 First published in 1902; now in Hugo von Hofmannsthal, *Prosa II*, ed. Herbert Steiner, Frankfurt/Main 1959 (Gesammelte Werke in Einzelausgaben), pp. 7ff.

13 Adorno is speaking of H.G. Adler (1910–88) and his book *Theresienstadt 1941–1945. Das Antlitz einer Zwangsgemeinschaft. Geschichte Soziologie Psychologie* (Tübingen 1955). On H.G. Adler also cf. GS 20.2, p. 495; on Beckett's statement referred to in the following text cf. *Negative Dialectics*, pp. 367f.

14 See Lecture 14, n. 11. In a letter of 24.5.1947 Horkheimer reported on his reading of *Der SS-Staat*, cf. Horkheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 17: *Briefwechsel 1941–1948*, Frankfurt/Main 1996, p. 814.

15 The passage Adorno is referring to is in § 28 of the *Critique of Judgement*:

> Nature considered in an aesthetical judgment as might has no dominion over us, is *dynamically sublime*. If nature is to be judged by us as dynamically sublime, it must be represented as exciting fear. . . . But we can regard an object as *fearful*, without being afraid of it; viz. if we judge of it in such a way that we merely *think* a case in which we would wish to resist it, and yet in which all resistance would be altogether vain. [Adorno annotated the last sentence in his copy with: '*Critique of Judgement*: rather: the image mediates the fear concealed in reality'.] Bold, overhanging, and as it were threatening, rocks; clouds piled up in the sky, moving with lightning flashes and thunder peals; volcanoes in all their violence of destruction; hurricanes with their track of devastation; the boundless ocean in a state of tumult; the lofty waterfall of a mighty river, and such like; these exhibit our faculty of resistance as insignificantly small in comparison with their might. But the sight of them is the more attractive, the more fearful it is, provided only that we are in security. (*Kant's Kritik of Judgment*, trans. J.H. Bernard, London/New York 1892, pp. 123–5)

Adorno annotated the last paragraph in the margin: 'Like the poetry of the young Goethe.' Cf. NaS I.1, p. 243, and ibid., n. 284.

16 Part of the sentence has been omitted from the text source.

17 August Strindberg's novel *Black Banners* (cf. A. Strindberg, *Schwarze Fahnen*, Munich/Leipzig 1916, p. 254).

Lecture Seventeen

1 Allusion to Schelling's writings on 'Die Weltalter' (see the reference in Lecture 2, n. 6) on which Adorno and Horkheimer had held their advanced philosophy seminar in the winter semester of 1960/1.

2 Cf. Franz Kafka, *Nachgelassene Schriften und Fragmente II in der Fassung der Handschriften*, ed. Jost Schillemeit, Frankfurt/Main 1992, p. 123: 'To have faith in progress does not mean to have faith that any progress has yet taken place. That would not be faith.'
3 Published in London, 1948.
4 Conjectural reading.
5 Cf. § 53 of *Being and Time*:

> if by Being towards death we do not have in view an 'actualizing' of death, neither can we mean 'dwelling upon the end in its possibility'. This is the way one comports oneself when one 'thinks about death', pondering over when and how this possibility may perhaps be actualized. Of course, such brooding over death does not fully take away from it its character as a possibility. Indeed, it always gets brooded over as something that is coming; but in such brooding we weaken it by calculating how we are to have it at our disposal. (Heidegger, *Being and Time*, pp. 305–6; cf. Adorno's *The Jargon of Authenticity*, where this formulation is quoted (ibid., p. 131)

6 The National Socialist Ernst Krieck (1882–1947), professor at the Pädagogische Akademie in Frankfurt/Main since 1928, had become rector of the Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität in 1933. In a report on Arnold Gehlen, Horkheimer refers to the same quotation when he compares Gehlen's theory of institutions with 'Krieck's thesis' 'that only sacrifice makes us free, sacrifice for its own sake' (Horkheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 18: *Briefwechsel 1949–73*, Frankfurt/Main 1996, p. 420). Whether the quotation is correctly attributed to Krieck, in whose work it has not been traced, seems doubtful in view of a passage in *The Jargon of Authenticity*: 'In 1938 a National Socialist functionary wrote, in a polemical variation on a Social Democratic phrase: "Sacrifice will make us free" '; the source given is: 'cf. Herbert Marcuse's critique in *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, vol. VII (1938), p. 408'. However, Marcuse's critique is of a book by Franz Böhm (*Anti-Cartesianismus. Deutsche Philosophie im Widerstand*, Leipzig 1938); as a review of a book by Krieck begins on the next page, a lapse of memory by both Horkheimer and Adorno seems likely.
7 Cf. Adorno, *The Jargon of Authenticity*, p. 138 : 'Death is the possibility of the absolute impossibility of Dasein.' (Quoted from *Being and Time*, § 50.)
8 Adorno probably has a passage from § 47 of *Being and Time* in mind:

> Yet when someone has died, his Being-no-longer-in-the-world (if we understand it in an extreme way) is still a Being, but in the sense of the Being-just-present-at-hand-and-no-more of a corporeal Thing. . . . The *end* of the entity *qua* Dasein is the *beginning* of the same entity *qua* something present-at-hand. . . . From a theoretical point of view, even the corpse which is present-at-hand is still a possible object for the student of pathological anatomy, whose understanding tends to be oriented to the idea of life. (ibid., pp. 281–2)

9 Cf. the following passage from § 54:

> Man alone carries about with him in abstract concepts the certainty of his death, and yet, most strangely, this certainty arouses anxiety in him only at isolated moments when some cause brings it vividly to his imagination. Against the mighty voice of nature reflection can do little. In man too, as in the animal which cannot think, prevails the certainty sprung from his innermost consciousness, that he is nature, is the world itself, so that no-one is noticeably troubled by the idea of their certain and never distant death, but each carries on his life as if he must live for ever. . . . (Schopenhauer, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 1, pp. 388f)

10 In his essay on Bloch's *Spuren* Adorno connected this motif to the sections entitled 'Kleine Grille' and 'Weiter geben' in that work:

> In the traces which the experience of individual consciousness helps to unfold, the rescue of illusion has its centre in what the book on utopia called the encounter with self. The subject, man, he argues, is not himself at all; he is illusory both as an unreal entity which has not yet emerged from possibility, and as a reflection of what he could be. Nietzsche's idea of the human being as something which must be overcome is modulated into a sphere without violence: 'for man is something which has yet to be found'. (GS 11, p. 238)

The reason for his non-identity with himself, however, is the materialistic one

> that human beings in a universal exchange society are not themselves but agents of the law of value. For in history up to now, which Bloch would not hesitate to call prehistory, humanity was an object, not a subject. 'But no one is what he thinks, and even less what he represents. And indeed, all are inclined to be too much in favour of what they have become, not too little.' (ibid., p. 239)

11 On the function of education in the social philosophy of Helvétius cf. Max Horkheimer, 'Vorlesung über die Geschichte der neueren Philosophie', in Horkheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 9: *Nachgelassene Schriften 1914–1931*, Frankfurt/Main 1987, pp. 362ff, and the dissertation by Günther Mensching, supervised by Adorno and Horkheimer, *Totalität und Autonomie. Untersuchungen zur philosophischen Gesellschaftstheorie des französischen Materialismus*, Frankfurt/Main 1971.

12 Cf. GS 11, p. 567.

13 In Freud's early theory of the drives the concept of the ego-drives is used synonymously with that of the self-preservation drives and contrasted to the sexual drives:

> These instincts are not always compatible with each other; their interests often come into conflict. Opposition between ideas is only an expression

> of struggles between the various instincts. . . . A quite specially important part is played by the undeniable opposition between the instincts which subserve sexuality, the attainment of sexual pleasure, and those other instincts, which have as their aim the self-preservation of the individual – the ego-instincts. As the poet has said, all the organic instincts that operate in our mind may be classified as 'hunger' or 'love'. (Sigmund Freud, *Complete Psychological Works*, trans. James Strachey, vol. 11 (1910), London 1962, pp. 213–14)

According to Freud's later theory, which operates with the antithesis of the Eros and death drives, the self-preservation drives are a special case among the Eros drives.

14 Cf. Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*, trans. C.K. Scott Moncrieff, London 1957, *The Captive*, Part I, pp. 243ff. The passage, which Adorno also interprets in his *Kleine Proust-Kommentare* (cf. GS 11, pp. 213ff), influenced his thinking about immortality more than anything else. Bergotte dies while visiting an exhibition where he wanted to study 'a little patch of yellow wall' in Vermeer's *View of Delft*:

> He was dead. Permanently dead? Who shall say? Certainly our experiments in spiritualism prove no more than the dogmas of religion that the soul survives death. All that we can say is that everything is arranged in this life as though we entered it carrying the burden of obligations contracted in a former life; there is no reason inherent in the conditions of life on this earth that can make us consider ourselves obliged to do good, to be fastidious, to be polite even, nor make the talented artist consider himself obliged to begin over again a score of times a piece of work the admiration aroused by which will matter little to his body devoured by worms, like the patch of yellow wall painted with so much knowledge and skill by an artist who must for ever remain unknown and is barely identified under the name Vermeer. All these obligations which have not their sanction in our present life seem to belong to a different world, founded upon kindness, scrupulosity, self-sacrifice, a world entirely different from this, which we leave in order to be born into this world, before perhaps returning to the other to live once again beneath the sway of those unknown laws which we have obeyed because we bore their precepts in our hearts, knowing not whose hand had traced them there – those laws to which every profound work of the intellect brings us nearer and which are invisible only – and still! – to fools. So that the idea that Bergotte was not wholly and permanently dead is by no means improbable. (ibid., pp. 250f)

15 Cf. the sketch of the essay planned by Adorno on 'L'innommable': 'Is nothingness the same as nothing? That is the question around which everything in B[eckett] revolves. Absolutely everything is thrown away, because there is only hope where nothing is kept back. The fullness of nothingness. This the reason for the insistence on the zero point.' And: 'The positive categories, such as hope, are the absolutely negative ones in B[eckett]. Hope is directed at nothingness' (source: Rolf Tiedemann, '"Gegen den Trug der Frage nach dem Sinn". Eine Dokumentation zu

Adorno's Beckett-Lektüre', in *Frankfurter Adorno Blätter III*, Munich 1994, pp. 73, 44).

16 Cf. GS 11, pp. 213ff; regarding the comparison between Proust and Kafka: 'Here . . . we find a statement which, at least in the German version, has echoes of Kafka. It is: "the idea that Bergotte is not wholly and permanently dead is by no means improbable" ' (ibid.; cf. Proust, *Remembrance*, p. 251).

17 The name of the first poet mentioned was not understood by the secretary; possibly Heym should be conjectured.

Lecture Eighteen

1 See Lecture 1, n. 1 and Lecture 13, n. 9. On 29.7.1965, when Adorno gave the last of the lectures on metaphysics, the first manuscript version of *Meditationen zur Metaphysik*, which he had begun to dictate on 3.5.1965, was completed. It was still entitled *Zur Metaphysik*, but from the second version, dating from 18.5.1965, it was called *Meditationen zur Metaphysik*. While Adorno also refers in his notes to *Metaphysische Thesen*, no other reference to *Reflexionen zur Metaphysik* as a title has been traced.

2 See pp. 15ff, 101–2 and 104 *passim*.

3 Adorno knew of the Sohar speculations through Scholem; cf. the latter's translation of the first chapter and especially the introduction to the translation (*Die Geheimnisse der Schöpfung. Ein Kapitel aus dem Sohar von G[erschom] Scholem*, Berlin 1935). Cf. Adorno's letter of 19.4.1939 to Scholem (Theodor W. Adorno, 'Um Benjamins Werk. Briefe an Gerschom Scholem 1939–1955', in *Frankfurter Adorno Blätter V*, Munich 1998).

4 As early as 1804 Schelling used the term 'positive philosophy' to refer to his own philosophy, equally opposed to rationalism and empiricism; this philosophy was not content with reason – regarded as 'negative' in relation to the real – but was directed towards the real itself: 'The positive philosophy . . . does not take as its starting point what is merely present in thought, or anything occurring in experience. . . . Its principle is found neither in experience nor in pure thinking. It can thus set out only from the absolutely transcendent . . .' (Schelling, *Philosophie der Offenbarung 1841/42*, ed. Manfred Frank, 3rd edn, Frankfurt/Main 1993, p. 146). Scholars have treated Schelling's late thought, which he himself claimed to be both an 'existential philosophy' and a foundation for a 'philosophical religion', as verging on the apocryphal, if not on obscurantism; only recently has it also been seen as an attempt to overcome idealism. In his reference to the theological speculation in the Cabbala Adorno probably had in mind an essay by Jürgen Habermas which discusses connections between Schelling on the one hand and the Sohar, Isaak Luria and Jakob Böhme on the other (cf. Jürgen Habermas, 'Dialektischer Idealismus im Übergang zum Materialismus – Geschichtsphilosophische

Folgerungen aus Schellings Idee einer Contraction Gottes', in Habermas, *Theorie und Praxis. Sozialphilosophische Studien*, Neuwied/Berlin 1963, pp. 108ff).

5 The place names in Proust have been conjectured, since the text source contains only omission marks.

6 Adorno is thinking of a passage in the chapter on amphiboly in the *Critique of Pure Reason*: 'The critique of this pure understanding . . . does not permit us . . . to stray into intelligible worlds; nay, it does not allow of our entertaining even the concept of them' (*Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 294 (A 289, B 345)). Also cf. NaS IV.4, p. 17, *passim*.

7 On the constellation of happiness and place names in Adorno cf. *Negative Dialectics*, p. 373, and NaS 1.1, p. 279, n. 1.

8 Cf. *Minima Moralia*, p. 109 ('Second Harvest').

9 Cf. p. 68 above.

10 Adorno took over the concept of the dialectical image from Benjamin, but characteristically remodelled it in his own theory; on Adorno's use of the term cf. Tiedemann, *Begriff Bild Name*, pp. 92ff.

11 Cf. Hegel, *Theologische Jugendschriften*, nach den Handschriften hrsg. von Herman Nohl, Tübingen 1907.

12 Not in this lecture, at least the surviving part; but cf. *Negative Dialectics*, pp. 173ff, and GS 10.2, pp. 741ff.

13 In this connection cf. Adorno's lecture series *Kants 'Kritik der reinen Vernunft'*, NaS IV.10, pp. 118ff, and ibid., pp. 262f.

14 The concept of the 'situation' was endowed with the value of a category by Jaspers; it was emphasized less by Heidegger, but most of all in the existentialism of Sartre; cf. the section 'Freedom and Facticity: the Situation' in *Being and Nothingness*, London 1972.

15 Meaning: with the idea of the negation of the negation as a positivity attained.

16 At the conclusion of his last lecture Adorno had reached page 20 of his notes (cf. Theodor W. Adorno Archiv, Vo 10806) and thus almost the end of the fourth of the 'Meditations on Metaphysics' (cf. *Negative Dialectics*, p. 375). However, the notes for the lecture continue some way beyond this point, including the first third of the fifth 'Meditation' (cf. ibid., pp. 376f); as Adorno clearly meant to take the lecture to at least that point, the remaining notes – some of which Adorno had, however, already dealt with outside the planned sequence at the end of the lecture – will be listed here, as they were noted down (the small type clearly indicates later additions, as distinct from the main text):

The despair at what is is spreading to the transcendental ideas.

Paradox is passing over into slander (a tendency already found in Kierkegaard, in his attitude to poverty).

In Kant the – unrealizable – metaphysical ideas were supposed, at least, not to collide with reason; absurd today. NB. Their anthropocentrism and cosmology. Ambiguity of the Copernican revolution.

False elevation of the fate of metaphysical ideas to a metaphysics.

The deception that despair guarantees the existence of what is hopelessly lost. The howls of religious joy over despair. Alleluia!

Just as socially the means replace the ends, metaphysically the lack replaces what is lacking.

The truth of what is absent is becoming indifferent; it is asserted because it is good for people, as a heart-warmer. A curious inversion, in relation to the situation of Epicureanism; that too is subject to a historical dialectic.

Metaphysics is turning into pragmatism.

The truth of negation must not be subverted as positivity.

The real criticism of Hegel: it is untrue that the negation of the negation is the positive. (Projection of consequential logic on to the absolute. Dissolution of the non-identical into identity.)

The question of the 'meaning of life'.

The associated idea that it is what the questioner gives to life.

But meaning ought to be objectively beyond all doing; otherwise false, a mere duplication.

All metaphysics aims at something objective.

Subjects imprisoned in their constitution; metaphysics means reflection on how far they can see beyond the prison of their selves.

Any other question about meaning is an advertisement for the world.

The Nazis: the world has *a meaning. The terrorist element in this idealism's lapse into the question of meaning condemns it retrospectively: it already contained the untruth of the mirroring.*

Mirroring is the primary phenomenon of ideology.

The totality *of the question of meaning as a spell.*

If a suicidal person asks about the meaning of life, the helpless helper will be unable to name one.

If he attempts to do so he can be convicted of talking rubbish.

Life which had meaning would not ask about it; it shuns the question.

But abstract nihilism just as untrue.

It would have no answer to the question: Why, in that case, are you yourself alive?

To aim at the whole, to calculate the net profit of life is precisly the death which calculation seeks to evade.

Where there is meaning, it is in the open, not in what is closed in on itself.

The thesis that life has no meaning is, as a positive statement, as false as its antithesis; true only as a blow against empty affirmation.

The close affinity of Schopenhauer to the German idealists.

The rekindling of nature religions; the blind will as demon.

The truth *in monotheism against Schopenhauerian irrationalism.*

Regression to the stage before the awakening of genius amid the mute world.

Denial of freedom; this makes the escape by the back door in Book 4 [of The World as Will and Representation*] so feeble.*

Total determinism no less mythical than the totalities in Hegelian logic.

The totum *is the totem.*

(Theodor W. Adorno Archiv, Vo 10806–10808)

17 Regarding Adorno's paradox of the 'impossibility of thinking that which must nevertheless be thought', cf. Kierkegaard: 'The paradox is not an admission, but a category, an ontological determination, which expresses the relationship between an existing, cognizant mind and the eternal truth' (source: Søren Kierkegaard, *Die Tagebücher*, ed. Hayo Gerdes, vol. 2, Düsseldorf, Cologne 1963, p. 80 [VIII, A 11]). But also see Adorno's critique in *Negative Dialectics*: 'The theological conception of the paradox, that last, starved-out bastion, is past rescuing – a fact ratified by the course of the world in which the *skandalon* that caught Kierkegaard's eye is translated into outright blasphemy' (ibid., p. 375).

EDITOR'S AFTERWORD

As a rule, Adorno's academic teaching and his writing proceeded separately side-by-side, but not always. Hardly qualified as a lecturer in the summer semester of 1932, he devoted one of his first lecture series to the philosophy of Kierkegaard, the subject of his still unprinted doctoral thesis. Later, after their return from emigration, Adorno and Horkheimer covered the content of both *Dialectic of Enlightenment* and *Metakritik der Erkenntnistheorie* in their joint philosophy seminars between 1956 and 1958. But the most striking exception to the rule is *Negative Dialectics*, of which Adorno wrote in 1968, when it had already been published, that it represented 'what [he] had to put on the scales' (cf. GS 7, p. 537). This book which, despite Adorno's reservations about the genre, one can hardly help calling his *magnum opus*, crystallized during a lecture series entitled 'Ontology and Dialectics' that he gave in the winter semester of 1960/1. The lecture with the same title that Adorno gave at the College de France in March 1961 was the first version of the first part of *Negative Dialectics* – the systematic, critical discussion of Heidegger's philosophy which formed the starting point of Adorno's 'anti-system'. Then, from 1964 to 1966, no fewer than three successive lecture series by Adorno had themes which are central to *Negative Dialectics*, on which he was working intensively at that time. In the summer semester of 1967 and in the following winter semester, when the book was already finished, it was discussed in the philosophy seminar. The lectures on *Negative Dialectics* are the only evidence of the courses which Adorno held in conjunction with his own writings,

and even they have not been completely preserved. The first was announced for the winter semester of 1964/5 with the title 'Theories of History and Freedom', and dealt with the thematic complexes to which the studies of Kant and Hegel in *Negative Dialectics* are devoted – the first two 'models' in Part 3. The lecture series 'Metaphysics. Concept and Problems', contained in the present volume and relating to the last 'model' in *Negative Dialectics*, the 'Meditations on Metaphysics', followed in the summer semester of 1965. The last lecture series, held in the winter semester of 1965/6, developed the idea of a dialectic of non-identity from a certain distance; Adorno gave this idea the name 'negative dialectics', and used the same title for the lectures as for the book. Adorno's intention in these lectures was to provide 'a kind of methodological reflection on what I do' (Theodor W. Adorno Archiv, Vo 10813) – a definition corresponding to that of the 'methodology of the author's material works' in the preface of *Negative Dialectics* (p. XIX).

On the relationship between his lectures and the book with which they are associated Adorno made some remarks at the beginning of his lectures entitled 'Negative Dialectics' which throw light on the climate in which he was then having to teach:

> As you know, the traditional definition of a university calls for a unity of research and teaching. As you also know, the realization of this idea, which is still upheld, is very problematic. My own work suffers badly from this problematic, since the quantity of teaching and administrative tasks I have to contend with makes it almost impossible for me to attend to my so-called research tasks – if one wishes to speak of philosophy as research – during term time in the way which is not only objectively called for but which, above all, matches my own inclination and disposition. In such a situation, and under such compulsion and pressure, one develops certain characteristics which can best be described as peasant cunning. I try to make the best of this situation by . . . deriving a substantial part of my lectures from the copious and quite onerous book I have been working on for the last six years and which will bear the title *Negative Dialectics*. . . . I am aware that one might object to such a procedure, as those with a positivist outlook will be particularly inclined to do, that an academic teacher ought only to serve up finished, valid, watertight results. While I do not wish to make a virtue of necessity, I do not think that this view quite fits the concept of philosophy; that philosophy is thought in a permanent *status nascendi*; and that, as the great founder of the dialectic, Hegel, said, what matters in philosophy is the process as much as the result; that process and result . . . are even the same thing. Beyond that, I think that philosophical thinking has an inherent moment of trying out, experimenting, of non-conclusiveness, which distinguishes it from

> the positive sciences, and to investigate this further will be not the least of my concerns in these lectures. Accordingly, the reflections I am presenting to you here will have such experimental traits as long as they have not reached the definitive linguistic form attainable to me, as far as my strength allows. And I would really like to encourage you . . . by what I have to say to think with me and to conduct your own reflections, rather than handing you a piece of certain knowledge that you can confidently take home. (Theodor W. Adorno Archiv, Vo 10812f)

An important feature of the lecture series relating to *Negative Dialectics* is that all three or – if we include 'Ontology and Dialectics' – all four were held at a time when the parallel texts in the book version had not yet reached their final form, so that the lectures stemmed, as Adorno liked to put it, from work in progress or, better, reflected a specific stage in the still continuing evolution of *Negative Dialectics*. The reader may find confirmed in them what was said of the lectures on 'Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*':

> To be able to accompany Adorno's thinking in its detours and byways reveals aspects in which the closed and conclusive form characteristic of Adorno's writings is broken open, giving rise to possibilities the author was unable to follow up in his finished works. . . . Only the transcripts of his lectures enable us to watch him in his exertions of thought, to get a glimpse into the workshop where, like Siegfried forging his sword in Mime's cave, the philosopher was fashioning his concepts . . . . (NaS IV.4, pp. 420f)

Adorno himself, as can be easily gathered from his comments, had a very indecisive attitude towards the experimental character of his lectures. On the one hand the experimental aspect was supposed to represent an integrating moment of philosophical thinking, for which, on the other, Adorno nevertheless hoped to achieve the binding, definitive formulation which would 'dispose of' the provisional quality of the experimental stage, in keeping with Hofmannsthal's dictum that 'the form disposes of the problem'. In the tension between the linguistic form in the strong sense and the thought which cannot be concluded, the special character of Adorno's philosophy is probably to be sought, a character which emerges far more clearly from his lectures than from the finished writings.

The course on 'Metaphysics' differs from the directly preceding and succeeding lecture series in that its contents go beyond the scope of 'Meditations on Metaphysics' and *Negative Dialectics*. Two-thirds of it are devoted to Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. As far as can be seen

from our present knowledge of Adorno's teaching activities, he only lectured twice on Greek philosophy. In the winter semester of 1953/4 and in the following summer semester of 1954 he gave a two-part series on 'The Problem of Idealism'; while the second part was an 'Introduction to Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*', the first dealt with the pre-Socratics, especially Parmenides and Heraclitus, Plato's doctrine of Forms and the critique of it by Aristotle. Only Adorno's brief notes for the lectures have been preserved, and while the outline of the lectures can be precisely reconstructed from these, little of the argumentation can be gleaned (cf. Theodor W. Adorno, 'Das Problem des Idealismus. Stichworte zur Vorlesung', in *Frankfurter Adorno Blätter V*, Munich 1998). The discussion of the Aristotelian categories in the lectures on 'Metaphysics' from the summer semester of 1965 is the only extensive treatment of a theme from ancient philosophy by Adorno which has been preserved. The relevance of these discussions lies not so much in the fact that they concern one of the key works in the history of philosophy as in the context in which Adorno placed them: with the question 'whether after Auschwitz you can go on living' (*Negative Dialectics*, p. 363), the last third of the lectures on 'Metaphysics' poses the most serious question faced by philosophy today. Although the part devoted to Aristotle seems to be somewhat self-contained and unconnected to the freely improvised commentary on 'Meditations on Metaphysics', Adorno's reflections are not motivated by an historical interest in Aristotle's philosophy, but are guided rather by problems arising from his own thought. Thus, they do not need to be based on Aristotle's text itself, but can largely make do with Eduard Zeller's account of it. The identity and difference of Aristotle's categories in relation to those of a 'negative' metaphysics, which is only possible after Kant, are not a philological problem. Unlike Paul Tillich, for example, who explicitly took over Aristotle's distinction between δύναμις and ἐνέργεια as 'principal qualities of being' in his discussion of the so-called 'life-dimensions' in his *Systematische Theologie* – especially in the third volume, which Adorno asked the author to lend him while writing 'Meditations on Metaphysics' – Adorno seeks to find out what history has made of such supra-temporal categories in the meantime; whether and how far Aristotle's categories still hold good in the utterly administered world. That the discussion of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* has no counterpart in the book version of *Negative Dialectics* does not mean that antiquity is not ubiquitously present in it – or for that matter, in Adorno's philosophy as a whole. It is present, and to a far higher degree than the relatively rare mentions of Greek philosophers in Adorno's writings might suggest. Even if there is no work by him which is explicitly devoted to

ancient philosophy, Adorno's thought presupposed Plato and Aristotle just as much as any other great philosophy has done, at least up to the threshold at which positivism silenced it. For Adorno, 'as far back as we can trace it, the history of thought has been a dialectic of enlightenment'. In *Negative Dialectics* he traced it back to its origins in archaic thought, in which he did not differ from Heidegger, except in opposing the archaic and favouring demythologization. 'The toil and trouble of the metaphysicists of antiquity – from Parmenides, who had to split thinking and Being so that he might identify them, down to Aristotle – consisted in forcing the division. Demythologization is division; the myth is the deceptive unity of the undivided' (*Negative Dialectics*, p. 118). Because identity and unity, without which no thought can be thought, terminated in the catastrophe of modernity, Adorno's 'thinking after Auschwitz', in its solidarity with the multiple, the non-identical, enquires once again into the categorial distinctions of Aristotle, a 'last philosophy' enquiring into the 'first'. However suspect the proximity of ἀρχή, the mythical concept of origin, may have been to that of the fatherland for Adorno, he would nevertheless have agreed with Hegel, who 'always felt at home when [he] heard the word Greece'.

To meditate on metaphysics was already as untimely in the mid-1960s, when Adorno gave his lectures, at it seems thirty years later, at the time of their publication. For Adorno metaphysics was more than a 'conversation' in which the participants are more concerned with each other than with the content of the conversation, the problems traditionally called metaphysical; he persisted in believing that philosophy had to do with the perception of truth, and could not be dissolved into such casual contexts as a 'conversation of mankind' (cf. Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Oxford 1980, pp. 389ff). If metaphysics is to be understood, with Aristotle, as a 'thinking of thinking', as the 'concept which has become aware of itself', with which thinking itself and its forms are elevated to categories of being, to something absolute, then, with Adorno, metaphysics today can be 'nothing other than a thinking about metaphysics', about 'whether thinking and its constitutive forms are *in fact* the absolute' (p. 99 above). In the 'Metaphysics' lectures, as in *Negative Dialectics*, this question receives an unqualified 'no', in which Adorno is in agreement with the Horkheimer of *Dämmerung*: 'There is no metaphysics; no positive statement on anything absolute is possible' (Max Horkheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2: *Philosophische Frühschriften 1922–1932*, ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, Frankfurt/Main 1987, p. 430), although he added: 'Metaphysics cannot be a positive doctrine about any ontological content which might

be proclaimed as metaphysical; it consists of the *questions* relating to such entities. . . . To put it trenchantly: negative metaphysics is metaphysics no less than positive metaphysics' (Theodor W. Adorno, *Philosophische Terminologie. Zur Einleitung*, ed. Rudolf zur Lippe, vol. 2, Frankfurt/Main 1974, p. 166). Adorno, in his recorded comments on 'metaphysical experience', would like to insist that experience of the metaphysical, the sphere which, since Kant, cannot in principle be fulfilled by experience, is nevertheless possible. It is, nevertheless, an incontrovertible experience of contingency, of death, of loss of meaning, that metaphysics, throughout history the quintessence of the spiritual, has 'slipped into material questions of existence' (*Negative Dialectics*, p. 366) in the era of Auschwitz. For Adorno, metaphysics – of which he might have said, as Benjamin said of theology, that it is small and ugly and should not show its face today – has withdrawn into the relation of thought to need, to the material want of human beings; this need 'survives' only as negation.

> Represented in the inmost cell of thought is that which is unlike thought. The smallest intramundane traits would be of relevance to the absolute, for the micrological view cracks the shells of what, measured by the subsuming cover concept, is helplessly isolated and explodes its identity, the delusion that it is but a specimen. There is solidarity between such thinking and metaphysics at the time of its fall. (ibid., p. 408)

Metaphysics no longer leads into any Platonic heaven of Forms, it is no longer guaranteed any *κόσμος χωριστός*, it is only a last refuge both against the ideology of 'the metaphysics that has risen nowadays' (ibid., p. 372) and against the cult of 'that which is the case'. In the only place where Adorno brought himself to offer a kind of definition of metaphysics, he gave it the form of a negation of the first proposition of the *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*: metaphysics, he wrote, stood

> against scientism, for example Wittgenstein's position that fundamentally consciousness has to do only with that which is the case. That might call forth another definition: metaphysics is the form of consciousness in which it attempts to know what is more than the case, or is not merely the case, and yet must be thought, because that which, as one says, is the case compels us to do so. (Adorno, *Philosophische Terminologie*, vol. 2, p. 167; on Wittgenstein's dictum also cf. GS 8, pp. 337f)

It was Adorno's hope that reflection on the limits within which thought is blocked might open the prison a little: '[the ability of

philosophy] to think beyond itself, into openness – that, precisely, is metaphysics' (p. 68 above). Adorno refused to an extent to share in the pessimism of his friend Horkheimer, in his materialist grief that past suffering could not be made good, when he wrote that 'if thought is not decapitated it will flow into transcendence, down to the idea of a world that would not only abolish extant suffering but revoke the suffering that is irrevocably past' (*Negative Dialectics*, p. 403). It may be that such revocation in all its impotence represents the metaphysical minimum which is left to a negative dialectics.

The edited text of the lectures is based on a transcript of the tape-recording – a transcript which was made in the Institut für Sozialforschung, usually directly after the individual lectures. The transcribed tapes were erased at that time so that they could be reused. The transcript is now kept in the Theodor W. Adorno Archiv and numbered Vo 10347–10808.

In establishing the text the editor has tried to proceed in the same way as Adorno when editing extempore lectures, if indeed he released them for publication; in particular, he has tried to retain their character as lectures. As the text of the transcript has deteriorated badly, an unusually large number of interventions had to be made, in comparison, for example, with the lectures on *Kants 'Kritik der reinen Vernunft'*. The transcript was clearly made by someone who was neither familiar with Adorno's peculiarities nor remotely able to understand the subject matter of the lectures. It not infrequently shows omissions from the text, Greek words have always been omitted and names often misunderstood; in addition, there are numerous factual errors when the transcriber failed to hear properly. Nevertheless, it was, as a rule, not difficult to surmise and tacitly insert what was said or at least intended. In view of the necessity to make frequent emendations to the text, the editor believed himself authorized to retouch it further in a way which would not have been appropriate in a more authentic original, and was not done, for example, in the case of the Kant lectures just mentioned. Clear violations of grammatical rules have been corrected, and superfluous words, especially the particles *nun, also, ja* have been removed where they merely filled awkward gaps. Adorno's use of the definite article before names, following a peculiarity of the Hessian dialect ('der Aristoteles'), was deleted where it occurred over-frequently. Any too-distracting repetitions were discreetly removed, and cumbersome syntactical constructions were occasionally modified. The editor felt most free in inserting missing punctuation, attempting to articulate the spoken text as clearly and unambiguously as possible, regardless of the rules applied by

Adorno to written texts. However, he never attempted to 'improve' Adorno's text, but only to establish *his* text, as far as the editor was able. The notes give references to the quotations used in the lectures, and cite passages to which Adorno refers or might have referred. In addition, parallel passages from Adorno's writings are adduced both to clarify what is said in the lectures and to demonstrate that manifold connections exist between the author's lectures and writings. 'One needs to develop a faculty for discerning the emphases and accents peculiar to that philosophy in order to uncover their relationships within the philosophical context, and thus to understand the philosophy itself – that is at least as important as knowing unequivocally: such and such is metaphysics' (p. 51 above). The notes are intended to assist a reading which follows this injunction of Adorno's. In their totality they are meant to help the reader gain an awareness of the context of learning in which Adorno's lecturing took place, and which cannot be taken for granted now. If the notes here and there give the impression of verging on a commentary, it should be borne in mind that this impression is not unintentional.

GLOSSARY OF GREEK TERMS

τὸ ἀγαθόν (the good)
ἀκίνητος, -ον (unmoved)
ἡ ἀνάγκη (necessity)
ὁ ἄνθρωπος (man)
ἡ ἀνδρεία (courage)
ἀόριστος, -ον (indefinite)
τὸ ἄπειρον (the infinite)
ἡ ἀρχή (principle, beginning)
τὸ αὐτόματον (chance)

γάρ (for)

δεύτερος, -α, -ον (secondary), see οὐσία, δεύτερα
ἡ δικαιοσύνη (justice)
ἡ δύναμις (power, potentiality)

εἰδέναι (to know)
τὸ εἶδος (form)
εἶναι (to be)
ἕκαστος, -η, ον (each, each individual)
ἐνδέχομαι (to be possible, to admit)
ἡ ἐνέργεια (actuality)
ἓν κατὰ πολλῶν (one in the many)
ἡ ἐντελέχεια (realization)
ἔστιν (is, is the case)

ἔσχατος, -η, -ον (last), see ὕλη, ἐσχάτη

ἡ ζωή (life)
ἡμεῖς (we)

οἱ θεοί (the gods)
ὁ θεός (God)
θέσει (by position)
ἡ θεωρία (study, speculation)

ἡ ἰδέα (the idea)
ἴδιος, -α, -ον (personal, private)

καί (and)
ἡ κατηγορία (category)
τὸ [ἀκίνητον] κινοῦν (the [unmoved] mover)
ὁ κόσμος (world, order)

ὁ λόγος (speech, reason, definition)

ἡ μέθεξις (participation)
ἡ μεσότης (mean state)
μετά (after)
μετάβασις εἰς ἄλλο γένος (transition to another kind)
μή (not)
τὸ μὴ ὄν (what is not the case)
ἡ μηχανή (device)
ἡ μορφή (form)

νοεῖν (to think, perceive)
νοητός, -ή, όν (mental)
ἡ νόησις (thought, perception)
ὁ νοῦς (intellect, mind)

ἡ οἰκία (house)
τὸ ὄν, τὰ ὄντα (that which is the case, existing things)
ὄντως (really)
ὀρέγωμαι (to desire, reach for)
ἡ ὁρμή (impulse)
τὸ οὗ ἕνεκα (final cause, purpose)
ἡ οὐσία (substance)
οὐσία, πρώτη (primary substance)
οὐσία, δεύτερα (secondary substance)

πᾶς, πᾶσα, πᾶν, pl. πάντες (all, every)
τὸ πεῖραρ (end, boundary, bounding)
ποιεῖν (to make, do, act)
ἡ ποίησις (creation, poetry)
ἡ πόλις (city-state)
ἡ πρᾶξις (action)
πράττειν (to do)
πρός (with regard to)
πρότερος, -α, -ον (former, prior)
τὸ πρῶτον (the first)
πρῶτος, -η, -ον (first)

ἡ σοφία (wisdom)
ἡ στέρησις (privation)

τὸ τέλος (end)
τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι (essence)
τόδε τι (individual thing)
τοιοῦτος, τοιαύτη, τοιοῦτο(ν) (such)
ὁ τόπος (place, topic)
ἡ τύχη (fate, chance)

ἡ ὕλη (matter)
ὕλη, ἐσχάτη (last matter)
ὕλη, πρώτη (primary matter)
τὸ ὑποκείμενον (the substratum)
ὕστερος, -α, -ον (later)

φιλοσοφία (philosophy)
φιλοσοφία, πρώτη (first philosophy)
φύσει (by nature)
τὰ φυσικά (physics)
ἡ φύσις (nature)

χρόνῳ (in time)
χωρίς (separately)
ὁ χωρισμός (separation)
χωριστός (separable)

τὸ ψεῦδος (lie)

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