Hannah Arendt

The Life of the Mind

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Editor's Note

As Hannah Arendt's friend and literary executor, I have prepared *The Life of the Mind* for publication. In 1973 *Thinking* was delivered in briefer form as Gifford Lectures at the University of Aberdeen, and in 1974 the opening part of *Willing* as well. Both *Thinking* and *Willing*, again in briefer form, were given as lecture courses at the New School for Social Research in New York in 1974–5 and 1975. The history of the work and of its editorial preparation will be related in the editor's postface to be found at the end of each volume. The second volume contains an appendix on Judging, drawn from a lecture course on Kant's political philosophy given in 1970 at the New School.

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checking of some elusive quotations. I thank my own husband, James West, for the windfall of *his* college textbooks in philosophy and for his readiness to discuss the manuscript and its occasional perplexities, and I thank him also for his decisiveness in cutting several Gordian knots in the general plan and lay-out of these volumes. I am grateful to Lotte Köhler, my co-executor, for making the relevant books from Hannah Arendt's library available to the publisher's editors, and for her overall helpfulness and devotion. Great appreciation is due Roberta Leighton and her staff at Harcourt Brace Jovanovich for the enormous pains and the intelligence they have brought to bear on the manuscript, far surpassing normal editorial practice. I warmly thank William Jovanovich for the personal interest he has always taken in *The Life of the Mind,* already evident in his presence in Aberdeen at three of the Gifford Lectures. Hannah Arendt was much more than an "author" to him, and she, on her side, valued not only his friendship but also his comments on and critical insights into her text. Since her death, he has encouraged and fortified me by his attentive reading of the edited text and by his suggestions for handling the Judgment material from the Kant lectures. Over and above that, there has been his willingness to share the burdens of decision on some minute points as well as on larger ones. I must thank too my friends Stanley Geist and Joseph Frank for being available for consultation on linguistic problems raised by the manuscript. And, for giving a hand with the German, my friend Werner Stemans of the Goethe Institute in Paris. Acknowledgments are due *The New Yorker,* which has published *Thinking* with a few slight changes; I feel gratitude to William Shawn for his enthusiastic response to the manuscript—a reaction that would have been very satisfying to the author. Finally, and most of all, I thank Hannah Arendt for the privilege of working on her book.

MARY MC CARTHY

One / Thinking

Thinking does not bring knowledge as do the sciences.

Thinking does not produce usable practical wisdom.

Thinking does not solve the riddles of the universe.

Thinking does not endow us directly with the power to act.

MARTIN HEIDEGGER

Introduction

The title I have given this lecture series, *The Life of the Mind,* sounds pretentious, and to talk about Thinking seems to me so presumptuous that I feel I should start less with an apology than with a justification. No justification, of course, is needed for the topic itself, especially not in the framework of eminence inherent in the Gifford Lectures. What disturbs me is that *I* try my hand at it, for I have neither claim nor ambition to be a "philosopher" or be numbered among what Kant, not without irony, called *Denker von Gewerbe* (professional thinkers).[1] The question then is, should I not have left these problems in the hands of the experts, and the answer will have to show what prompted me to venture from the relatively safe fields of political science and theory into these rather awesome matters, instead of leaving well enough alone.

Factually, my preoccupation with mental activities has two rather different origins. The immediate impulse came from my attending the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem. In my report of it[2] I spoke of "the banality of evil." Behind that phrase, I held no thesis or doctrine, although I was dimly aware of the fact that it went counter to our tradition of thought—literary, theological, or philosophic—about the phenomenon of evil. Evil, we have learned, is something demonic; its incarnation is Satan, a "lightning fall from heaven" (Luke 10:18), or Lucifer, the fallen angel ("The devil is an angel too"—Unamuno) whose sin is pride ("proud as Lucifer"), namely, that *superbia* of which only the best are capable: they don't want to serve God but to be like Him. Evil men, we are told, act out of envy; this may be resentment at not having turned out well through no fault of their own (Richard III) or the envy of Cain, who slew Abel because "the Lord had regard for Abel and his

1. Notes are on pages 217–238.

offering, but for Cain and his offering he had no regard." Or they may be prompted by weakness (Macbeth). Or, on the contrary, by the powerful hatred wickedness feels for sheer goodness (Iago's "I hate the Moor: my cause is hearted"; Claggart's hatred for Billy Budd's "barbarian" innocence, a hatred considered by Melville a "depravity according to nature"), or by covetousness, "the root of all evil" (*Radix omnium malorum cupiditas*). However, what I was confronted with was utterly different and still undeniably factual. I was struck by a manifest shallowness in the doer that made it impossible to trace the uncontestable evil of his deeds to any deeper level of roots or motives. The deeds were monstrous, but the doer—at least the very effective one now on trial—was quite ordinary, commonplace, and neither demonic nor monstrous. There was no sign in him of firm ideological convictions or of specific evil motives, and the only notable characteristic one could detect in his past behavior as well as in his behavior during the trial and throughout the pre-trial police examination was something entirely negative: it was not stupidity but *thoughtlessness*. In the setting of Israeli court and prison procedures he functioned as well as he had functioned under the Nazi regime but, when confronted with situations for which such routine procedures did not exist, he was helpless, and his cliché-ridden language produced on the stand, as it had evidently done in his official life, a kind of macabre comedy. Clichés, stock phrases, adherence to conventional, standardized codes of expression and conduct have the socially recognized function of protecting us against reality, that is, against the claim on our thinking attention that all events and facts make by virtue of their existence. If we were responsive to this claim all the time, we would soon be exhausted; Eichmann differed from the rest of us only in that he clearly knew of no such claim at all.

It was this absence of thinking—which is so ordinary an experience in our everyday life, where we have hardly the time, let alone the inclination, to *stop* and think—that awakened my interest. Is evil-doing (the sins of omission, as well as the sins of commission) possible in default of not just "base motives" (as the law calls them) but of any motives whatever, of any particular prompting of interest or volition? Is wickedness,

however we may define it, this being "determined to prove a villain," *not* a necessary condition for evil-doing? Might the problem of good and evil, our faculty for telling right from wrong, be connected with our faculty of thought? To be sure, not in the sense that thinking would ever be able to produce the good deed as its result, as though "virtue could be taught" and learned—only habits and customs can be taught, and we know only too well the alarming speed with which they are unlearned and forgotten when new circumstances demand a change in manners and patterns of behavior. (The fact that we usually treat matters of good and evil in courses in "morals" or "ethics" may indicate how little we know about them, for morals comes from *mores* and ethics from *ēthos*, the Latin and the Greek words for customs and habit, the Latin word being associated with rules of behavior, whereas the Greek is derived from habitat, like our "habits.") The absence of thought I was confronted with sprang neither from forgetfulness of former, presumably good manners and habits nor from stupidity in the sense of inability to comprehend—not even in the sense of "moral insanity," for it was just as noticeable in instances that had nothing to do with so-called ethical decisions or matters of conscience.

The question that imposed itself was: Could the activity of thinking as such, the habit of examining whatever happens to come to pass or to attract attention, regardless of results and specific content, could this activity be among the conditions that make men abstain from evil-doing or even actually "condition" them against it? (The very word "con-science," at any rate, points in this direction insofar as it means "to know with and by myself," a kind of knowledge that is actualized in every thinking process.) And is not this hypothesis enforced by everything we know about conscience, namely, that a "good conscience" is enjoyed as a rule only by really bad people, criminals and such, while only "good people" are capable of having a bad conscience? To put it differently and use Kantian language: after having been struck by a fact that, willy-nilly, "put me in possession of a concept" (the banality of evil), I could not help raising the *quaestio juris* and asking myself "by what right I possessed and used it."[3]

The Eichmann trial, then, first prompted my interest in this subject. Second, those moral questions, arising from factual experience, and going counter to the wisdom of the ages—not only to the various traditional answers that "ethics," a branch of philosophy, has offered to the problem of evil, but also to the much larger answers that philosophy has ready for the much less urgent question What is thinking?—were apt to renew in me certain doubts that had been plaguing me ever since I had finished a study of what my publisher wisely called "The Human Condition," but which I had intended more modestly as an inquiry into "The Vita Activa." I had been concerned with the problem of Action, the oldest concern of political theory, and what had always troubled me about it was that the very term I adopted for my reflections on the matter, namely, *vita activa*, was coined by men who were devoted to the contemplative way of life and who looked upon all kinds of being alive from that perspective.

Seen from that perspective, the active way of life is "laborious," the contemplative way is sheer quietness; the active one goes on in public, the contemplative one in the "desert"; the active one is devoted to "the necessity of one's neighbor," the contemplative one to the "vision of God." (*Duae sunt vitae, activa et contemplativa. Activa est in labore, contemplativa in requie. Activa in publico, contemplativa in deserto. Activa in necessitate proximi, contemplativa in visione Dei.*) I have quoted from a medieval author[4] of the twelfth century, almost at random, because the notion that contemplation is the highest state of the mind is as old as Western philosophy. The thinking activity—according to Plato, the soundless dialogue we carry on with ourselves—serves only to open the eyes of the mind, and even the Aristotelian *nous* is an organ for seeing and beholding the truth. In other words, thinking aims at and ends in contemplation, and contemplation is not an activity but a passivity; it is the point where mental activity comes to rest. According to traditions of Christian time, when philosophy had become the handmaiden of theology, thinking became meditation, and meditation again ended in contemplation, a kind of blessed state of the soul where the mind was no longer stretching out to know the truth but, in anticipation of a future state, received

it temporarily in intuition. (Descartes, characteristically, still influenced by this tradition, called the treatise in which he set out to demonstrate God's existence *Méditations.*) With the rise of the modern age, thinking became chiefly the handmaiden of science, of organized knowledge; and even though thinking then grew extremely active, following modernity's crucial conviction that I can know only what I myself make, it was Mathematics, the non-empirical science par excellence, wherein the mind appears to play only with itself, that turned out to be the Science of sciences, delivering the key to those laws of nature and the universe that are concealed by appearances. If it was axiomatic for Plato that the invisible eye of the soul was the organ for beholding invisible truth with the certainty of knowledge, it became axiomatic for Descartes—during the famous night of his "revelation"—that there existed "a fundamental accord between the *laws* of nature [which are concealed by appearances and deceptive sense perceptions] and the laws of mathematics";[5] that is, between the laws of discursive thinking on the highest, most abstract level and the laws of whatever lies behind mere semblance in nature. And he actually believed that with this kind of thinking, with what Hobbes called "reckoning with consequences," he could deliver certain knowledge about the existence of God, the nature of the soul, and similar matters.

What interested me in the Vita Activa was that the contrary notion of complete quietness in the Vita Contemplativa was so overwhelming that compared with this stillness all other differences between the various activities in the Vita Activa disappeared. Compared to this quiet, it was no longer important whether you labored and tilled the soil, or worked and produced use-objects, or acted together with others in certain enterprises. Even Marx, in whose work and thought the question of action played such a crucial role, "uses the expression '*Praxis*' simply in the sense of 'what man does' as opposed to 'what man thinks.' "[6] I was, however, aware that one could look at this matter from an altogether different viewpoint, and to indicate my doubts I ended this study of active life with a curious sentence that Cicero ascribed to Cato, who used to say that "never is a man more active than when he does nothing,

never is he less alone than when he is by himself" (*Numquam se plus agere quam nihil cum ageret, numquam minus solum esse quam cum solus esset*).[7] Assuming Cato was right, the questions are obvious: What are we "doing" when we do nothing but think? Where are we when we, normally always surrounded by our fellow-men, are together with no one but ourselves?

Obviously, to raise such questions has its difficulties. At first glance, they seem to belong to what used to be called "philosophy" or "metaphysics," two terms and two fields of inquiry that, as we all know, have fallen into disrepute. If this were merely a matter of modern positivist and neo-positivist assaults, we perhaps need not be concerned. Carnap's statement that metaphysics should be regarded as poetry certainly goes counter to the claims usually made by metaphysicians; but these, like Carnap's own evaluation, may be based on an underestimation of poetry. Heidegger, whom Carnap singled out for attack, retorted by stating that philosophy and poetry were indeed closely related; they were not identical but sprang from the same source—which is thinking. And Aristotle, whom so far no one has accused of writing "mere" poetry, was of the same opinion: poetry and philosophy somehow belong together. Wittgenstein's famous aphorism "What we cannot speak of we must be silent about," which argues on the other side, would, if taken seriously, apply not only to what lies beyond sense experience but even more to objects of sensation. Nothing we see or hear or touch can be expressed in words that equal what is given to the senses. Hegel was right when he pointed out that "the This of sense . . . cannot be reached by language."[8] Was it not precisely the discovery of a discrepancy between words, the medium in which we think, and the world of appearances, the medium in which we live, that led to philosophy and metaphysics in the first place? Except that in the beginning, it was thinking, in the form either of *logos* or of *noēsis*, that was held to reach truth or true Being, while by the end the emphasis had shifted to what is given to perception and to the implements by which we can extend and sharpen our bodily senses. It seems only natural that the former will discriminate against appearances and the latter against thought.

Our difficulties with metaphysical questions are caused not so much by those to whom they are "meaningless" anyhow as by the party under attack. For just as the crisis in theology reached its climax when theologians, as distinguished from the old crowd of non-believers, began to talk about the "God is dead" proposition, so the crisis in philosophy and metaphysics came into the open when the philosophers themselves began to declare the end of philosophy and metaphysics. By now this is an old story. (The attraction of Husserl's phenomenology sprang from the anti-historical and anti-metaphysical implications of the slogan "*Zu den Sachen selbst*"; and Heidegger, who "seemingly remained on the metaphysical track," actually also aimed at "overcoming metaphysics," as he has repeatedly proclaimed since 1930.[9])

It was not Nietzsche but Hegel who first declared that the "sentiment underlying religion in the modern age [is] the sentiment: God is dead."[10] Sixty years ago, the Encyclopaedia Britannica felt quite safe in treating "metaphysics" as philosophy "under its most discredited name,"[11] and if we wish to trace this disrepute further back, we encounter Kant most prominently among the detractors, not the Kant of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, whom Moses Mendelssohn called the "all-destroyer," the *alles Zermalmer*, but Kant in his pre-critical writings, where he quite freely admits that "it was [his] fate to fall in love with metaphysics" but also speaks of its "bottomless abyss," its "slippery ground," its utopian "land of milk and honey" (*Schlaraffenland*) where the "Dreamers of reason" dwell as though in an "airship," so that "there exists no folly which could not be brought to agree with a groundless wisdom."[12] All that needs to be said today on this subject has been admirably said by Richard McKeon: In the long and complicated history of thought, this "awesome science" has never produced "general conviction concerning [its] function . . . nor indeed much consensus of opinion concerning its subject matter."[13] In view of this history of detraction, it is rather surprising that the very word "metaphysics" has been able to survive at all. One almost suspects that Kant was right when as a very old man, after having dealt a deathblow to the "awesome science," he prophesied that men will surely return to metaphysics "as one re-

turns to one's mistress after a quarrel" (*wie zu einer entzweiten Geliebten*).[14]

I do not think this very likely or even desirable. Yet before we begin to speculate about the possible advantages of our present situation, it may be wise to reflect upon what we really mean when we observe that theology, philosophy, metaphysics have reached an end—certainly not that God has died, something about which we can *know* as little as about God's existence (so little, in fact, that even the word "existence" is misplaced), but that the way God had been thought of for thousands of years is no longer convincing; if anything is dead, it can only be the traditional *thought* of God. And something similar is true of the end of philosophy and metaphysics: not that the old questions which are coeval with the appearance of men on earth have become "meaningless," but that the way they were framed and answered has lost plausibility.

What has come to an end is the basic distinction between the sensory and the suprasensory, together with the notion, at least as old as Parmenides, that whatever is not given to the senses—God or Being or the First Principles and Causes (*archai*) or the Ideas—is more real, more truthful, more meaningful than what appears, that it is not just *beyond* sense perception but *above* the world of the senses. What is "dead" is not only the localization of such "eternal truths" but also the distinction itself. Meanwhile, in increasingly strident voices the few defenders of metaphysics have warned us of the danger of nihilism inherent in this development; and although they themselves seldom invoke it, they have an important argument in their favor: it is indeed true that once the suprasensory realm is discarded, its opposite, the world of appearances as understood for so many centuries, is also annihilated. The sensory, as still understood by the positivists, cannot survive the death of the suprasensory. No one knew this better than Nietzsche, who, with his poetic and metaphoric description of the assassination of God,[15] has caused so much confusion in these matters. In a significant passage in *The Twilight of Idols*, he clarifies what the word "God" meant in the earlier story. It was merely a symbol for the suprasensory realm as understood by metaphysics; he now uses, instead of "God," the expression

"true world" and says: "We have abolished the true world. What has remained? The apparent one perhaps? Oh no! With the true world we have also abolished the apparent one."[16]

This insight of Nietzsche's, namely, that "the elimination of the suprasensory also eliminates the merely sensory and thereby the difference between them" (Heidegger),[17] is actually so obvious that it defies every attempt to date it historically; all thinking in terms of two worlds implies that these two are inseparably connected with each other. Thus, all the elaborate modern arguments against positivism are anticipated by the unsurpassed simplicity of Democritus' little dialogue between the mind, the organ for the suprasensory, and the senses. Sense perceptions are illusions, says the mind; they change according to the conditions of our body; sweet, bitter, color, and so on exist only *nomō*, by convention among men, and not *physei*, according to true nature behind the appearances. Whereupon the senses answer: "Wretched mind! Do you overthrow us while you take from us your evidence [*pisteis*, everything you can trust]? Our overthrow will be your downfall."[18] In other words, once the always precarious balance between the two worlds is lost, no matter whether the "true world" abolishes the "apparent one" or vice versa, the whole framework of reference in which our thinking was accustomed to orient itself breaks down. In these terms, nothing seems to make much sense any more.

These modern "deaths"—of God, metaphysics, philosophy, and, by implication, positivism—have become events of considerable historical consequence, since, with the beginning of our century, they have ceased to be the exclusive concern of an intellectual elite and instead are not so much the concern as the common unexamined assumption of nearly everybody. With this political aspect of the matter we are not concerned here. In our context, it may even be better to leave the issue, which actually is one of political authority, outside our considerations, and to insist, rather, on the simple fact that, however seriously our ways of thinking may be involved in this crisis, our *ability* to think is not at stake; we are what men always have been—thinking beings. By this I mean no more than that men have an inclination, perhaps a need, to think beyond

the limitations of knowledge, to do more with this ability than use it as an instrument for knowing and doing. To talk about nihilism in this context is perhaps just unwillingness to part company with concepts and thought-trains that actually died quite some time ago, though their demise has been publicly acknowledged only recently. If only, one would like to imagine, we could do in this situation what the modern age did in its early stage, that is, treat each and every subject "as though no one had touched the matter before me" (as Descartes proposes in his introductory remarks to "*Les Passions de l'âme*")! This has become impossible, partly because of our enormously enlarged historical consciousness, but primarily because the only record we possess of what thinking as an activity meant to those who had chosen it as a way of life is what we would call today the "metaphysical fallacies." None of the systems, none of the doctrines transmitted to us by the great thinkers may be convincing or even plausible to modern readers; but none of them, I shall try to argue here, is arbitrary and none can be simply dismissed as sheer nonsense. On the contrary, the metaphysical fallacies contain the only clues we have to what thinking means to those who engage in it—something of great importance today and about which, oddly enough, there exist few direct utterances.

Hence, the possible advantage of our situation following the demise of metaphysics and philosophy would be twofold. It would permit us to look on the past with new eyes, unburdened and unguided by any traditions, and thus to dispose of a tremendous wealth of raw experiences without being bound by any prescriptions as to how to deal with these treasures. "*Notre héritage n'est précédé d'aucun testament*" ("Our inheritance comes to us by no will-and-testament").[19] The advantage would be even greater had it not been accompanied, almost inevitably, by a growing inability to move, on no matter what level, in the realm of the invisible; or, to put it another way, had it not been accompanied by the disrepute into which everything that is not visible, tangible, palpable has fallen, so that we are in danger of losing the past itself together with our traditions.

For even though there has never been much consensus about the subject matter of metaphysics, at least one

point has been taken for granted: that these disciplines—whether you called them metaphysics or philosophy—dealt with matters that were not given to sense-perception and that their understanding transcended common-sense reasoning, which springs from sense experience and can be validated by empirical tests and means. From Parmenides till philosophy's end, all thinkers were agreed that, in order to deal with such matters, man had to detach his mind from the senses by detaching it both from the world as given by them and from the sensations—or passions—aroused by sense-objects. The philosopher, to the extent that he is a philosopher and not (what of course he also is) "a man like you and me," withdraws from the world of appearances, and the region he then moves in has always, since philosophy's beginning, been described as the world of the few. This age-old distinction between the many and the "professional thinkers" specializing in what was supposedly the highest activity human beings could attain to—Plato's philosopher "shall be called the friend of the god, and if it ever is given to man to put on immortality, it shall be given to him"[20]—has lost its plausibility, and this is the second advantage in our present situation. If, as I suggested before, the ability to tell right from wrong should turn out to have anything to do with the ability to think, then we must be able to "demand" its exercise from every sane person, no matter how erudite or ignorant, intelligent or stupid, he may happen to be. Kant—in this respect almost alone among the philosophers—was much bothered by the common opinion that philosophy is only for the few, precisely because of its moral implications, and he once observed that "stupidity is caused by a wicked heart."[21] This is not true: absence of thought is not stupidity; it can be found in highly intelligent people, and a wicked heart is not its cause; it is probably the other way round, that wickedness may be caused by absence of thought. In any event, the matter can no longer be left to "specialists" as though thinking, like higher mathematics, were the monopoly of a specialized discipline.

Crucial for our enterprise is Kant's distinction between *Vernunft* and *Verstand*, "reason" and "intellect" (not "understanding," which I think is a mistranslation; Kant used the

German *Verstand* to translate the Latin *intellectus*, and *Verstand*, though it is the noun of *verstehen*, hence "understanding" in current translations, has none of the connotations that are inherent in the German *das Verstehen*). Kant drew this distinction between the two mental faculties after he had discovered the "scandal of reason," that is, the fact that our mind is not capable of certain and verifiable knowledge regarding matters and questions that it nevertheless cannot help thinking about, and for him such matters, that is, those with which mere thought is concerned, were restricted to what we now often call the "ultimate questions" of God, freedom, and immortality. But quite apart from the existential interest men once took in these questions, and although Kant still believed that no "honest soul ever lived that could bear to think that everything is ended with death,"[22] he was also quite aware that "the urgent need" of reason is both different from and "more than mere quest and desire for knowledge."[23] Hence, the distinguishing of the two faculties, reason and intellect, coincides with a distinction between two altogether different mental activities, thinking and knowing, and two altogether different concerns, meaning, in the first category, and cognition, in the second. Kant, though he had insisted on this distinction, was still so strongly bound by the enormous weight of the tradition of metaphysics that he held fast to its traditional subject matter, that is, to those topics which could be *proved* to be unknowable, and while he justified reason's need to think beyond the limits of what can be known, he remained unaware of the fact that man's need to reflect encompasses nearly everything that happens to him, things he knows as well as things he can never know. He remained less than fully aware of the extent to which he had liberated reason, the ability to think, by justifying it in terms of the ultimate questions. He stated defensively that he had "found it necessary to deny *knowledge* . . . to make room for *faith*,"[24] but he had not made room for faith; he had made room for thought, and he had not "denied knowledge" but separated knowledge from thinking. In the notes to his lectures on metaphysics he wrote: "The aim of metaphysics . . . is to extend, albeit only negatively, our use of reason beyond the limitations of the sensorily given world, that is, *to eliminate*

the obstacles by which reason hinders itself" (italics added).[25]

The great obstacle that reason (*Vernunft*) puts in its own way arises from the side of the intellect (*Verstand*) and the entirely justified criteria it has established for its own purposes, that is, for quenching our thirst, and meeting our need, for knowledge and cognition. The reason neither Kant nor his successors ever paid much attention to thinking as an activity and even less to the experiences of thinking ego is that, all distinctions notwithstanding, they were demanding the kind of results and applying the kind of criteria for certainty and evidence that are the results and the criteria of cognition. But if it is true that thinking and reason are justified in transcending the limitations of cognition and the intellect—justified by Kant on the ground that the matters they deal with, though unknowable, are of the greatest existential interest to man—then the assumption must be that thinking and reason are not concerned with what the intellect is concerned with. To anticipate, and put it in a nutshell: *The need of reason is not inspired by the quest for truth but by the quest for meaning. And truth and meaning are not the same.* The basic fallacy, taking precedence over all specific metaphysical fallacies, is to interpret meaning on the model of truth. The latest and in some respects most striking instance of this occurs in Heidegger's *Being and Time,* which starts out by raising "anew the question of the meaning of Being."[26] Heidegger himself, in a later interpretation of his own initial question, says explicitly: " 'Meaning of Being' and 'Truth of Being' say the same."[27]

The temptations to make the equation—which comes down to a refusal to accept and think through Kant's distinction between reason and intellect, between the "urgent need" to think and the "desire to know"—are very great, and by no means due only to the weight of tradition. Kant's insights had an extraordinary liberating effect on German philosophy, touching off the rise of German idealism. No doubt, they had made room for speculative thought; but this thought again became a field for a new brand of specialists committed to the notion that philosophy's "subject proper" is "the actual knowledge of what truly is."[28] Liberated by Kant from the old school dogmatism and its sterile exercises, they

erected not only new systems but a new "science"—the original title of the greatest of their works, Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind,* was "Science of the Experience of Consciousness"[29]—eagerly blurring Kant's distinction between reason's concern with the unknowable and the intellect's concern with cognition. Pursuing the Cartesian ideal of certainty as though Kant had never existed, they believed in all earnest that the results of their speculations possessed the same kind of validity as the results of cognitive processes.

Does God ever judge us by appearances? I suspect that he does.

W. H. AUDEN

Appearance I

1 *The world's phenomenal nature*

The world men are born into contains many things, natural and artificial, living and dead, transient and sempiternal, all of which have in common that they *appear* and hence are meant to be seen, heard, touched, tasted, and smelled, to be perceived by sentient creatures endowed with the appropriate sense organs. Nothing could appear, the word "appearance" would make no sense, if recipients of appearances did not exist—living creatures able to acknowledge, recognize, and react to—in flight or desire, approval or disapproval, blame or praise—what is not merely there but appears to them and is meant for their perception. In this world which we enter, appearing from a nowhere, and from which we disappear into a nowhere, *Being and Appearing coincide.* Dead matter, natural and artificial, changing and unchanging, depends in its being, that is, in its appearingness, on the presence of living creatures. Nothing and nobody exists in this world whose very being does not presuppose a *spectator.* In other words, nothing that is, insofar as it appears, exists in the singular; everything that is is meant to be perceived by somebody. Not Man but men inhabit this planet. Plurality is the law of the earth.

Since sentient beings—men and animals, to whom things appear and who as recipients guarantee their reality—are themselves also appearances, meant and able both to see and be seen, hear and be heard, touch and be touched, they are never mere subjects and can never be understood as such; they are no less "objective" than stone and bridge. The worldliness of living things means that there is no subject that is not also an object and appears as such to somebody else, who guarantees its "objective" reality. What we usually call "consciousness," the fact that I am aware of myself and therefore in a sense can appear to myself, would never suffice to guaran-

tee reality. (Descartes' *Cogito me cogitare ergo sum* is a non sequitur for the simple reason that this *res cogitans* never appears at all unless its *cogitationes* are made manifest in sounding-out or written-down speech, which is already meant for and presupposes auditors and readers as its recipients.) Seen from the perspective of the world, every creature born into it arrives well equipped to deal with a world in which Being and Appearing coincide; they are fit for worldly existence. Living beings, men and animals, are not just in the world, they are *of the world*, and this precisely because they are subjects and objects—perceiving and being perceived—at the same time.

Nothing perhaps is more surprising in this world of ours than the almost infinite diversity of its appearances, the sheer entertainment value of its views, sounds, and smells, something that is hardly ever mentioned by the thinkers and philosophers. (Only Aristotle at least incidentally counted the life of passive enjoyment of the pleasures our bodily organs provide as among the three ways of life that can be elected by those who, not being subject to necessity, can devote themselves to the *kalon*, to what is beautiful in opposition to what is necessary and useful.[1]) This diversity is matched by an equally astounding diverseness of sense organs among the animal species, so that what actually appears to living creatures assumes the greatest variety of form and shape: every animal species lives in a world of its own. Still, all sense-endowed creatures have appearance as such in common, first, an appearing world and second, and perhaps even more important, the fact that they themselves are appearing and disappearing creatures, that there always was a world before their arrival and there always will be a world after their departure.

To be alive means to live in a world that preceded one's own arrival and will survive one's own departure. On this level of sheer being alive, appearance and disappearance, as they follow upon each other, are the primordial events, which as such mark out time, the time span between birth and death. The finite life span allotted to each living creature determines not merely its life expectancy but also its time experience; it provides the secret prototype for all time measurements no

matter how far these then may transcend the allotted life span into past and future. Thus, the lived experience of the length of a year changes radically throughout our life. A year that to a five-year-old constitutes a full fifth of his existence must seem much longer than when it will constitute a mere twentieth or thirtieth of his time on earth. We all know how the years revolve quicker and quicker as we get older, until, with the approach of old age, they slow down again because we begin to measure them against the psychologically and somatically anticipated date of our departure. Against this clock, inherent in living beings who are born and die, stands "objective" time, according to which the length of a year never changes. This is the time of the world, and its underlying assumption—regardless of any religious or scientific beliefs—is that the world has neither beginning nor end, an assumption that seems only natural for beings who always come into a world that preceded them and will survive them.

In contrast to the inorganic thereness of lifeless matter, living beings are not mere appearances. To be alive means to be possessed by an urge toward self-display which answers the fact of one's own appearingness. Living things *make their appearance* like actors on a stage set for them. The stage is common to all who are alive, but it *seems* different to each species, different also to each individual specimen. Seeming—the it-seems-to-me, *dokei moi*—is the mode, perhaps the only possible one, in which an appearing world is acknowledged and perceived. To appear always means to seem to others, and this seeming varies according to the standpoint and the perspective of the spectators. In other words, every appearing thing acquires, by virtue of its appearingness, a kind of disguise that may indeed—but does not have to—hide or disfigure it. Seeming corresponds to the fact that every appearance, its identity notwithstanding, is perceived by a plurality of spectators.

The urge toward self-display—to respond by showing to the overwhelming effect of being shown—seems to be common to men and animals. And just as the actor depends upon stage, fellow-actors, and spectators, to make his entrance, every living thing depends upon a world that solidly appears as the loca-

tion for its own appearance, on fellow-creatures to play with, and on spectators to acknowledge and recognize its existence. Seen from the viewpoint of the spectators to whom it appears and from whose view it finally disappears, each individual life, its growth and decline, is a developmental process in which an entity unfolds itself in an upward movement until all its properties are fully exposed; this phase is followed by a period of standstill—its bloom or epiphany, as it were—which in turn is succeeded by the downward movement of disintegration that is terminated by complete disappearance. There are many perspectives in which this process can be seen, examined, and understood, but our criterion for what a living thing essentially is remains the same: in everyday life as well as in scientific study, it is determined by the relatively short time span of its full appearance, its epiphany. The choice, guided by the sole criteria of completeness and perfection in appearance, would be entirely arbitrary if reality were not first of all of a phenomenal nature.

The primacy of appearance for all living creatures to whom the world appears in the mode of an it-seems-to-me is of great relevance to the topic we are going to deal with—those mental activities by which we distinguish ourselves from other animal species. For although there are great differences among these activities, they all have in common a *withdrawal* from the world as it appears and a bending back toward the self. This would cause no great problem if we were mere spectators, godlike creatures thrown into the world to look after it or enjoy it and be entertained by it, but still in possession of some other region as our natural habitat. However, *we are of the world and not merely in it;* we, too, are appearances by virtue of arriving and departing, of appearing and disappearing; and while we come from a nowhere, we arrive well equipped to deal with whatever appears to us and to take part in the play of the world. These properties do not vanish when we happen to be engaged in mental activities and close the eyes of our body, to use the Platonic metaphor, in order to be able to open the eyes of the mind. The two-world theory belongs among the metaphysical fallacies but it would never have been able to survive for so many centuries if it had

not so plausibly corresponded to some basic experiences. As Merleau-Ponty once put it, "I can flee being only into being,"[2] and since Being and Appearing coincide for men, this means that I can flee appearance only into appearance. And that does not solve the problem, for the problem concerns the fitness of thought to appear at all, and the question is whether thinking and other invisible and soundless mental activities are meant to appear or whether in fact they can never find an adequate home in the world.

2 *(True) being and (mere) appearance: the two-world theory*

We may find a first consoling hint regarding this subject if we turn to the old metaphysical dichotomy of (true) Being and (mere) Appearance, because it, too, actually relies on the primacy, or at least on the priority, of appearance. In order to find out what truly *is*, the philosopher must *leave* the world of appearances among which he is naturally and originally at home—as Parmenides did when he was carried upward, beyond the gates of night and day, to the divine way that lay "far from the beaten path of men,"[3] and as Plato did, too, in the Cave parable.[4] The world of appearances is *prior* to whatever region the philosopher may *choose* as his "true" home but into which he was not born. It has always been the very appearingness of this world that suggested to the philosopher, that is, to the human mind, the notion that something must exist that is not appearance: "*Nehmen wir die Welt als Erscheinung so beweiset sie gerade zu das Dasein von Etwas das nicht Erscheinung ist*" ("If we look upon the world as appearance, it demonstrates the existence of something that is not appearance"), in the words of Kant.[5] In other words, when the philosopher takes leave of the world given to our senses and does a turnabout (Plato's *periagōgē*) to the life of the mind, he takes his clue from the former, looking for something to be revealed to him that would explain its underlying truth. This

truth—*a-lētheia,* that which is disclosed (Heidegger)—can be conceived only as another "appearance," another phenomenon originally hidden but of a supposedly higher order, thus signifying the lasting predominance of appearance. Our mental apparatus, though it can withdraw from *present* appearances, remains geared to Appearance. The mind, no less than the senses, in its search—Hegel's *Anstrengung des Begriffs*—expects that something will appear to it.

Something quite similar seems to be true for science, and especially for modern science, which—according to an early remark of Marx's—relies on Being and Appearance having parted company, so that the philosopher's special and individual effort is no longer needed to arrive at some "truth" behind the appearances. The scientist, too, depends on appearances, whether, in order to find out what lies beneath the surface, he cuts open the visible body to look at its interior or catches hidden objects by means of all sorts of sophisticated equipment that deprives them of the exterior properties through which they show themselves to our natural senses. The guiding notion of these philosophical and scientific efforts is always the same: Appearances, as Kant said, "must themselves have grounds which are not appearances."[6] This, in fact, is an obvious generalization of the way natural things grow and "appear" into the light of day out of a ground of darkness, except that it was now assumed that this ground possessed a higher rank of reality than what merely appeared and after a while disappeared again. And just as the philosophers' "conceptual efforts" to find something beyond appearances have always ended with rather violent invectives against "mere appearances," the eminently practical achievements of the scientists in laying bare what appearances themselves never show without being interfered with have been made at their expense.

The primacy of appearance is a fact of everyday life which neither the scientist nor the philosopher can ever escape, to which they must always return from their laboratories and studies, and which shows its strength by never being in the least changed or deflected by whatever they may have discovered when they withdrew from it. "Thus the 'strange'

notions of the new physics . . . [surprise] common sense . . . without changing anything of its categories."[7] Against this unshakable common-sense conviction stands the age-old theoretical supremacy of Being and Truth over mere appearance, that is, the supremacy of the *ground* that does not appear over the surface that does. This ground supposedly answers the oldest question of philosophy as well as of science: How does it happen that something or somebody, including myself, appears at all and what makes it appear in this form and shape rather than in any other? The question itself asks for a *cause* rather than a base or ground, but the point of the matter is that our tradition of philosophy has transformed the base from which something rises into the cause that produces it and has then assigned to this producing agent a higher rank of reality than is given to what merely meets the eye. The belief that a cause should be of higher rank than the effect (so that an effect can easily be disparaged by being retraced to its cause) may belong to the oldest and most stubborn metaphysical fallacies. Yet here again we are not dealing with a sheer arbitrary error; the truth is, not only do appearances never reveal what lies beneath them of their own accord but also, generally speaking, they never just reveal; they also conceal—"No thing, no side of a thing, shows itself except by actively hiding the others."[8] They expose, and they also protect from exposure, and, as far as what lies beneath is concerned, this protection may even be their most important function. At any rate, this is true for living things, whose surface hides and protects the inner organs that are their source of life.

The elementary logical fallacy of all theories that rely on the dichotomy of Being and Appearance is obvious and was early discovered and summed up by the sophist Gorgias in a fragment from his lost treatise *On Non-Being or On Nature*—supposedly a refutation of Eleatic philosophy: "Being is not manifest since it does not appear [to men: *dokein*]; appearing [to men] is weak since it does not succeed in being."[9]

Modern science's relentless search for the base underneath mere appearances has given new force to the old argument. It has indeed forced the ground of appearances into the open so that man, a creature fitted for and dependent on appearances,

can catch hold of it. But the results have been rather perplexing. No man, it has turned out, can live among "causes" or give full account in normal human language of a Being whose truth can be scientifically demonstrated in the laboratory and tested practically in the real world through technology. It does look as though Being, once made manifest, overruled appearances—except that nobody so far has succeeded in *living* in a world that does not manifest itself of its own accord.

3 *The reversal of the metaphysical hierarchy: the value of the surface*

The everyday common-sense world, which neither the scientist nor the philosopher ever eludes, knows error as well as illusion. Yet no elimination of errors or dispelling of illusions can arrive at a region beyond appearance. "For when an illusion dissipates, when an appearance suddenly breaks up, it is always for the profit of a new appearance which takes up again for its own account the ontological function of the first. . . . The dis-illusion is the loss of one evidence only because it is the acquisition of *another evidence* . . . there is no *Schein* without an *Erscheinung*, every *Schein* is the counterpart of an *Erscheinung*."[10] That modern science, in its relentless search for *the* truth behind *mere* appearances, will ever be able to resolve this predicament is, to say the least, highly doubtful, if only because the scientist himself belongs to the world of appearances although his perspective on this world may differ from the common-sense perspective.

Historically speaking, it seems that an irremovable doubt has been inherent in the whole enterprise ever since its beginnings with the rise of science in the modern age. The first entirely new notion brought in by the new age—the seventeenth-century idea of an unlimited *progress*, which after a few centuries became the most cherished dogma of *all* men living in a scientifically oriented world—seems intended to take care of the predicament: though one expects to progress further and

further, no one seems ever to have believed in reaching a final absolute goal of truth.

It is obvious that consciousness of the predicament should be most acute in the sciences that deal directly with men, and the answer—reduced to its lowest common denominator—of the various branches of biology, sociology, and psychology is to interpret all appearances as functions of the life process. The great advantage of functionalism is that it presents us again with a unitary world view, and the old metaphysical dichotomy of (true) Being and (mere) Appearance, together with the old prejudice of Being's supremacy over appearance, is still kept intact, albeit in a different manner. The argument has shifted; appearances are no longer depreciated as "secondary qualities" but understood as necessary conditions for essential processes that go on inside the living organism.

This hierarchy has recently been challenged in a way that seems to me highly significant. Could it not be that appearances are not there for the sake of the life process but, on the contrary, that the life process is there for the sake of appearances? Since we live in an *appearing* world, is it not much more plausible that the relevant and the meaningful in this world of ours should be located precisely on the surface?

In a number of publications on the various shapes and forms in animal life, the Swiss zoologist and biologist Adolf Portmann has shown that the facts themselves speak a very different language from the simplistic functional hypothesis that holds that appearances in living beings serve merely the twofold purpose of self-preservation and preservation of the species. From a different and, as it were, more innocent viewpoint, it rather looks as though, on the contrary, the inner, non-appearing organs exist only in order to bring forth and maintain the appearances. "Prior to all functions for the purpose of preservation of the individual and the species . . . we find the simple fact of appearing as self-display *that makes these functions meaningful*" (italics added).[11]

Moreover, Portmann demonstrates with a great wealth of fascinating example, what should be obvious to the naked eye—that the enormous variety of animal and plant life, the very richness of display in its sheer functional *superfluity*,

cannot be accounted for by the common theories that understand life in terms of functionality. Thus, the plumage of birds, "which, at first, we consider to be of value as a warm, protective covering, is thus in addition so formed that its visible parts—and these only—build up a coloured garment, the intrinsic worth of which lies solely in its visible appearance."[12] Generally speaking, "the functional form pure and simple, so much extolled by some as befitting Nature [adequate to nature's purpose], is a rare and special case."[13] Hence, it is wrong to take into account only the functional process that goes on inside the living organism and to regard everything that is outside and "offers itself to the senses as the more or less subordinate consequence of the much more essential, 'central,' and 'real' processes."[14] According to that prevailing misinterpretation, "the external shape of the animal serves to conserve the essential, the inside apparatus, through movement and intake of food, avoidance of enemies, and finding sexual partners."[15] Against this approach Portmann proposes his "morphology," a new science that would reverse the priorities: "*Not what something is, but how it 'appears' is the research problem*" (italics added).[16]

This means that the very shape of an animal "must be appraised as a special organ of reference in relationship to a beholding eye. . . . The eye and what is to be looked at form a functional unit which is fitted together according to rules as strict as those obtaining between food and digestive organs."[17] And in accordance with this reversal, Portmann distinguishes between "authentic appearances," which come to light of their own accord, and "inauthentic" ones, such as the roots of a plant or the inner organs of an animal, which become visible only through interference with and violation of the "authentic" appearance.

Two facts of equal importance give this reversal its main plausibility. First, the impressive phenomenal difference between "authentic" and "inauthentic" appearances, between outside shapes and the inside apparatus. The outside shapes are infinitely varied and highly differentiated; among the higher animals we can usually tell one individual from another. Outside features of living things, moreover, are arranged

according to the law of symmetry so that they appear in a definite and pleasing order. Inside organs, on the contrary, are never pleasing to the eye; once forced into view, they look as though they had been thrown together piecemeal and, unless deformed by disease or some peculiar abnormality, they appear alike; not even the various animal species, let alone the individuals, are easy to tell from each other by the mere inspection of their intestines. When Portmann defines life as "the appearance of an inside in an outside,"[18] he seems to fall victim to the very views he criticizes; for the point of his own findings is that what appears outside is so hopelessly *different* from the inside that one can hardly say that the inside ever appears at all. The inside, the functional apparatus of the life process, is covered up by an outside which, as far as the life process is concerned, has only one function, namely, to hide and protect it, to prevent its exposure to the light of an appearing world. If this inside were to appear, we would all look alike.

There is, second, the equally impressive evidence for the existence of an innate impulse—no less compelling than the merely functional instinct of preservation—which Portmann calls "the urge to self-display" (*Selbstdarstellung*). This instinct is entirely gratuitous in terms of life-preservation; it far transcends what may be deemed necessary for sexual attraction. These findings suggest that the predominance of outside appearance implies, in addition to the sheer receptivity of our senses, a spontaneous activity: *whatever can see wants to be seen, whatever can hear calls out to be heard, whatever can touch presents itself to be touched.* It is indeed as though everything that is alive—in addition to the fact that its surface is made for appearance, fit to be seen and meant to appear to others—has an *urge to appear,* to fit itself into the world of appearances by displaying and showing, not its "inner self" but itself as an individual. (The word "self-display," like the German *Selbstdarstellung,* is equivocal: it can mean that I actively make my presence felt, seen, and heard, or that I display my *self,* something inside me that otherwise would not appear at all—that is, in Portmann's terminology, an "inauthentic" appearance. In the following we shall use the word in

the first meaning.) It is precisely this self-display, quite prominent already in the higher forms of animal life, that reaches its climax in the human species.

Portmann's morphological reversal of the usual priorities has far-reaching consequences, which he himself, however—perhaps for very good reasons—does not elaborate. They point to what he calls "the value of the surface," that is, to the fact that "the appearance shows a maximum power of expression compared with the internal, whose functions are of a more primitive order."[19] The use of the word "expression" shows clearly the terminological difficulties an elaboration of these consequences is bound to encounter. For an "expression" cannot but express something, and to the inevitable question, What does the expression express? (that is, press out), the answer will always be: something inside—an idea, a thought, an emotion. The expressiveness of an appearance, however, is of a different order; it "expresses" nothing but itself, that is, it exhibits or displays. It follows from Portmann's findings that our habitual standards of judgment, so firmly rooted in metaphysical assumptions and prejudices—according to which the essential lies beneath the surface, and the surface is "superficial" —are wrong, that our common conviction that what is inside ourselves, our "inner life," is more relevant to what we "are" than what appears on the outside is an illusion; but when it comes to correcting these fallacies, it turns out that our language, or at least our terminological discourse, fails us.

4 *Body and soul; soul and mind*

Besides, the difficulties are far from being merely terminological. They are intimately related to the problematic beliefs we hold with regard to our psychic life and the relationship of soul and body. To be sure, we are inclined to agree that no bodily inside ever appears authentically, of its own accord, but if we speak of an inner life that is expressed in outward appearance, we mean the life of the soul; the inside-outside relation,

true for our bodies, is not true for our souls, even though we speak of our psychic *life* and its location "inside" ourselves in metaphors obviously drawn from bodily data and experiences. The same use of metaphors, moreover, is characteristic of our conceptual language, designed to make manifest the life of the mind; the words we use in strictly philosophical discourse are also invariably derived from expressions originally related to the world as given to our five bodily senses, from whose experience they then, as Locke pointed out, are "transferred"—*metapherein*, carried over—"to more abstruse significations, and made to stand for ideas that come not under the cognizance of our senses." Only by means of such transference could men "conceive those operations they experimented in themselves, which made no outward sensible appearances."[20] Locke relies here on the old tacit assumption of an identity of soul and mind, both being opposed to the body by virtue of their invisibility.

Upon closer examination, however, it turns out that what is true for the mind, namely, that metaphorical language is the only way it has to make an "outward sensible appearance"—even silent, non-appearing activity already consists in speech, the soundless dialogue of me with myself—is not at all true for the life of the soul. Conceptual metaphorical speech is indeed adequate to the activity of thinking, the operations of our mind, but the life of our soul in its very intensity is much more adequately expressed in a glance, a sound, a gesture, than in speech. What becomes manifest when we speak about psychic experiences is never the experience itself but whatever we *think* about it when we reflect upon it. Unlike thoughts and ideas, feelings, passions, and emotions can no more become part and parcel of the world of appearances than can our inner organs. What appears in the outside world in addition to physical signs is only what we make of them through the operation of thought. Every *show* of anger, as distinct from the anger I feel, already contains a reflection on it, and it is this reflection that gives the emotion the highly individualized form which is meaningful for all surface phenomena. To show one's anger is one form of self-presentation: I decide what is fit for appearance. In other words, the emotions

I feel are no more *meant* to be shown in their unadulterated state than the inner organs by which we live. To be sure, I could never transform them into appearances if they did not prompt it and if I did not feel them as I do other sensations that make me aware of the life process within me. But the way they become manifest without the intervention of reflection and transference into speech—by glance, gesture, inarticulate sound—is no different from the way the higher animal species communicate very similar emotions to each other as well as to men.

Our mental activities, by contrast, are conceived in speech even before being communicated, but speech is meant to be heard and words are meant to be understood by others who also have the ability to speak, just as a creature endowed with the sense of vision is meant to see and to be seen. Thought without speech is inconceivable; "thought and speech anticipate one another. They continually take one another's place";[21] they actually take each other for granted. And although the power of speech can be physically located with greater assurance than many emotions—love or hatred, shame or envy—the locus is not an "organ" and lacks all the strictly functional properties that are so characteristic of the whole organic life process. It is true that all mental activities withdraw from the world of appearances, but this withdrawal is not toward an interior of either the self or the soul. Thought with its accompanying conceptual language, since it occurs in and is spoken by a being at home in a world of appearances, stands in need of metaphors in order to bridge the gap between a world given to sense experience and a realm where no such immediate apprehension of evidence can ever exist. But our soul-experiences are body-bound to such an extent that to speak of an "inner life" of the soul is as unmetaphorical as to speak of an inner sense thanks to which we have clear sensations of the functioning or non-functioning of our inner organs. It is obvious that a mindless creature cannot possess anything like an experience of personal identity; it is at the complete mercy of its inner life process, its moods and emotions, whose continual change is in no way different from the continual change of our bodily organs. Every emotion is

a somatic experience; my heart aches when I am grieved, gets warm with sympathy, opens itself up in rare moments when love or joy overwhelms me, and similar physical sensations take possession of me with anger, wrath, envy, and other affects. The language of the soul in its mere expressive stage, prior to its transformation and transfiguration through thought, is not metaphorical; it does not depart from the senses and uses no analogies when it talks in terms of physical sensations. Merleau-Ponty, to my knowledge the only philosopher who not only tried to give an account of the organic structure of human existence but also tried in all earnest to embark upon a "philosophy of the flesh," was still misled by the old identification of mind and soul when he defined "the mind as the *other side* of the body" since "there is a body of the mind, and a mind of the body and a chiasm between them."[22] Precisely the lack of such chiasmata or crossings over is the crux of mental phenomena, and Merleau-Ponty himself, in a different context, recognized the lack with great clarity. Thought, he writes, is " 'fundamental' because it is not borne by anything, but not fundamental as if with it one reached a foundation upon which one ought to base oneself and stay. As a matter of principle, fundamental thought is bottomless. It is, if you wish, an abyss."[23] But what is true of the mind is not true of the soul and vice versa. The soul, though perhaps much darker than the mind will ever manage to be, is not bottomless; it does indeed "overflow" into the body; it "encroaches upon it, is hidden in it—and at the same time needs it, terminates in it, is *anchored* in it."[24]

Such insights, incidentally, into the forever troublesome body-soul problem are very old. Aristotle's *De Anima* is full of tantalizing hints at psychic phenomena and their close interconnection with the body in contrast with the relation or, rather, non-relation between body and mind. Discussing these matters in a rather tentative and uncharacteristic way, Aristotle declares: ". . . there seems to be no case in which the soul can act or be acted upon without the body, e.g., anger, courage, appetite, and sensation generally. [To be active without involving the body] seems rather a property of the mind [*noein*]. But if the mind [*noein*] too proves to be some imagination

[*phantasia*] or impossible without imagination, it [*noein*] too could not be without the body."[25] And somewhat later, summing up: "Nothing is evident about the mind [*nous*] and the theoretical faculty, but it seems to be a different kind of soul, and only this kind can be separated [from the body], as what is eternal from what is perishable."[26] And in one of the biological treatises he suggests that the soul—its vegetative as well as its nutritive and sensitive part—"came into being in the embryo without existing previously outside it, but the *nous* entered the soul from outside, thus granting to man a kind of activity which had no connection with the activities of the body."[27] In other words, there are no sensations corresponding to mental activities; and the sensations of the psyche, of the soul, are actually feelings we sense with our bodily organs.

In addition to the urge toward self-display by which living things fit themselves into a world of appearances, men also *present* themselves in deed and word and thus indicate how they *wish* to appear, what in their opinion is fit to be seen and what is not. This element of deliberate choice in what to show and what to hide seems specifically human. *Up to a point* we can choose how to appear to others, and this appearance is by no means the outward manifestation of an inner disposition; if it were, we probably would all act and speak alike. Here, too, we owe to Aristotle the crucial distinctions. "What is spoken out," he says, "are symbols of affects in the soul, and what is written down are symbols of spoken words. As writing, so also is speech not the same for all. *That however of what these primarily are symbols, the affections* [*pathēmata*] *of the soul, are the same for all.*" These affections are "naturally" expressed by "inarticulate noises [which] also reveal something, for instance, those made by animals." Distinction and individuation occur through speech, the use of verbs and nouns, and these are not products or "symbols" of the soul but of the mind: "Nouns themselves and verbs resemble [*eoiken*] . . . thoughts [*noēmasin*]" (italics added).[28]

If the inner psychic ground of our individual appearance were not always the same, there could be no science of psychology which qua science relies on a psychic "inside we are

all alike,"[29] just as the science of physiology and medicine relies on the sameness of our inner organs. Psychology, depth psychology or psychoanalysis, discovers no more than the ever-changing moods, the ups and downs of our psychic life, and its results and discoveries are neither particularly appealing nor very meaningful in themselves. "Individual psychology," on the other hand, the prerogative of fiction, the novel and the drama, can never be a science; as a science it is a contradiction in terms. When modern science finally began to illuminate the Biblical "darkness of the human heart"—of which Augustine said: "*Latet cor bonum, latet cor malum, abyssus est in corde bono et in corde malo*" ("Hidden is the good heart, hidden is the evil heart, an abyss is in the good heart and in the evil heart")[30] —it turned out to be "a motley-colored and painful storehouse and treasure of evils," as Democritus already suspected.[31] Or to put it in a somewhat more positive way: "*Das Gefühl ist herrlich, wenn es im Grunde bleibt; nicht aber wenn es an den Tag tritt, sich zum Wesen machen und herrschen will*" ("The emotions are glorious when they stay in the depths, but not when they come forth into the day and wish to become of the essence and to rule").[32]

The monotonous sameness and pervasive ugliness so highly characteristic of the findings of modern psychology, and contrasting so obviously with the enormous variety and richness of overt human conduct, witness to the radical difference between the inside and outside of the human body. The passions and emotions of our soul are not only body-bound, they seem to have the same life-sustaining and preserving functions as our inner organs, with which they also share the fact that only disorder or abnormality can individualize them. Without the sexual urge, arising out of our reproductive organs, love would not be possible; but while the urge is always the same, how great is the variety in the actual appearances of love! To be sure, one may understand love as the sublimation of sex if only one keeps in mind that there would be nothing that we understand as sex without it, and that without some intervention of the mind, that is, without a deliberate choice between what pleases and what displeases, not even the selection of a sexual partner would be possible. Similarly fear is an emotion

indispensable for survival; it indicates danger, and without that warning sense no living thing could last long. The courageous man is not one whose soul lacks this emotion or who can overcome it once and for all, but one who has decided that fear is not what he wants to show. Courage can then become second nature or a habit but not in the sense that fearlessness replaces fear, as though it, too, could become an emotion. Such choices are determined by various factors; many of them are predetermined by the culture into which we are born—they are made because we wish to please others. But there are also choices not inspired by our environment; we may make them because we wish to please ourselves or because we wish to set an example, that is, to persuade others to be pleased with what pleases us. Whatever the motives may be, success and failure in the enterprise of self-presentation depend on the consistency and duration of the image thereby presented to the world.

Since appearances always present themselves in the guise of seeming, pretense and willful deception on the part of the performer, error and illusion on the part of the spectator are, inevitably, among the inherent potentialities. Self-presentation is distinguished from self-display by the active and conscious choice of the image shown; self-display has no choice but to show whatever properties a living being possesses. Self-presentation would not be possible without a degree of self-awareness—a capability inherent in the reflexive character of mental activities and clearly transcending mere consciousness, which we probably share with the higher animals. Only self-presentation is open to hypocrisy and pretense, properly speaking, and the only way to tell pretense and make-believe from reality and truth is the former's failure to endure and remain consistent. It has been said that hypocrisy is the compliment vice pays to virtue, but this is not quite true. All virtue begins with a compliment paid to it, by which I express my being pleased with it. The compliment implies a promise to the world, to those to whom I appear, to act in accordance with my pleasure, and it is the breaking of the implied promise that characterizes the hypocrite. In other words, the hypocrite is not a villain who is pleased with vice and hides his pleasure

from his surroundings. The test applying to the hypocrite is indeed the old Socratic "*Be* as you wish to appear," which means appear *always* as you wish to appear to others even if it happens that you are alone and appear to no one but yourself. When I make such a decision, I am not merely reacting to whatever qualities may be given me; I am making an act of deliberate choice among the various potentialities of conduct with which the world has presented me. Out of such acts arises finally what we call character or personality, the conglomeration of a number of identifiable qualities gathered together into a comprehensible and reliably identifiable whole, and imprinted, as it were, on an unchangeable substratum of gifts and defects peculiar to our soul and body structure. Because of the undeniable relevance of these self-chosen properties to our appearance and role in the world, modern philosophy, starting with Hegel, has succumbed to the strange illusion that man, in distinction from other things, has created himself. Obviously, self-presentation and the sheer thereness of existence are not the same.

5 *Appearance and semblance*

Since choice as the decisive factor in self-presentation has to do with appearances, and since appearance has the double function of concealing some interior and revealing some "surface"—for instance of concealing fear and revealing courage, that is, hiding the fear by showing courage—there is always the possibility that what appears may by disappearing turn out finally to be a mere *semblance*. Because of the gap between inside and outside, between the ground of appearance and appearance—or to put it differently, no matter how different and individualized we appear and how deliberately we have chosen this individuality—it always remains true that "inside we are all alike," unchangeable except at the cost of the very functioning of our inner psychic and bodily organs or, conversely, of an intervention undertaken to remove some dys-

function. Hence, there is always an element of semblance in all appearance: the ground itself does not appear. From this it does not follow that all appearances are mere semblances. Semblances are possible only in the midst of appearances; they presuppose appearance as error presupposes truth. Error is the price we pay for truth, and semblance is the price we pay for the wonders of appearance. Error and semblance are closely connected phenomena; they correspond with each other.

Semblance is inherent in a world ruled by the twofold law of appearing to a plurality of sensitive creatures each equipped with the faculties of perception. Nothing that appears manifests itself to a single viewer capable of perceiving it under all its inherent aspects. The world appears in the mode of it-seems-to-me, depending on particular perspectives determined by location in the world as well as by particular organs of perception. This mode not only produces error, which I can correct by changing my location, drawing closer to what appears, or by improving my organs of perception with the help of tools and implements, or by using my imagination to take other perspectives into account; it also gives birth to true semblances, that is, to deceptive appearance, which I cannot correct like an error since they are caused by my permanent location on the earth and remain bound up with my own existence as one of the earth's appearances. "Semblance" (*dokos*, from *dokei moi*), said Xenophanes, "is wrought over all things," so that "there is no man, nor will there ever be one who knows clearly about the gods and about everything I speak of; for even if someone should chance to say what appears in its total reality, he himself would not know it."[33]

Following Portmann's distinction between authentic and inauthentic appearances, one would like to speak of authentic and inauthentic semblances: the latter, mirages like some Fata Morgana, will dissolve of their own accord or can be dispelled upon closer inspection; the former, on the contrary, like the movement of the sun, its rise in the morning and setting in the evening, will not yield to any amount of scientific information, because that is the way the *appearance* of sun and earth inevitably *seems* to an earth-bound creature that cannot change its abode. Here we are dealing with those "nat-

ural and unavoidable illusions" of our sense apparatus to which Kant referred in his introduction to the transcendental dialectic of reason. The illusion in transcendent judgment he called "natural and unavoidable," because it was "inseparable from human reason, and . . . even after its deceptiveness has been exposed, will not cease to play tricks with reason and continually entrap it into momentary aberrations ever and again calling for correction."[34]

That natural and inevitable semblances are inherent in a world of appearances from which we can never escape is perhaps the strongest, certainly the most plausible, argument against the simple-minded positivism that believes it has found a firm ground of certainty if it only excludes all mental phenomena from consideration and holds fast to observable facts, the everyday reality given to our senses. All living creatures, capable both of receiving appearance through sense organs and displaying themselves as appearances, are subject to authentic illusions, which are by no means the same for each species but connected with the form and mode of their specific life process. Animals are also able to produce semblances—quite a number of them can even counterfeit a physical appearance—and men and animals both possess an innate ability to manipulate appearance for the sake of deception. To uncover the "true" identity of an animal behind its adaptive temporary color is not unlike the unmasking of the hypocrite. But what then appears under a deceptive surface is not an inside self, an authentic appearance, changeless and reliable in its thereness. The uncovering destroys a deception; it does not discover anything authentically appearing. An "inside self," if it exists at all, never appears to either the inner or the outward sense, since none of the inner data possess stable, relatively permanent features which, being recognizable and identifiable, characterize individual appearance. "No fixed and abiding self can present itself in this flux of inner appearances," as Kant observed repeatedly.[35] Actually it is misleading to speak even of inner "appearances"; all we know are inner sensations whose relentless succession prevents any of them from assuming a lasting, identifiable shape. ("For where, when, and how has there ever been a vision of the inside? . . . The 'psychism' is

opaque to itself."[36]) Emotions and "inner sensations" are "unworldly" in that they lack the chief worldly property of "standing still and remaining" at least long enough to be clearly perceived—and not merely sensed—to be intuited, identified, and acknowledged; again according to Kant, "time, the only form of inner intuition, has nothing permanent."[37] In other words, when Kant speaks of time as the "form of inner intuition," he speaks, though without being aware of it, metaphorically, and he draws his metaphor from our spatial experiences, which have to do with outside appearances. It is precisely the absence of form and hence of any possibility of intuition that characterizes our experience of inner sensations. In inner experience, the only thing to hold onto, to distinguish something at least resembling reality from the incessantly passing moods of our psyche, is persistent repetition. In extreme cases repetition can become so persistent that it results in the unbroken permanence of one mood, one sensation; but this invariably indicates a grave disorder of the psyche, the euphoria of the maniac or the depression of the melancholic.

6 *The thinking ego and the self: Kant*

In the work of no other philosopher has the concept of appearance, and hence of semblance (of *Erscheinung* and *Schein*), played so decisive and central a role as in Kant. His notion of a "thing in itself," something which *is* but does not appear although it causes appearances, can be, and has been, explained on the grounds of the theological tradition: God is "something"; He is "not nothing." God can be thought, but only as that which does not appear, is not given to our experience, hence is "in itself," and, as He does not appear, He is not *for us*. This interpretation has its difficulties. For Kant, God is an "Idea of reason" and as such *for us:* to think God and speculate about a hereafter is, according to Kant, inherent in human thought insofar as reason, man's speculative capacity, necessarily transcends the cognitive faculties of his intellect:

only what appears and, in the mode of it-seems-to-me, is given to experience can be known; but thoughts also "are," and certain thought-things, which Kant calls "ideas," though never given to experience and therefore unknowable, such as God, freedom, and immortality, are *for us* in the emphatic sense that reason cannot help thinking them and that they are of the greatest interest to men and the life of the mind. It may therefore be advisable to examine to what extent the notion of a non-appearing "thing in itself" is given in the very understanding of the world as a world of appearances, regardless of the needs and assumptions of a thinking being and of the life of the mind.

There is first the everyday fact—rather than Kant's conclusion mentioned above (page 24)—that every living thing because it appears possesses a "ground which is not appearance" but which can be forced to the light of day and then becomes what Portmann called an "inauthentic appearance." To be sure, in Kant's understanding, things that do not appear of their own accord but whose existence can be demonstrated—inner organs, roots of trees and plants, and the like—are also appearances. Still, his conclusion that appearances "must themselves have grounds which are not appearances" and therefore must "rest upon a transcendent object[38] which determines them as mere representations,"[39] that is, upon something which in principle is of an altogether different ontological order, seems clearly drawn in analogy to phenomena of this world, which contains both authentic and inauthentic appearances, and in which the inauthentic appearances, insofar as they contain the very apparatus of the life process, seem to *cause* the authentic ones. The theological bias (in Kant's case the need to make the arguments favor the existence of an intelligible world) enters here in the word "*mere* representations"—as though he had forgotten his own central thesis: "We assert that the conditions of the *possibility of experience* in general are likewise conditions of the *possibility of the objects of experience*, and that for this reason they have objective validity in a synthetic *a priori* judgment."[40] The plausibility of Kant's argument, that what causes something to appear must be of a different order from the appearance itself, rests on our ex-

perience with these life phenomena, but the hierarchical order between the "transcendent object" (the thing in itself) and "mere representations" does not, and it is this order of priorities that Portmann's thesis reverses. Kant was carried away by his great desire to shore up each and every argument which, without being able to arrive at a definite proof, may at least make it overwhelmingly plausible that "there *undoubtedly* is something distinct from the world which contains the ground of the order of the world,"[41] and therefore is itself of a higher order. If we trust only our experiences with appearing and non-appearing things and start speculating on the same lines, we can just as well, actually with much stronger plausibility, conclude that there may indeed exist a fundamental ground behind an appearing world, but that this ground's chief and even sole significance lies in its effects, that is, in what it causes to appear, rather than in its sheer creativity. If the divine is what causes appearances and does not appear itself, then man's inner organs could turn out to be his true divinities.

In other words, the common philosophical understanding of Being as the ground of Appearance is true to the phenomenon of Life, but the same cannot be said of the evaluation of Being *versus* Appearance which is at the bottom of all two-world theories. That traditional hierarchy arises not from our ordinary experiences with the world of appearances, but, rather, from the not-at-all ordinary experience of the thinking ego. As we shall see later, the experience transcends not only Appearance but Being as well. Kant himself explicitly identifies the phenomenon that gave him the actual basis for his belief in a "thing in itself" behind "mere" appearances. It was the fact that "in the consciousness of myself in the sheer thinking activity [*beim blossen Denken*], I am the thing itself [*das Wesen selbst*, i.e. *das Ding an sich*] although nothing of myself is thereby given for thought."[42] If I reflect on the relation of me to myself obtaining in the thinking activity, it may well seem as though my thoughts were "mere representations" or manifestations of an ego that itself remains forever concealed, for thoughts of course are never anything like properties that can be predicated of a self or a person. The thinking ego is indeed Kant's "thing in itself": it does not appear to others

and, unlike the self of self-awareness, it does not appear to itself, and yet it is "not nothing."

The thinking ego is sheer activity and therefore ageless, sexless, without qualities, and without a life story. Etienne Gilson, asked to write his autobiography, responded: "A man of seventy-five should have many things to say about his past, but . . . if he has lived only as a philosopher, he immediately realizes that he has no past."[43] For the thinking ego is not the self. There is an incidental remark—one of those on which we are so dependent in our inquiry—in Thomas Aquinas that sounds rather mysterious unless we are aware of this distinction between the thinking ego and the self: "My soul [in Thomas the organ for thought] is not I; and if only souls are saved, I am not saved, nor is any man."[44]

The inner sense that might let us get hold of the thinking activity in some sort of inner intuition has nothing to hold on to, according to Kant, because its manifestations are utterly unlike "the appearance confronting external sense [which finds] something still and remaining . . . while time, the only form of inner intuition, has nothing permanent."[45] Hence, "I am conscious of myself, not as I appear to myself, nor as I am in myself, but only that I am. This *representation* is a *thought,* not an *intuition.*" And he adds in a footnote: "The 'I think' expresses the act of determining my existence. Existence is already given thereby, but the mode in which I am . . . is not thereby given."[46] Kant stresses the point repeatedly in the *Critique of Pure Reason*—nothing permanent "is given in inner intuition insofar as I think myself"[47]—but we will do better to turn to his pre-critical writings to find an actual description of the sheer experiences of the thinking ego.

In the *Träume eines Geistersehers, erläutert durch Träume der Metaphysik* (1766), Kant stresses the "immateriality" of the *mundus intelligibilis,* the world in which the thinking ego moves, in contrast to the "inertia and constancy" of dead matter that surrounds living beings in the world of appearances. In this context, he distinguishes between the "notion the soul of man has of itself as mind [*Geist*] through an immaterial intuition, and the consciousness through which it presents itself as a man by means of an image having its source in the

sensation of physical organs and conceived in relation to material things. It is, therefore, indeed always the same subject that is both a member of the visible and the invisible world, but not the same person, since . . . what I as mind think is not remembered by me as man, and, conversely, my actual state as man does not enter my notion of myself as mind." And he speaks in a strange footnote of a "certain double personality which belongs to the soul even in this life"; he compares the state of the thinking ego to the state of sound sleep "when the external senses are completely at rest." The ideas in sleep, he suspects, "may be clearer and broader than the very clearest in the waking state," precisely because "man, at such times, is not sensible of his body." And of these ideas, on waking up, we remember nothing. Dreams are something still different; they "do not belong here. For then man does not wholly sleep . . . and weaves the actions of his mind into the impressions of the external senses."[48]

These notions of Kant's, if understood as constituting a dream theory, are patently absurd. But they are interesting as a rather awkward attempt to account for the mind's experiences of withdrawal from the real world. Because an account does have to be given of an activity that, unlike any other activity or action, never meets the resistance of matter. It is not even hindered or slowed down by sounding out in words, which are formed by sense organs. The experience of the activity of thought is probably the aboriginal source of our notion of spirituality in itself, regardless of the forms it has assumed. Psychologically speaking, one of the outstanding characteristics of thought is its incomparable *swiftness*—"swift as a thought," said Homer, and Kant in his early writings speaks repeatedly of the *Hurtigkeit des Gedankens*.[49] Thought is swift, clearly, because it is immaterial, and this in turn goes a long way toward explaining the hostility of so many of the great metaphysicians to their own bodies. From the viewpoint of the thinking ego, the body is nothing but an obstacle.

To conclude from this experience that there exist "things in themselves" which, in their own intelligible sphere, *are* as we "are" in a world of appearances belongs among the metaphysical fallacies, or, rather, semblances of reason, whose very exis-

tence Kant was the first to discover, to clarify, and dispel. It seems only proper that this fallacy, like most of the others that have afflicted the tradition of philosophy, should have its source in the experiences of the thinking ego. This one, at any rate, bears an obvious resemblance to a simpler and more common one, mentioned by P. F. Strawson in an essay on Kant: "It is, indeed, an old belief that reason is something essentially out of time and yet in us. Doubtless it has its ground in the fact that . . . we grasp [mathematical and logical] truths. But . . . [one] who grasps timeless truths [need not] himself be timeless."[50] It is characteristic of the Oxford school of criticism to understand these fallacies as logical non sequiturs—as though philosophers throughout the centuries had been, for reasons unknown, just a bit too stupid to discover the elementary flaws in their arguments. The truth of the matter is that elementary logical mistakes are quite rare in the history of philosophy; what appear to be errors in logic to minds disencumbered of questions that have been uncritically dismissed as "meaningless" are usually caused by semblances, unavoidable for beings whose whole existence is determined by appearance. Hence, in our context the only relevant question is whether the semblances are inauthentic or authentic ones, whether they are caused by dogmatic beliefs and arbitrary assumptions, mere mirages that disappear upon closer inspection, or whether they are inherent in the paradoxical condition of a living being that, though itself part of the world of appearances, is in possession of a faculty, the ability to think, that permits the mind to withdraw from the world without ever being able to leave it or transcend it.

7 *Reality and the thinking ego: the Cartesian doubt and the* sensus communis

Reality in a world of appearances is first of all characterized by "standing still and remaining" the same long enough to become an *object* for acknowledgment and recognition by a

subject. Husserl's basic and greatest discovery takes up in exhaustive detail the intentionality of all acts of consciousness, that is, the fact that no subjective act is ever without an object: though the seen tree may be an illusion, for the act of seeing it is an object nevertheless; though the dreamt-of landscape is visible only to the dreamer, it is the object of his dream. Objectivity is built into the very subjectivity of consciousness by virtue of intentionality. Conversely and with the same justness, one may speak of the intentionality of appearances and their built-in subjectivity. All objects because they appear indicate a subject, and, just as every subjective act has its intentional object, so every appearing object has its intentional subject. In Portmann's words, every appearance is a "conveyance for receivers" (a *Sendung für Empfangsapparate*). Whatever appears is meant for a perceiver, a potential subject no less inherent in all objectivity than a potential object is inherent in the subjectivity of every intentional act.

That appearance always demands spectators and thus implies an at least potential recognition and acknowledgment has far-reaching consequences for what we, appearing beings in a world of appearances, understand by reality, our own as well as that of the world. In both cases, our "perceptual faith,"[51] as Merleau-Ponty has called it, our certainty that what we perceive has an existence independent of the act of perceiving, depends entirely on the object's also appearing as such to others and being acknowledged by them. Without this tacit acknowledgment by others we would not even be able to put faith in the way we appear to ourselves.

This is why all solipsistic theories—whether they radically claim that nothing but the self "exists" or, more moderately, hold that the self and its consciousness of itself are the primary objects of verifiable knowledge—are out of tune with the most elementary data of our existence and experience. Solipsism, open or veiled, with or without qualifications, has been the most persistent and, perhaps, the most pernicious fallacy of philosophy even before it attained in Descartes the high rank of theoretical and existential consistency. When the philosopher speaks of "man," he has in mind neither the species-being (the *Gattungswesen*, like horse or lion, which, according to

Marx, constitutes man's fundamental existence) nor a mere paradigm of what, in the philosopher's view, all men should strive to emulate. To the philosopher, speaking out of the experience of the thinking ego, man is quite naturally not just word but *thought made flesh*, the always mysterious, never fully elucidated incarnation of the thinking capability. And the trouble with this fictitious being is that it is neither the product of a diseased brain nor one of the easily dispelled "errors of the past," but the entirely authentic semblance of the thinking activity itself. For while, for whatever reason, a man indulges in sheer thinking, and no matter on what subject, he lives completely in the singular, that is, in complete solitude, as though not men but Man inhabited the earth. Descartes himself explained and justified his radical subjectivism by the decisive loss of certainties entailed by the great scientific discoveries of the modern age, and I have, in a different context, followed up Descartes' reasoning.[52] However, when—beset by the doubts inspired by the beginnings of modern science—he decided *"à rejeter la terre mouvante et le sable pour trouver le roc ou l'argile"* ("to reject the quicksand and mud in order to find the rock or clay"), he certainly rediscovered rather familiar territory in withdrawing to a place where he could live *"aussi solitaire et retiré que dans les déserts les plus écartés"* ("as solitary and retired as in the most remote deserts").[53] Withdrawal from the "beastliness of the multitude" into the company of the "very few"[54] but also into the absolute solitude of the One has been the most outstanding feature of the philosopher's life ever since Parmenides and Plato discovered that for those "very few," the *sophoi*, the "life of thinking" that knows neither joy nor grief is the most divine of all, and *nous*, thought itself, is "the king of heaven and earth."[55]

Descartes, true to the radical subjectivism that was the philosophers' first reaction to the new glories of science, no longer ascribed the gratifications of this way of life to the objects of thinking—the everlastingness of the *kosmos* that neither comes into being nor ever vanishes from it and thus gives those few who have decided to spend their lives as its spectators their share of immortality. His very modern suspicion of man's cognitive and sensory apparatus made him define with greater

clarity than anyone before him as properties of the *res cogitans* certain characteristics that were by no means unknown to the ancients but that now, perhaps for the first time, assumed a paramount importance. Outstanding among these was self-sufficiency, namely, that this ego has "no need of any place, nor does it depend on any material thing," and, next, worldlessness, namely, that in self-inspection, "*examinant avec attention ce que j'étais,*" he could easily "*feindre que je n'avais aucun corps et qu'il n'y avait aucun monde ni aucun lieu où je fusse*" ("feign that I had no body, and that there was no world nor place where I would be").[56]

To be sure, none of these discoveries, or, rather, re-discoveries, was of great importance in itself to Descartes. His main concern was to find something—the thinking ego or, in his words, "*la chose pensante,*" which he equated with the soul —whose reality was beyond suspicion, beyond the illusions of sense perception: even the power of an all-powerful *Dieu trompeur* would not be able to shatter the certainty of a consciousness that had withdrawn from all sense experience. Although everything given may be illusion and dream, the dreamer, if he will only consent not to demand reality of the dream, must be real. Hence, "*Je pense, donc je suis,*" "I think, therefore I am." So strong was the experience of the thinking activity itself, on the one hand, so passionate on the other the desire to find certainty and some sort of abiding permanence after the new science had discovered "*la terre mouvante*" (the shifting quicksand of the very ground on which we stand), that it never occurred to him that no *cogitatio* and no *cogito me cogitare,* no consciousness of an acting self that had suspended all faith in the reality of its intentional objects, would ever have been able to convince him of his own reality had he actually been born in a desert, without a body and its senses to perceive "material" things and without fellow-creatures to assure him that what he perceived was perceived by them too. The Cartesian *res cogitans,* this fictitious creature, bodiless, senseless, and forsaken, would not even know that there is such a thing as reality and a possible distinction between the real and the unreal, between the common world of waking life and the private non-world of our dreams. What Merleau-Ponty had to say against

Descartes is brilliantly right: "To reduce perception to the thought of perceiving . . . is to take out an insurance against doubt whose premiums are more onerous than the loss for which it is to indemnify us: for it is to . . . move to a type of certitude that will never restore to us the 'there is' of the world."[57]

Moreover, it is precisely the thinking activity—the experiences of the thinking ego—that gives rise to doubt of the world's reality and of my own. Thinking can seize upon and get hold of everything real—event, object, its own thoughts; their realness is the only property that remains stubbornly beyond its reach. The *cogito ergo sum* is a fallacy not only in the sense that, as Nietzsche remarked, from the *cogito* only the existence of *cogitationes* could be inferred; the *cogito* is subject to the same doubt as the *sum*. The I-am is presupposed in the I-think; thought can seize on this presupposition but it can neither prove nor disprove it. (Kant's argument against Descartes was entirely right, too: The thought "*I am not* . . . cannot exist; for if I am not, it follows that I cannot become aware that I am not."[58]) Reality cannot be derived; thought or reflection can accept or reject it, and the Cartesian doubt, starting from the notion of a *Dieu trompeur*, is but a sophisticated and veiled form of rejection.[59] It remained for Wittgenstein, who had set out to investigate "how much truth there is in solipsism" and thus became its most relevant contemporary representative, to formulate the existential delusion underlying all its theories: "At death the world does not alter, but comes to an end." "Death is not an event in life; we do not live our death."[60] This is the basic premise of all solipsistic thinking.

Although everything that appears is perceived in the mode of it-seems-to-me, hence open to error and illusion, appearance as such carries with it a prior indication of *realness*. All sense experiences are normally accompanied by the additional, if usually mute, sensation of reality, and this despite the fact that none of our senses, taken in isolation, and no sense-object, taken out of context, can produce it. (Art therefore, which transforms sense-objects into thought-things, tears them first of all out of their context in order to de-realize and thus prepare them for their new and different function.)

The reality of what I perceive is guaranteed by its worldly context, which includes others who perceive as I do, on the one hand, and by the working together of my five senses on the other. What since Thomas Aquinas we call common sense, the *sensus communis*, is a kind of sixth sense needed to keep my five senses together and guarantee that it is the same object that I see, touch, taste, smell, and hear; it is the "one faculty [that] extends to all objects of the five senses."[61] This same sense, a mysterious "sixth sense"[62] because it cannot be localized as a bodily organ, fits the sensations of my strictly private five senses—so private that sensations in their mere sensational quality and intensity are incommunicable—into a common world shared by others. The subjectivity of the it-seems-to-me is remedied by the fact that the same object also appears to others though its mode of appearance may be different. (It is the inter-subjectivity of the world, rather than similarity of physical appearance, that convinces men that they belong to the same species. Though each single object appears in a different perspective to each individual, the context in which it appears is the same for the whole species. In this sense, every animal species lives in a world of its own, and the individual animal does not need to compare its own physical characteristics with those of its fellow-members in order to recognize them as such.) In a world of appearances, filled with error and semblance, reality is guaranteed by this three-fold commonness: the five senses, utterly different from each other, have the same object in common; members of the same species have the context in common that endows every single object with its particular meaning; and all other sense-endowed beings, though perceiving this object from utterly different perspectives, agree on its identity. Out of this threefold commonness arises the *sensation* of reality.

To each of our five senses corresponds a specific, sensorily perceptible property of the world. Our world is visible because we have vision, audible because we have hearing, touchable and full of odors and tastes because we have touch, smell, and taste. The sixth sense's corresponding worldly property is *realness*, and the difficulty with this property is that it cannot be perceived like other sensory properties. The sense of real-

ness is not a sensation strictly speaking; reality "is *there* even if we can never be certain that we know it" (Peirce),[63] for the "sensation" of reality, of sheer thereness, relates to the *context* in which single objects appear as well as to the context in which we ourselves as appearances exist among other appearing creatures. The context qua context never appears entirely; it is elusive, almost like Being, which qua Being never appears in a world filled with beings, with single entities. But Being, since Parmenides the highest concept of Western philosophy, is a thought-thing that we do not expect to be perceived by the senses or to cause a sensation, whereas realness is akin to sensation; a feeling of realness (or irreality) actually accompanies all the sensations of my senses, which without it would not make "sense." This is why Thomas Aquinas defined common sense, his "*sensus communis*," as an "inner sense"—*sensus interior*—that functioned as "the common root and principle of the exterior senses" ("*Sensus interior non dicitur communis . . . sicut genus; sed sicut communis radix et principium exteriorum sensuum*").[64]

To equate this "inner sense," which cannot be physically localized, with the faculty of thought is tempting indeed, because among the chief characteristics of thinking, occurring in a world of appearances and performed by an appearing being, is that it is itself invisible. From this property of invisibility, shared by common sense with the faculty of thought, Peirce concludes that "reality has a relationship to human thought," ignoring the fact that thinking is not only itself invisible but also deals with invisibles, with things not *present* to the senses though they may be, and mostly are, also sense-objects, remembered and collected in the storehouse of memory and thus prepared for later reflection. Thomas Landon Thorson elaborates Peirce's suggestion and comes to the conclusion that "reality bears a relationship to the thought process like the environment does to biological evolution."[65]

These remarks and suggestions are based on the tacit assumption that thought processes are in no way different from common-sense reasoning; the result is the old Cartesian illusion in modern disguise. Whatever thinking can reach and whatever it may achieve, it is precisely reality as given to com-

mon sense, in its sheer thereness, that remains forever beyond its grasp, indissoluble into thought-trains—the stumbling block that alerts them and on which they founder in affirmation or negation. Thought processes, unlike common sense, can be physically located in the brain, but nevertheless transcend all biological data, be they functional or morphological in Portmann's sense. Common sense, on the contrary, and the feeling of realness belong to our biological apparatus, and common-sense reasoning (which the Oxford school of philosophy mistakes for thinking) could certainly bear the same relation to reality that biological evolution does to environment. With respect to common-sense reasoning, Thorson is right: "We may indeed be talking about more than an analogy; we may be describing two aspects of the same process."[66] And if language, in addition to its treasure of words for things given to the senses, did not offer us such thought-words, technically called "concepts," as justice, truth, courage, divinity, and so on, which are indispensable even in ordinary speech, we would certainly lack all tangible evidence for the thinking activity and hence might be justified in concluding with the early Wittgenstein: *"Die Sprache ist ein Teil unseres Organismus"* ("language is a part of our organism").[67]

Thinking, however, which subjects everything it gets hold of to doubt, has no such natural, matter-of-fact relation to reality. It was thought—Descartes' reflection on the *meaning* of certain scientific discoveries—that destroyed his common-sense trust in reality, and his error was to hope he could overcome his doubt by insisting on withdrawing from the world altogether, eliminating every worldly reality from his thoughts and concentrating only on the thinking activity itself. (*Cogito cogitationes,* or *cogito me cogitare, ergo sum,* is the correct form of the famous formula.) But thinking can neither prove nor destroy the *feeling* of realness arising out of the sixth sense, which the French, perhaps for this reason, also call *le bon sens,* the good sense; when thinking withdraws from the world of appearances, it withdraws from the sensorily given and hence also from the feeling of realness, given by common sense. Husserl claimed that the *suspension* [*epochē*] of this feeling was the methodological foundation of his phenomenological

science. For the thinking ego, this suspension is a matter of course and by no means a special method to be taught and learned; we know it as the quite ordinary phenomenon of absent-mindedness, to be observed in anyone who happens to be absorbed in no matter what sort of thought. In other words, the loss of common sense is neither the vice nor the virtue of Kant's "professional thinkers"; it happens to everybody who ever reflects on something; it only happens more often to professional thinkers. These we call philosophers, and their way of life will always be "the life of a stranger" (*bios xenikos*), as Aristotle called it in his *Politics*.[68] And the reason that strangeness and absent-mindedness are not more dangerous, that all "thinkers," professionals and laymen alike, survive so easily the loss of the feeling of realness, is just that the thinking ego asserts itself only temporarily: every thinker no matter how eminent remains "a man like you and me" (Plato), an appearance among appearances equipped with common sense and knowing enough common-sense reasoning to survive.

8 *Science and common sense; Kant's distinction between intellect and reason; truth and meaning*

Something very similar seems, at first glance, to be true of the modern scientist who constantly destroys authentic semblances without, however, destroying his own sensation of reality, telling him, as it tells us, that the sun rises in the morning and sets in the evening. It was thinking that enabled men to penetrate the appearances and unmask them as semblances, albeit authentic ones; common-sense reasoning would never have dared to upset so radically all the plausibilities of our sensory apparatus. The famous "quarrel between the ancients and the moderns" actually turns on the question of what the aim of knowledge is; is it "to save the phenomena," as the ancients believed, or to discover the hidden functional apparatus which makes them appear? Thought's doubt of the reliability of sense experience, its suspicion that things might

be quite different from the way they appear to human senses, was by no means uncommon in antiquity. Democritus' atoms were not only indivisible but invisible, moving in a void, infinite in number, and, through various configurations and combinations, producing impressions on our senses; Aristarchus in the third century B.C. first proposed the heliocentric hypothesis. It is interesting that the consequences of such daring were rather unpleasant: Democritus was suspected of being insane, and Aristarchus was threatened with an indictment for impiety. But the relevant point is of course that no attempt was made to prove these hypotheses and no science came out of it.

Thinking, no doubt, plays an enormous role in every scientific enterprise, but it is the role of a means to an end; the end is determined by a decision about what is worthwhile knowing, and this decision cannot be scientific. Moreover, the end is cognition or knowledge, which, having been obtained, clearly belongs to the world of appearances; once established as truth, it becomes part and parcel of the world. Cognition and the thirst for knowledge never leave the world of appearances altogether; if the scientists withdraw from it in order to "think," it is only in order to find better, more promising approaches, called methods, toward it. Science in this respect is but an enormously refined prolongation of common-sense reasoning in which sense illusions are constantly dissipated just as errors in science are corrected. The criterion in both cases is evidence, which as such is inherent in a world of appearances. And since it is in the very nature of appearances to reveal *and to conceal,* every correction and every *dis*-illusion "is the loss of one evidence only because it is the acquisition of *another evidence,*" in the words of Merleau-Ponty.[69] Nothing, even in science's own understanding of the scientific enterprise, guarantees that the new evidence will prove to be more reliable than the discarded evidence.

The very concept of an *unlimited progress,* which accompanied the rise of modern science, and has remained its dominant inspiring principle, is the best documentation of the fact that all science still moves within the realm of common sense experience, subject to corrigible error and deception. When the experience of constant correction in scientific research is gen-

eralized, it leads into the curious "better and better," "truer and truer," that is, into the boundlessness of progress with its inherent admission that *the* good and *the* true are unattainable. If they were ever attained, the thirst for knowledge would be quenched and the search for cognition would come to an end. This, of course, is unlikely to happen, in view of the enormous amount of the unknown, but it is quite likely that particular sciences may reach definite limits of what is knowable to man. Yet the point is that the modern idea of progress implicitly denies such limitations. Unquestionably the notion of progress was born as the result of the tremendous advances of scientific knowledge, a veritable avalanche of discoveries, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and I think it quite possible that it was the relentlessness inherent in sheer thinking, whose need can never be assuaged, that, once it had invaded the sciences, drove the scientists to ever-new discoveries, each one giving rise to a new theory, so that those caught in the movement were subject to the illusion of a never-ending process—the *process* of progress. Here we should not forget that the later notion of an unending perfectibility of the human species, so prominent in the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, was absent from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries' rather pessimistic evaluation of human nature.

One consequence, however, of this development seems to me obvious and of considerable importance. The very notion of *truth,* which somehow had survived so many turning-points of our intellectual history, underwent a decisive change: it was transformed or, rather, broken down into a string of verities, each one in its time claiming general validity even though the very continuity of the research implied something merely provisional. This is a strange state of affairs. It may even suggest that if a given science accidentally reached its goal, this would by no means stop the workers in that field, who would be driven past their goal by the sheer momentum of the illusion of unlimited progress, a kind of semblance rising out of their activity.

The transformation of truth into mere verity results primarily from the fact that the scientist remains bound to the common sense by which we find our bearings in a world of

appearances. Thinking withdraws radically and for its own sake from this world and its evidential nature, whereas science profits from a possible withdrawal for the sake of specific results. In other words, it is common-sense reasoning ultimately that ventures out into the realm of sheer speculation in the theories of the scientists, and the chief weakness of common sense in this sphere has always been that it lacks the safeguards inherent in sheer thinking, namely, thinking's critical capacity, which, as we shall see, harbors within itself a highly self-destructive tendency. But to go back to the assumption of unlimited progress, the basic fallacy was early discovered. It is well known that not progress per se, but the notion of its limitlessness would have made modern science unacceptable to the ancients. It is less well known that the Greeks had some reason for their "prejudice" against the infinite. (Plato discovered that everything permitting of a comparative is by nature unlimited, and limitlessness was to him as to all Greeks the cause of all evils.[70] Hence, his great confidence in number and measurement: it sets limits on what of itself [pleasure, for instance] "does not and never will contain and derive from itself either beginning [*archē*] or middle or end [*telos*]."[71])

That modern science, always hunting for manifestations of the invisible—atoms, molecules, particles, cells, genes—should have added to the world a spectacular, unprecedented quantity of new perceptible things is only seemingly paradoxical. In order to prove or disprove its hypotheses, its "paradigms" (Thomas Kuhn), and to discover what makes things work, it began to imitate the working processes of nature. For that purpose it produced the countless and enormously complex implements with which to *force* the non-appearing to appear (if only as an instrument-reading in the laboratory), as that was the sole means the scientist had to persuade himself of its reality. Modern technology was born in the laboratory, but this was not because scientists wanted to produce appliances or change the world. No matter how far their theories leave common-sense experience and common-sense reasoning behind, they must finally come back to some form of it or lose all sense of realness in the object of their investigation. And this return is possible only via the man-made, artificial world of the laboratory,

where that which does not appear of its own accord is forced to appear and to disclose itself. Technology, the "plumber's" work held in some contempt by the scientist, who sees practical applicability as a mere by-product of his own efforts, introduces scientific findings, made in "unparalleled insulation . . . from the demands of the laity and of everyday life,"[72] into the everyday world of appearances and renders them accessible to common-sense experience; but this is possible only because the scientists themselves are ultimately dependent on that experience. Seen from the perspective of the "real" world, the laboratory is the anticipation of a changed environment; and the cognitive processes using the human abilities of thinking and fabricating as means to their end are indeed the most refined modes of common-sense reasoning. The activity of knowing is no less related to our sense of reality and no less a world-building activity than the building of houses.

The faculty of thinking, however, which Kant, as we have seen, called *Vernunft* (reason) to distinguish it from *Verstand* (intellect), the faculty of cognition, is of an altogether different nature. The distinction, on its most elementary level and in Kant's own words, lies in the fact that "concepts of reason serve us to conceive [*begreifen*, comprehend], as concepts of the intellect serve us to apprehend perceptions" (*"Vernunftbegriffe dienen zum Begreifen, wie Verstandesbegriffe zum Verstehen der Wahrnehmungen"*).[73] In other words, the intellect (*Verstand*) desires to grasp what is given to the senses, but reason (*Vernunft*) wishes to understand its *meaning*. Cognition, whose highest criterion is truth, derives that criterion from the world of appearances in which we take our bearings through sense perceptions, whose testimony is self-evident, that is, unshakeable by argument and replaceable only by other evidence. As the German translation of the Latin *perceptio*, the word *Wahrnehmung* used by Kant (what is given me in perceptions and ought to be *true* [*Wahr*]) clearly indicates, truth is located in the evidence of the senses. But that is by no means the case with meaning and with the faculty of thought, which searches for it; the latter does not ask what something is or whether it exists at all—its existence is always taken for granted—*but what it means for it to be.* This dis-

tinction between truth and meaning seems to me to be not only decisive for any inquiry into the nature of human thinking but also to be the necessary consequence of Kant's crucial distinction between reason and intellect. Admittedly, Kant himself never pursued that particular implication of his own thought; in fact, a clear-cut line of demarcation between these two altogether different modes cannot be found in the history of philosophy. The exceptions—occasional remarks by Aristotle in *On Interpretation*—remained without significance for Aristotle's later philosophy. In that early treatise on language he writes: Every "*logos* [sentence, in the context] is a significant sound (*phōnē sēmantikē*)"; it gives a sign, points out something. But "not every *logos* is revealing (*apophantikos*), only those in which true speech or false speech (*alētheuein* or *pseudesthai*) holds sway. This is not always the case; for example, a prayer is a *logos* [it is *significant*] but neither true nor false."[74]

The questions raised by our thirst for knowledge arise from our curiosity about the world, our desire to investigate whatever is given to our sensory apparatus. The famous first sentence of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, "*Pantes anthrōpoi tou eidenai oregontai physei*"[75]—"All men by nature desire to know"—literally translated reads: "All men desire to see and to have seen [that is, to know]," and Aristotle immediately adds: "An indication of this is our love of the senses; for they are loved for their own sake, quite apart from their use." The questions raised by the desire to know are in principle all answerable by common-sense experience and common-sense reasoning; they are exposed to corrigible error and illusion in the same way as sense perceptions and experiences. Even the relentlessness of modern science's Progress, which constantly corrects itself by discarding the answers and reformulating the questions, does not contradict science's basic goal—to see and to know the world as it is given to the senses—and its concept of truth is derived from the common-sense experience of irrefutable evidence, which dispels error and illusion. But the questions raised by thinking and which it is in reason's very nature to raise—questions of meaning—are all unanswerable by common sense and the refinement of it

we call science. The quest for meaning is "meaningless" to common sense and common-sense reasoning because it is the sixth sense's function to fit us into the world of appearances and make us at home in the world given by our five senses; there we are and no questions asked.

What science and the quest for knowledge are after is *irrefutable* truth, that is, propositions human beings are not free to reject—they are compelling. They are of two kinds, as we have known since Leibniz: truths of reasoning and truths of fact. The main distinction between them lies in the degree of their force of compulsion: the truths of "Reasoning are necessary and their opposite is impossible" while "those of Fact are contingent and their opposite is possible."[76] The distinction is very important although perhaps not in the sense Leibniz himself meant. Truths of fact, their contingency notwithstanding, are as compelling for anybody witnessing them with his own eyes as the proposition that two and two make four is for anybody in his right mind. The point is only that a fact, an event, can never be witnessed by everyone who may want to know about it, whereas rational or mathematical truth presents itself as self-evident to everyone endowed with the same brain power; its compelling nature is universal, while the compelling force of factual truth is limited; it does not reach those who, not having been witnesses, have to rely on the testimony of others, whom one may or may not believe. The true opposite of factual, as distinguished from rational, truth is not error or illusion but the deliberate lie.

Leibniz' distinction between the truths of fact and the truths of reasoning, whose highest form is mathematical reasoning—which deals only with thought-things and needs neither witnesses nor the sensorily given—is based on the age-old distinction between necessity and contingency, according to which all that is necessary, and whose opposite is impossible, possesses a higher ontological dignity than whatever is but could also not be. This conviction that mathematical reasoning should serve as a paradigm for all thought is probably as old as Pythagoras; at any rate we find it in Plato's refusal to admit anyone to philosophy who has not been trained in mathematics. It is still at the root of the medieval *dictamen rationis,* the

dictate of reason. That truth compels with the force of necessity (*anagkē*), which is far stronger than the force of violence (*bia*), is an old *topos* in Greek philosophy, and it is always meant as a compliment to truth that it can compel men with the irresistible force of Necessity (*hyp' autēs alētheias anagkasthentes,* in the words of Aristotle[77]). *"Euclide,"* as Mercier de la Rivière once noted, *"est un véritable despote; et les vérités qu'il nous a transmises, sont des lois véritablement despotiques."*[78] The same notion led Grotius to the conviction that "even God cannot cause two times two not to make four"—a very questionable proposition not only because it would put God under the dictate of necessity but because, if true, it would be equally valid for the evidence of sense perception, and it was on these grounds that Duns Scotus had questioned it.

The source of mathematical truth is the human brain, and *brain power* is no less natural, no less equipped to guide us through an appearing world, than our senses plus common sense and the extension of it that Kant called intellect. The best proof of this may lie in the otherwise quite mysterious fact that mathematical reasoning, the purest activity of our brain, and at first glance, because of its abstraction from all qualities given to our senses, the farthest removed from sheer common-sense reasoning, could play such an enormously liberating role in science's exploration of the universe. The intellect, the organ of knowledge and cognition, is still of this world; in the words of Duns Scotus, it falls under the sway of nature, *cadit sub natura,* and carries with it all the necessities to which a living being, endowed with sense organs and brain power, is subject. The opposite of necessity is not contingency or accident but freedom. Everything that appears to human eyes, everything that occurs to the human mind, everything that happens to mortals for better or worse is "contingent," including their own existence. We all know:

> Unpredictably, decades ago, You arrived
> among that unending cascade of creatures spewed
> from Nature's maw. A random event, says Science.

But that does not prevent us from answering with the poet:

> Random my bottom! A true miracle, say I,
> for who is not certain that he was meant to be?[79]

But this being "meant to be" is not a truth; it is a highly meaningful proposition.

In other words, there are no truths beyond and above factual truths: all scientific truths are factual truths, those engendered by sheer brain power and expressed in a specially designed sign language not excluded, and only factual statements are scientifically verifiable. Thus the statement "A triangle laughs" is not untrue but meaningless, whereas the old ontological demonstration of the existence of God, as we find it in Anselm of Canterbury, is not valid and in this sense not true, but it is full of meaning. Knowing certainly aims at truth, even if this truth, as in the sciences, is never an abiding truth but a provisional verity that we expect to exchange against other, more accurate verities as knowledge progresses. To expect truth to come from thinking signifies that we mistake the need to think with the urge to know. Thinking can and must be employed in the attempt to know, but in the exercise of this function it is never itself; it is but the handmaiden of an altogether different enterprise. (Hegel seems to have been the first to protest against the modern development that tends to put philosophy in a position similar to the one it had in the Middle Ages. "Then, philosophy was supposed to be the handmaiden of theology, humbly accepting its achievements, and asked to bring them into a clean logical order and present them in a plausible, conceptually demonstrable context. Now, philosophy is supposed to be the handmaiden of the other sciences. . . . Its task is to demonstrate the methods of the sciences"—something Hegel denounces as "catching the shadow of shadows."[80])

Truth is what we are compelled to admit by the nature either of our senses or of our brain. The proposition that everybody who is "was meant to be" can easily be refuted; but the certainty of the I "was meant to be" will survive refutation intact because it is inherent in every thinking reflection on the I-am.

By drawing a distinguishing line between truth and mean-

ing, between knowing and thinking, and by insisting on its importance, I do not wish to deny that thinking's quest for meaning and knowledge's quest for truth are connected. By posing the unanswerable questions of meaning, men establish themselves as question-asking beings. Behind all the cognitive questions for which men find answers, there lurk the unanswerable ones that seem entirely idle and have always been denounced as such. It is more than likely that men, if they were ever to lose the appetite for meaning we call thinking and cease to ask unanswerable questions, would lose not only the ability to produce those thought-things that we call works of art but also the capacity to ask all the answerable questions upon which every civilization is founded. In this sense, reason is the a priori condition of the intellect and of cognition; it is because reason and intellect are so connected, despite utter difference in mood and purpose, that the philosophers have always been tempted to accept the criterion of truth—so valid for science and everyday life—as applicable to their own rather extraordinary business as well. For our desire to know, whether arising out of practical or purely theoretical perplexities, can be fulfilled when it reaches its prescribed goal, and while our thirst for knowledge may be unquenchable because of the immensity of the unknown, the activity itself leaves behind a growing treasure of knowledge that is retained and kept in store by every civilization as part and parcel of its world. The loss of this accumulation and of the technical expertise required to conserve and increase it inevitably spells the end of this particular world. The thinking activity on the contrary leaves nothing so tangible behind, and the need to think can therefore never be stilled by the insights of "wise men." As far as positive results are concerned, the most we can expect from it is what Kant finally achieved in carrying out his purpose "to extend, albeit only negatively, our use of reason beyond the limitations of the sensorily given world, that is, to eliminate the obstacles by which reason hinders itself."[81]

Kant's famous distinction between *Vernunft* and *Verstand,* between a faculty of speculative thought and the ability to

know arising out of sense experience—where "all thought is but a means to reach intuition" ("In whatever manner and by whatever means a cognition may relate to objects, *intuition* is that through which it is in immediate relation to them, and to which all thought is directed as a means")[82]—has consequences more far-reaching, and even perhaps quite other, than those he himself recognized.[83] (While discussing Plato, he once remarked "that it is by no means unusual, upon comparing the thoughts which an author has expressed in regard to his subject . . . to find that we understand him better than he has understood himself. As he has not sufficiently determined his concept, he has sometimes spoken, or even thought, in opposition to his own intention."[84] And this is of course applicable to his own work.) Although he insisted on the inability of reason to arrive at knowledge, especially with respect to God, Freedom, and Immortality—to him the highest objects of thought—he could not part altogether with the conviction that the final aim of thinking, as of knowledge, is truth and cognition; he thus uses, throughout the Critiques, the term *Vernunfterkenntnis*, "knowledge arising out of pure reason,"[85] a notion that ought to have been a contradiction in terms for him. He never became fully aware of having liberated reason and thinking, of having justified this faculty and its activity even though they could not boast of any "positive" results. As we have seen, he stated that he had "found it necessary to deny *knowledge* . . . to make room for *faith*,"[86] but all he had "denied" was knowledge of things that are unknowable, and he had not made room for faith but for thought. He believed that he had built the foundations of a future "systematic metaphysic" as "a bequest to posterity,"[87] and it is true that without Kant's unshackling of speculative thought the rise of German idealism and its metaphysical systems would hardly have been possible. But the new brand of philosophers—Fichte, Schelling, Hegel—would scarcely have pleased Kant. Liberated by Kant from the old school dogmatism and its sterile exercises, encouraged by him to indulge in speculative thinking, they actually took their cue from Descartes, went hunting for certainty, blurred once again the distinguishing

line between thought and knowledge, and believed in all earnest that the results of their speculations possessed the same kind of validity as the results of cognitive processes.

What undermined Kant's greatest discovery, the distinction between knowledge, which uses thinking as a means to an end, and thinking itself as it arises out of "the very nature of our reason" and is done for its own sake, was that he constantly compared the two with each other. Only if truth (in Kant, intuition), and not meaning, is the ultimate criterion of man's mental activities does it make sense in this context to speak of deception and illusion at all. "It is impossible," he says, that reason, "this highest tribunal of all the rights and claims of speculation should itself be the source of deceptions and illusions."[88] He is right, but only because reason as the faculty of speculative thought does not move in the world of appearances and hence can produce non-sense and meaninglessness but neither illusion nor deception, which properly belong to the realm of sense perception and common-sense reasoning. He recognizes this himself when he calls the ideas of pure reason only "heuristic," not "ostensive" concepts;[89] they are tentative—they do not demonstrate or show anything. "They ought not to be assumed as existing in themselves, but only as having the reality of a schema . . . [and] should be regarded only as analoga of real things, not as in themselves real things."[90] In other words, they neither reach nor are able to present and represent reality. It is not merely the other-worldly transcendent things that they can never reach; the realness given by the senses playing together, kept in tune by common sense, and that is guaranteed by the fact of plurality—is beyond their grasp. But Kant does not insist on this side of the matter, because he is afraid that his ideas might then turn out to be "empty thought-things" (*leere Gedankendinge*)[91]—as indeed they invariably do when they dare to show themselves nakedly, that is, untransformed and in a way unfalsified by language, in our everyday world and in everyday communication.

It is perhaps for the same reason that he equates what we have here called meaning with Purpose and even Intention (*Zweck* and *Absicht*): The "highest formal unity, which rests

solely on concepts of reason, is the *purposive* unity of things. The *speculative* interest of reason makes it necessary to regard all order in the world as if it had originated in the [intention] of a supreme reason."[92] Now, it turns out, reason pursues specific purposes, has specific intentions in resorting to its ideas; it is the need of human reason and its interest in God, Freedom, and Immortality that make men think, even though only a few pages later he will admit that "the mere speculative interest of reason" with respect to the three main objects of thought—"the freedom of the will, the immortality of the soul, and the existence of God"—"is very small; and for its sake alone we should hardly have undertaken the labor of transcendental investigations . . . since whatever discoveries might be made in regard to these matters, we should not be able to make use of them in any helpful manner *in concreto*."[93] But we do not have to go hunting for small contradictions in the work of this very great thinker. Right in the midst of the passages quoted above occurs the sentence that stands in the greatest possible contrast to his own equation of reason with Purpose: "Pure reason is in fact occupied with nothing but itself. It can have no other vocation."[94]

II

Mental Activities in a World of Appearances

9 *Invisibility and withdrawal*

Thinking, willing, and judging are the three basic mental activities; they cannot be derived from each other and though they have certain common characteristics they cannot be reduced to a common denominator. To the question What makes us think? there is ultimately no answer other than what Kant called "reason's need," the inner impulse of that faculty to actualize itself in speculation. And something very similar is true for the will, which neither reason nor desire can move. "Nothing other than the Will is the total cause of volition" (*"nihil aliud a voluntate est causa totalis volitionis in voluntate"*), in the striking formula of Duns Scotus, or *"voluntas vult se velle"* ("the will wills itself to will"), as even Thomas, the least voluntaristic of those who thought about this faculty, had to admit.[1] Judgment, finally, the mysterious endowment of the mind by which the general, always a mental construction, and the particular, always given to sense experience, are brought together, is a "peculiar faculty" and in no way inherent in the intellect, not even in the case of "determinant judgments"—where particulars are subsumed under general rules in the form of a syllogism—because no rule is available for the *applications* of the rule. To know how to apply the general to the particular is an additional "natural gift," the want of which, according to Kant, is "ordinarily called stupidity, and for such a failing there is no remedy."[2] The autonomous nature of judgment is even more obvious in the case of "reflective judgment," which does not descend from the general to the particular but ascends "from the particular . . . to the universal" by deciding, without any over-all rules, This is beautiful, this is ugly, this is right, this is wrong; and here for a guiding principle, judging "can only give [it] as a law from and to itself."[3]

I called these mental activities basic because they are autonomous; each of them obeys the laws inherent in the activity itself, although all of them depend on a certain stillness of the soul's passions, on that "dispassionate quiet" (*"leidenschaftslose Stille"*) which Hegel ascribed to "merely thinking cognition."[4] Since it is always the same person whose mind thinks, wills, and judges, the autonomous nature of these activities has created great difficulties. Reason's inability to move the will, plus the fact that thinking can only "understand" what is past but neither remove it nor "rejuvenate" it—"the owl of Minerva begins its flight when dusk is falling"[5]—have led to the various doctrines asserting the mind's impotence and the force of the irrational, in brief to Hume's famous dictum that "Reason is and *ought* only to be the slave of the passions," that is, to a rather simple-minded reversal of the Platonic notion of reason's uncontested rulership in the household of the soul. What is so remarkable in all these theories and doctrines is their implicit monism, the claim that behind the obvious multiplicity of the world's appearances and, even more pertinently for our context, behind the obvious plurality of man's faculties and abilities, there must exist a oneness—the old *hen pan*, "the all is one"—either a single source or a single ruler.

The autonomy of mental activities, moreover, implies their being unconditioned; none of the conditions of either life or the world corresponds to them directly. For the "dispassionate quiet" of the soul is not a condition properly speaking; not only does the mere quiet never cause the mental activity, the urge to think; "reason's need" more often than not quiets the passions. To be sure, the objects of my thinking or willing or judging, the mind's subject matter, are given in the world, or arise from my life in this world, but they themselves as activities are not necessitated or conditioned by either. Men, though they are totally conditioned existentially—limited by the time span between birth and death, subject to labor in order to live, motivated to work in order to make themselves at home in the world, and roused to action in order to find their place in the society of their fellow-men—can mentally transcend all these conditions, but only mentally,

never in reality or in cognition and knowledge, by virtue of which they are able to explore the world's realness and their own. They can judge affirmatively or negatively the realities they are born into and by which they are also conditioned; they can will the impossible, for instance, eternal life; and they can think, that is, speculate meaningfully, about the unknown and the unknowable. And although this can never directly change reality—indeed in our world there is no clearer or more radical opposition than that between thinking and doing—the principles by which we act and the criteria by which we judge and conduct our lives depend ultimately on the life of the mind. In short, they depend on the performance of these apparently profitless mental enterprises that yield no results and do "not endow us directly with the power to act" (Heidegger). Absence of thought is indeed a powerful factor in human affairs, statistically speaking the most powerful, not just in the conduct of the many but in the conduct of all. The very urgency, the *a-scholia*, of human affairs demands provisional judgments, the reliance on custom and habit, that is, on prejudices. As to the world of appearances, which affects our senses as well as our soul and our common sense, Heraclitus spoke truly, in words still unburdened by terminology: "The mind is separate from all things" (*sophon esti pantōn kechōrismenon*).[6] It is because of that complete separateness that Kant could believe so firmly in the existence of other intelligible beings in a different corner of the universe, namely, of creatures capable of the same kind of reasonable thought although without our sensory apparatus and without our intellectual brain power, that is, without our criteria for truth and error and our conditions for experience and scientific cognition.

Seen from the perspective of the world of appearances and the activities conditioned by it, the main characteristic of mental activities is their *invisibility*. Properly speaking, they never appear, though they manifest themselves to the thinking, willing, or judging ego, which is aware of being active, yet lacks the ability or the urge to appear as such. The Epicurean *lathē biōsas*, "live in hiding," may have been a counsel of prudence; it is also an at least negatively exact description of the *topos*, the locality, of the man who thinks; in fact, it is

the very opposite of John Adams' *"spectemur agendo"* (let us be seen in action). In other words, to the invisible that manifests itself to thinking there corresponds a human faculty that is not only, like other faculties, invisible so long as it is latent, a mere potentiality, but remains non-manifest in full actuality. If we consider the whole scale of human activities from the viewpoint of appearance, we find many degrees of manifestation. Neither laboring nor fabrication requires display of the activity itself; only action and speaking need a space of appearance—as well as people who see and hear—in order to be actualized at all. But none of these activities is invisible. Were we to follow Greek linguistic custom, by which the "heroes," acting men in the highest sense, were called *andres epiphaneis*, men who are fully manifest, highly conspicuous, then we would call thinkers the inconspicuous men by definition and profession.[7]

In this, as in other respects, the mind is decisively different from the soul, its chief competitor for the rank of ruler over our inner, non-visible life. The soul, where our passions, our feelings and emotions arise, is a more or less chaotic welter of happenings which we do not enact but suffer (*pathein*) and which in cases of great intensity may overwhelm us as pain or pleasure does; its invisibility resembles that of our inner bodily organs of whose functioning or non-functioning we are also aware without being able to control them. The life of the mind, on the contrary, is sheer activity, and this activity, like other activities, can be started and stopped at will. The passions, moreover, though their seat is invisible, have an expressiveness of their own: we blush with shame or embarrassment, we grow pale with fear or anger, we can shine with happiness or look dejected, and we need a considerable training in self-control in order to prevent the passions from showing. The only outward manifestation of the mind is absent-mindedness, an obvious disregard of the surrounding world, something entirely negative which in no way hints at what is actually happening within us.

The mere fact of invisibility, that something can be without being manifest to the eye, must always have been striking. How much so may be gauged by the strange disinclination

of our whole tradition to draw clear lines between soul, mind, and consciousness, so often equated as objects of our inner sense for no other reason than that they are non-appearing to the outer senses. Thus Plato concluded that the soul is invisible because it is made for the cognition of the invisible within a world of visible things. And even Kant, among the philosophers by far the most critical of traditional metaphysical prejudices, will occasionally enumerate two kinds of objects: "'I', as thinking, am an object of inner sense, and am called 'soul'. That which is an object of the outer senses is called 'body'."[8] This, of course, is but a variation of the old metaphysical two-world theory. An analogy is made to the outwardness of sense experience, on the assumption that an internal space houses what is within us in the same way that external space provides for our bodies, so that an "inner sense," namely, the intuition of introspection, is pictured as fitted to ascertain whatever goes on "within" with the same reliability our outer senses have in dealing with the outer world. And for the soul, the analogy is not too misleading. Since feelings and emotions are not self-made but "passions" caused by outside events that affect the soul and bring about certain reactions, namely, the soul's *pathēmata*—its passive states and moods—these inner experiences may indeed be open to the inner sense of introspection precisely because they are possible, as Kant once remarked, "only on the assumption of outer experience."[9] Moreover, their very passivity, the fact that they are not liable to be changed by deliberate intervention, results in an impressive semblance of stability. This semblance then produces certain illusions of introspection, which in turn lead to the theory that the mind is not merely the master of its own activities but can rule the soul's passions—as though the mind were nothing but the soul's highest organ. This theory is very old and reached its climax in the Stoic doctrines of the mind's control of pleasure and pain; its fallacy—that you can *feel* happy when roasted in the Phalarian Bull—rests ultimately on the equation of soul and mind, that is, on ascribing to the soul and its essential passivity the powerful sovereignty of the mind.

No mental act, and least of all the act of thinking, is content with its object as it is given to it. It always transcends

the sheer givenness of whatever may have aroused its attention and transforms it into what Petrus Johannis Olivi, the thirteenth-century Franciscan philosopher of the Will,[10] called an *experimentum suitatis*, an experiment of the self with itself. Since plurality is one of the basic existential conditions of human life on earth—so that *inter homines esse*, to be among men, was to the Romans the sign of being alive, aware of the realness of world and self, and *inter homines esse desinere*, to cease to be among men, a synonym for dying—to be by myself and to have intercourse with myself is the outstanding characteristic of the life of the mind. The mind can be said to have a life of its own only to the extent that it actualizes this intercourse in which, existentially speaking, plurality is reduced to the duality already implied in the fact and the word "consciousness," or *syneidenai*—to know with myself. I call this existential state in which I keep myself company "solitude" to distinguish it from "loneliness," where I am also alone but now deserted not only by human company but also by the possible company of myself. It is only in loneliness that I feel *deprived* of human company, and it is only in the acute awareness of such deprivation that men ever exist really in the singular, as it is perhaps only in dreams or in madness that they fully realize the unbearable and "unutterable horror" of this state.[11] Mental activities themselves all testify by their *reflexive* nature to a *duality* inherent in consciousness; the mental agent cannot be active except by acting, implicitly or explicitly, back upon himself. Consciousness, to be sure—Kant's "I think"—not only accompanies "all other representations" but all my activities, in which nevertheless I can be entirely oblivious of my self. Consciousness as such, before it is actualized in solitude, achieves nothing more than an awareness of the sameness of the I-am—"I am conscious of myself, not as I appear to myself, nor as I am in myself, but only that I am"[12]—which guarantees the identical continuity of a self throughout the manifold representations, experiences, and memories of a lifetime. As such, it "expresses the act of determining my existence."[13] Mental activities, and, as we shall see later, especially thinking—the soundless dialogue of

the I with itself—can be understood as the actualization of the original duality or the split between me and myself which is inherent in all consciousness. But this sheer self-awareness, of which I am, as it were, unconsciously conscious, is not an activity; by accompanying all other activities it is the guarantor of an altogether silent I-am-I.

The life of the mind in which I keep myself company may be soundless; it is never silent and it can never be altogether oblivious of itself, because of the reflexive nature of all its activities. Every *cogitare*, no matter what its object, is also a *cogito me cogitare*, every volition a *volo me velle*, and even judgment is possible, as Montesquieu once remarked, only through a *"retour secret sur moi-même."* This reflexivity seems to point to a place of inwardness for mental acts, construed on the principle of the outward space in which my non-mental acts take place. But that this inwardness, unlike the passive inwardness of the soul, could only be understood as a site of activities is a fallacy, whose historical orgin is the discovery, in the early centuries of the Christian era, of the Will and of the experiences of the willing ego. For I am aware of the faculties of the mind and their reflexivity only as long as the activity lasts. It is as though the very organs of thought or will or judgment came into being only when I think, or will, or judge; in their latent state, assuming that such latency exists prior to actualization, they are not open to introspection. The thinking ego, of which I am perfectly conscious so long as the thinking activity lasts, will disappear as though it were a mere mirage when the real world asserts itself again.

Since mental activities, non-appearing by definition, occur in a world of appearances and in a being that partakes of these appearances through its receptive sense organs as well as through its own ability and urge to appear to others, they cannot come into being except through a deliberate *withdrawal* from appearances. It is withdrawal not so much from the world—only thought, because of its tendency to generalize, i.e., its special concern for the general as opposed to the particular, tends to withdraw from the world altogether—as from the world's being *present* to the senses. *Every mental*

act rests on the mind's faculty of having present to itself what is absent from the senses. Re-presentation, making present what is actually absent, is the mind's unique gift, and since our whole mental terminology is based on metaphors drawn from vision's experience, this gift is called *imagination*, defined by Kant as "the faculty of intuition even without the presence of the object."[14] The mind's faculty of making present what is absent is of course by no means restricted to mental images of absent objects; memory quite generally stores, and holds at the disposition of recollection, whatever is *no more*, and the will anticipates what the future may bring but is *not yet*. Only because of the mind's capacity for making present what is absent can we say "no more" and constitute a past for ourselves, or say "not yet" and get ready for a future. But this is possible for the mind only after it has withdrawn from the present and the urgencies of everyday life. Thus, in order to will, the mind must withdraw from the immediacy of desire, which, without reflecting and without reflexivity, stretches out its hand to get hold of the desired object; for the will is not concerned with objects but with projects, for instance, with the future availability of an object that it may or may not desire in the present. The will transforms the desire into an intention. And judgment, finally, be it aesthetic or legal or moral, presupposes a definitely "unnatural" and deliberate withdrawal from involvement and the partiality of immediate interests as they are given by my position in the world and the part I play in it.

It would be wrong, I believe, to try to establish a hierarchical order among the mind's activities, but I also believe that it is hardly deniable that an order of priorities exists. It is inconceivable how we would ever be able to will or to judge, that is, to handle things which are not yet and things which are no more, if the power of representation and the effort necessary to direct mental attention to what in every way escapes the attention of sense perception had not gone ahead and prepared the mind for further reflection as well as for willing and judging. In other words, what we generally call "thinking," though unable to move the will or provide judgment

with general rules, must prepare the particulars given to the senses in such a way that the mind is able to handle them in their absence; it must, in brief, *de-sense* them.

The best description of this process of preparation I know of is given by Augustine. Sense perception, he says, "the vision, which was without when the sense was formed by a sensible body, is succeeded by a similar vision within," the image that re-presents it.[15] This image is then stored in memory, ready to become a "vision in thought" the moment the mind gets hold of it; it is decisive that "what remains in the memory"—the mere image of what once was real—is different from the "vision in thought"—the deliberately remembered object. "What remains in the memory . . . is one thing, and . . . something else arises when we remember,"[16] for "what is hidden and retained in the memory is one thing, and what is impressed by it in the thought of the one remembering is another thing."[17] Hence, the thought-object is different from the image, as the image is different from the visible sense-object whose mere representation it is. It is because of this twofold transformation that thinking "in fact goes even further," beyond the realm of all possible imagination, "when our reason proclaims the infinity of number which no vision in the thought of corporeal things has yet grasped" or "teaches us that even the tiniest bodies can be divided infinitely."[18] Imagination, therefore, which transforms a visible object into an invisible image, fit to be stored in the mind, is the condition *sine qua non* for providing the mind with suitable thought-objects; but these thought-objects come into being only when the mind actively and deliberately remembers, recollects and selects from the storehouse of memory whatever arouses its interest sufficiently to induce concentration; in these operations the mind learns how to deal with things that are absent and prepares itself to "go further," toward the understanding of things that are always absent, that cannot be remembered because they were never present to sense experience.

Although this last class of thought-objects—concepts, ideas, categories, and the like—became the special subject matter of "professional" philosophy, there is nothing in the

ordinary life of man that cannot become food for thought, that is, be subjected to the twofold transformation that readies a sense-object to become a suitable thought-object. All the metaphysical questions that philosophy took as its special topics arise out of ordinary common-sense experiences; "reason's need"—the quest for meaning that prompts men to ask them—is in no way different from men's need to tell the story of some happening they witnessed, or to write poems about it. In all such reflecting activities men move outside the world of appearances and use a language filled with abstract words which, of course, had long been part and parcel of everyday speech before they became the special currency of philosophy. For thinking, then, though not for philosophy, technically speaking, withdrawal from the world of appearances is the only essential precondition. In order for us to think about somebody, he must be removed from our presence; so long as we are with him we do not think either of him or about him; thinking always implies remembrance; every thought is strictly speaking an after-thought. It may, of course, happen that we start thinking about a still-present somebody or something, in which case we have removed ourselves surreptitiously from our surroundings and are conducting ourselves as though we were already absent.

These remarks may indicate why thinking, the quest for meaning—as opposed to the thirst for knowledge, even for knowledge for its own sake—has so often been felt to be unnatural, as though men, whenever they reflect without purpose, going beyond the natural curiosity awakened by the manifold wonders of the world's sheer thereness and their own existence, engaged in an activity *contrary to the human condition.* Thinking as such, not only the raising of the unanswerable "ultimate questions," but every reflection that does not serve knowledge and is not guided by practical needs and aims, is, as Heidegger once observed, *"out of order"* (italics added).[19] It interrupts any doing, any ordinary activities, no matter what they happen to be. All thinking demands a *stop*-and-think. Whatever the fallacies and the absurdities of the two-world theories may have been, they arose out of these genuine experiences of the thinking ego. And since whatever prevents thinking belongs

to the world of appearances and to those common-sense experiences I have in company with my fellow-men and that automatically guarantee my sense of the realness of my own being, it is indeed as though thinking paralyzed me in much the same way as an excess of consciousness may paralyze the automatism of my bodily functions, "*l'accomplissement d'un acte qui doit être réflexe ou ne peut être*," as Valéry phrases it. Identifying the state of consciousness with the state of thinking, he added: "*on en pourrait tirer toute une philosophie que je résumerais ainsi: Tantôt je pense et tantôt je suis*" ("At times I think, and at times I am").[20] This striking observation, entirely based on equally striking experiences—namely, that the mere consciousness of our bodily organs is enough to prevent them from functioning properly—insists on an antagonism between being and thinking which we can trace back to Plato's famous saying that only the philosopher's body—that is, what makes him appear among appearances—still inhabits the city of men, as though, by thinking, men removed themselves from the world of the living.

Throughout the history of philosophy a very curious notion has persisted of an affinity between death and philosophy. Philosophy for many centuries was supposed to teach men how to die; it was in this vein that the Romans decided that the study of philosophy was a fit occupation only for the old, whereas the Greeks had held that it should be studied by the young. Still, it was Plato who first remarked that the philosopher appears to those who do not do philosophy as though he were pursuing death,[21] and it was Zeno, the founder of Stoicism, who, still in the same century, reported that the Delphic oracle, on his asking it what he should do to attain the best life, had answered: "Take on the color of the dead."[22] In modern times it is not uncommon to find people holding, with Schopenhauer, that our mortality is the eternal source of philosophy, that "death actually is the inspiring genius of philosophy . . . [and that] without death there would scarcely be any philosophizing."[23] Even the younger Heidegger of *Sein und Zeit* still treated the anticipation of death as the decisive experience through which man can attain an authentic self and be liberated from the in-

authenticity of the They, quite unaware of the extent to which this doctrine actually sprang, as Plato had pointed out, from the opinion of the many.

10 *The intramural warfare between thought and common sense*

"Take on the color of the dead"—so indeed the philosopher's absent-mindedness and the style of life of the *professional* who devotes his entire life to thinking, thus monopolizing and raising to an absolute what is but one of the many human faculties, must appear to the common sense of common men, since we normally move in a world where the most radical experience of disappearing is death and withdrawal from appearance is dying. The very fact that there have always—at least since Parmenides—been men who chose this way of life deliberately without being candidates for suicide shows that this sense of an affinity with death does not come from the thinking activity and the experiences of the thinking ego itself. It is, rather, the philosopher's own common sense—his being "a man like you and me"—that makes him aware of being "out of order" while engaged in thinking. He is not immune from common opinion, because he shares, after all, in the "common-ness" of all men, and it is his own sense of realness that makes him suspect the thinking activity. And since thinking itself is helpless against the arguments of common-sense reasoning and the insistence on the "meaninglessness" of its quest for meaning, the philosopher is prone to answer in common-sense terms, which he simply turns upside down for the purpose. If common sense and common opinion hold that "death is the greatest of all evils," the philosopher (of Plato's time, when death was understood as the separation of soul from body) is tempted to say: on the contrary, "death is a deity, a benefactor to the philosopher, precisely because it dissolves the union of soul and body"[24] and thus seems to liberate the mind from bodily pain and

pleasure, both of which prevent our mental organs from pursuing their activity, just as consciousness prevents our bodily organs from functioning properly.[25] The whole history of philosophy, which tells us so much about the objects of thought and so little about the process of thinking and the experiences of the thinking ego, is shot through with an *intramural warfare* between man's common sense, this sixth sense that fits our five senses into a common world, and man's faculty of thought and need of reason, which determine him to remove himself for considerable periods from it.

The philosophers have interpreted that intramural warfare as the natural hostility of the many and their opinions toward the few and their truth; but the historical facts to support this interpretation are rather scanty. There is, to be sure, the trial of Socrates, which probably inspired Plato to declare at the end of the Cave parable (when the philosopher returns from his solitary flight into the sky of the ideas to the darkness of the cave and the company of his fellow-men) that the many, if they only could, would lay hands on the few and kill them. This interpretation of Socrates' trial echoes through the history of philosophy up to and including Hegel. Yet, leaving aside some very justified doubts about Plato's version of the event,[26] the fact is, there are hardly any instances on record of the many on their own initiative declaring war on philosophers. As far as the few and the many are concerned, it has been rather the other way round. It was the philosopher who of his own accord quitted the City of men and then told those he had left behind that, at best, they were deceived by the trust they put in their senses, by their willingness to believe the poets and be taught by the populace, when they should have been using their minds, and that, at worst, they were content to live only for sensual pleasure and to be glutted like cattle.[27] It seems rather obvious that the multitude can never resemble a philosopher, but this does not mean, as Plato stated, that those who do philosophy are "necessarily blamed" and persecuted by the many "like a man fallen among wild beasts."[28]

The philosopher's way of life is solitary, but this solitude is freely chosen, and Plato himself, when he enumerates the

natural conditions favorable to the development in "the noblest natures" of the philosophical gift, does not mention the hostility of the many. He speaks, rather, of exiles, of a "great mind born in a petty state whose affairs are beneath . . . notice," and of other circumstances such as ill health that cut such natures off from the public affairs of the many.[29] But this turning-of-the-tables, to make the warfare between thought and common sense the result of the few turning against the many, though perhaps a shade more plausible and better documented—to wit, on the philosopher's claim to rule—than the traditional persecution mania of the philosopher, is probably no nearer the truth. The most plausible explanation of the quarrel between common sense and "professional" thinking still is the point already mentioned (that we are dealing here with an intramural warfare) since surely the first to be aware of all the objections common sense could raise against philosophy must have been the philosophers themselves. And Plato—in a different context, where he is not concerned with a polity "worthy of the philosophical nature"—dismisses with laughter a question raised as to whether a man who is concerned with divine things is also good at things human.[30]

Laughter rather than hostility is the natural reaction of the many to the philosopher's preoccupation and the apparent uselessness of his concerns. This laughter is innocent and quite different from the ridicule frequently turned on an opponent in serious disputes, where it can indeed become a fearful weapon. But Plato, who argued in the *Laws* for the strict prohibition of any writing that would ridicule any of the citizens,[31] feared the ridicule in all laughter. What is decisive here are not the passages in the political dialogues, the *Laws* or the *Republic*, against poetry and especially comedians, but the entirely serious way in which he tells the story of the Thracian peasant girl who bursts out laughing when she saw Thales fall into a well while he was watching the motions of the heavenly bodies above him, "declaring that he was eager to know the things in the sky, but what was . . . just at his feet escaped him." And Plato adds: "Anyone who gives his life to philosophy is open to such mockery. . . . The whole rabble will join the peasant girl in laughing at

him . . . [as] in his helplessness he looks like a fool."[32] It is strange that in the long history of philosophy it occurred only to Kant—who was so singularly free of all the specifically philosophical vices—that the gift for speculative thought could be like the gift "with which Juno honored Tiresias, whom she blinded so that she might give him the gift of prophecy." He suspected that intimate acquaintance with another world could be "attained here only by forfeiting some of the sense one needs for the present world." Kant, at any rate, seems to have been unique among the philosophers in being sovereign enough to join in the laughter of the common man. Probably quite unaware of Plato's story of the Thracian girl, he tells in perfectly good humor a virtually identical tale about Tycho de Brahe and his coachman: the astronomer had proposed that they take their bearings from the stars to find the shortest way during a night journey, and the coachman had replied: "My dear sir, you may know a lot about the heavenly bodies; but here on earth you are a fool."[33]

On the assumption that the philosopher does not need the "rabble" to inform him of his "foolishness"—the common sense he shares with all men must be alert enough for him to anticipate their laughter—on the assumption, in short, that what we are dealing with is an intramural warfare between common-sense reasoning and speculative thinking going on in the mind of the philosopher himself, let us examine more closely the affinity between death and philosophy. If we take our perspective from the world of appearances, the common world in which we appeared by birth and from which we shall disappear by death, then the wish to know our common habitat and amass all kinds of knowledge about it is natural. Because of thinking's need to transcend it, we have turned away; in a metaphorical sense, we have *dis*appeared from this world, and this can be understood—from the perspective of the natural and of our common-sense reasoning—as the anticipation of our final departure, that is, our death.

That is how Plato described it in the *Phaedo:* Seen from the perspective of the multitude, the philosophers do nothing but pursue death, from which the many, if they cared at

all, might conclude that philosophers had better die.[34] And Plato is not so sure that the many are not right, except that they do not know in what sense that is to be construed. The "true philosopher," one who spends his whole life in thought, has two desires: first, that he may be free from all kinds of business and especially be rid of his body, which always demands to be taken care of, "falls in our way at every step . . . and causes confusion and trouble and panic,"[35] and second, that he may come to live in a hereafter where those things with which thinking is concerned, such as truth, justice, and beauty, will be no less accessible and real than what now can be perceived with the bodily senses.[36] Even Aristotle, in one of his popular writings, reminds his readers of those "islands of the blessed" that are blessed because there "men would not need anything and none of the other things could be of any use to them so that only thinking and contemplating (*theōrein*) would be left, that is, what even now we call a free life."[37] In short, the turning-about inherent in thinking is by no means a harmless enterprise. In the *Phaedo* it reverses all relationships: men, who naturally shun death as the greatest of evils, are now turning to it as the greatest good.

All of this is of course spoken with tongue in cheek—or, more academically, it is put into metaphorical language; philosophers are not famous for their suicides, not even when they hold with Aristotle (in a surprisingly personal remark in the *Protreptikos*)[38] that those who want to enjoy themselves should either philosophize or depart from life, all else seems to be foolish talk and nonsense. But the metaphor of death, or, rather, the metaphorical reversal of life and death—what we usually call life is death, what we usually call death is life—is not arbitrary, although one can see it a bit less dramatically: If thinking establishes its own conditions, blinding itself against the sensorily given by removing all that is close at hand, it is in order to make room for the distant to become manifest. To put it quite simply, in the proverbial absentmindedness of the philosopher, everything present is absent because something actually absent is present to his mind, and among the things absent is the philosopher's own body. Both the philosopher's hostility toward politics, "the petty affairs

of men,"[39] and his hostility toward the body have little to do with individual convictions and beliefs; they are inherent in the experience itself. While you are thinking, you are unaware of your own corporality—and it is this experience that made Plato ascribe immortality to the soul once it has departed from the body and made Descartes conclude "that the soul can think without the body except that so long as the soul is attached to the body it may be bothered in its operations by the bad disposition of the body's organs."[40]

Mnemosyne, Memory, is the mother of the Muses, and remembrance, the most frequent and also the most basic thinking experience, has to do with things that are absent, that have disappeared from my senses. Yet the absent that is summoned up and made present to my mind—a person, an event, a monument—cannot appear in the way it appeared to my senses, as though remembrance were a kind of witchcraft. In order to appear to my mind only, it must first be de-sensed, and the capacity to transform sense-objects into images is called "imagination." Without this faculty, which makes present what is absent in a de-sensed form, no thought processes and no trains of thought would be possible at all. Hence, thinking is "out of order" not merely because it stops all the other activities so necessary for the business of living and staying alive, but because it inverts all ordinary relationships: what is near and appears directly to our senses is now far away and what is distant is actually present. While thinking I am not where I actually am; I am surrounded not by sense-objects but by images that are invisible to everybody else. It is as though I had withdrawn into some never-never land, the land of invisibles, of which I would know nothing had I not this faculty of remembering and imagining. Thinking annihilates temporal as well as spatial distances. I can anticipate the future, think of it as though it were already present, and I can remember the past as though it had not disappeared.

Since time and space in ordinary experience cannot even be thought of without a continuum that stretches from the nearby into the distant, from the *now* into past or future, from *here* to any point in the compass, left and right, forward and backward, above and below, I could with some justification

say that not only distances but also time and space themselves are abolished in the thinking process. As far as space is concerned, I know of no philosophical or metaphysical concept that could plausibly be related to this experience; but I am rather certain that the *nunc stans*, the "standing now," became the symbol of eternity—the *"nunc aeternitatis"* (Duns Scotus)—for medieval philosophy because it was a plausible description of experiences that took place in meditation as well as in contemplation, the two modes of thought known to Christianity.

Just now, I chose to speak first of de-sensed sense-objects, that is, of invisibles belonging to the world of appearances that have temporarily disappeared from or have not yet reached our field of perception and are drawn into our presence by remembering or anticipation. What actually occurs in these instances is told for all time in the story of Orpheus and Eurydice. Orpheus went down to Hades to recover his dead wife and was told he could have her back on condition that he would not turn to look at her as she followed him. But when they approached the world of the living, Orpheus did look back and Eurydice immediately vanished. More precisely than could any terminological language, the old myth tells what happens the moment the thinking process comes to an end in the world of ordinary living: all the invisibles vanish again. It is fitting, too, that the myth should relate to remembrance and not to anticipation. The faculty of anticipating the future in thought derives from the faculty of remembering the past, which in turn derives from the even more elementary ability to de-sense and have present *before* (and not just *in*) your mind what is physically absent. The ability to create fictive entities *in* your mind, such as the unicorn and the centaur, or the fictitious characters of a story, an ability usually called *productive* imagination, is actually entirely dependent upon the so-called reproductive imagination; in "productive" imagination, elements from the visible world are rearranged, and this is possible because the elements, now so freely handled, have already gone through the de-sensing process of thinking.

Not sense perception, in which we experience things directly and close at hand, but imagination, coming after it, prepares the objects of our thought. Before we raise such

questions as What is happiness, what is justice, what is knowledge, and so on, we must have seen happy and unhappy people, witnessed just and unjust deeds, experienced the desire to know and its fulfillment or frustration. Furthermore, we must repeat the direct experience in our minds *after* leaving the scene where it took place. To say it again, every thought is an after-thought. By repeating in imagination, we *de-sense* whatever had been given to our senses. And only in this immaterial form can our thinking faculty now begin to concern itself with these data. This operation precedes all thought processes, cognitive thought as well as thought about meaning, and only sheer logical reasoning—where the mind in strict consistency with its own laws produces a deductive chain from a given premise—has definitely cut all strings to living experience; and it can do so only because the premise, either fact or hypothesis, is supposed to be self-evident, and therefore not subject to examination by thought. Even the simple *telling* of what has happened, whether the story then tells it as it was or fails to do so, is *preceded* by the de-sensing operation. The Greek language has this time element in its very vocabulary: the word "to know," as I pointed out earlier, is a derivative of the word "to see." To see is *idein*, to know is *eidenai*, that is, to *have* seen. First you see, then you know.

To vary this for our purposes: All thought arises out of experience, but no experience yields any meaning or even coherence without undergoing the operations of imagining and thinking. Seen from the perspective of thinking, life in its sheer thereness is meaningless; seen from the perspective of the immediacy of life and the world given to the senses, thinking is, as Plato indicated, a living death. The philosopher who lives in the "land of thought" (Kant)[41] will naturally be inclined to look upon these things from the viewpoint of the thinking ego, for which a life without meaning *is* a kind of living death. The thinking ego, because it is not identical with the real self, is unaware of its own withdrawal from the common world of appearances; from its perspective, it is rather as though the invisible had come forward, as though the innumerable entities making up the world of appearances, which through their very presence distract the mind and prevent its

activity, had been positively concealing an always invisible Being that reveals itself only to the mind. In other words, what for common sense is the obvious withdrawal of the mind from the world appears in the mind's own perspective as a "withdrawal of Being" or "oblivion of Being"—*Seinsentzug* and *Seinsvergessenheit* (Heidegger). And it is true, everyday life, the life of the "They," is spent in a world from which all that is "visible" to the mind is totally absent.

And not only is the quest for meaning absent from and good for nothing in the ordinary course of human affairs, while at the same time its results remain uncertain and unverifiable; thinking is also somehow self-destructive. In the privacy of his posthumously published notes, Kant wrote: "I do not approve of the rule that if the use of pure reason has proved something, the result should no longer be subject to doubt, as though it were a solid axiom"; and "I do not share the opinion . . . that one should not doubt once one has convinced oneself of something. In pure philosophy this is impossible. *Our mind has a natural aversion to it*" (italics added).[42] From which it follows that the business of thinking is like Penelope's web; it undoes every morning what it has finished the night before.[43] For the need to think can never be stilled by allegedly definite insights of "wise men"; it can be satisfied only through thinking, and the thoughts I had yesterday will satisfy this need today only to the extent that I want and am able to think them anew.

We have been looking at the outstanding characteristics of the thinking activity: its withdrawal from the common-sense world of appearances, its self-destructive tendency with regard to its own results, its reflexivity, and the awareness of sheer activity that accompanies it, plus the weird fact that I know of my mind's faculties only so long as the activity lasts, which means that thinking itself can never be solidly established as one and even the highest property of the human species—man can be defined as the "speaking animal" in the Aristotelian sense of *logon echōn*, in possession of speech, but not as the thinking animal, the *animal rationale*. None of these characteristics has escaped the attention of the philosophers. The curious thing is, however, that the more "professional" the

thinkers were and the greater they loom in our tradition of philosophy, the more they were inclined to find ways and means of reinterpreting these inherent traits so as to be armed against common-sense reasoning's objections to the uselessness and unreality of the whole enterprise. The lengths to which philosophers went in these reinterpretations as well as the quality of their arguments would be inexplicable if they had been directed at the famous multitude—which has never cared anyway and remained happily ignorant of philosophical argumentation—rather than prompted primarily by their own common sense and by the self-doubt which inevitably accompanies its suspension. The same Kant who confided his true thinking experiences to the privacy of his notebooks announced publicly that he had laid the foundations of all future metaphysical systems, and Hegel, the last and most ingenious among the system-builders, transformed thinking's undoing of its own results into the mighty power of the negative without which no movement and no development would ever come to pass. For him, the same inexorable chain of developmental consequences which rules organic nature from germ to fruit, in which one phase always "negates" and cancels out the earlier one, rules the undoing of the mind's thinking process, except that the latter, since it is "mediated through consciousness and will," through mental activities, can be seen as "making itself": "Mind is only that which it makes itself, and it makes itself actually into that which it is itself (potentially)." Which, incidentally, leaves unanswered the question of who made the potentiality of the mind to begin with.

I have mentioned Hegel because large portions of his work can be read as a running polemic against common sense, especially the Preface to the *Phenomenology of the Mind.* Very early (1801), he had asserted in a truculent mood, obviously still bothered by Plato's Thracian girl and her innocent laughter, that indeed "the world of philosophy [is for common sense] a world turned upside down."[44] Just as Kant had started out to remedy the "scandal of Reason," namely, that reason when it wished to know got trapped in its own antinomies, so Hegel set out to remedy the impotence of Kantian reason, that "it could achieve no more than an Ideal and an Ought," and

declared that reason, on the contrary, by virtue of the Idea is *das schlechthin Mächtige,* the mighty as such.[45]

Hegel's significance in our context lies in the fact that he, perhaps more than any other philosopher, testifies to the intramural warfare between philosophy and common sense, and this by virtue of his being by nature equally gifted as a historian and as a thinker. He knew that the intensity of the thinking ego's experiences is due to their being sheer activity: the mind's "very essence . . . is *action.* It makes itself what it essentially is; it is its own product, its own work." And he knew about its reflexivity: "In this lust of activity it only deals with itself."[46] He even admitted in his own way the mind's tendency to destroy its results: "Thus the mind is at war with itself. It must overcome itself as its own enemy and formidable obstacle."[47] But these insights of speculative reason into what it is actually doing when to all appearances it is doing nothing he transformed into pieces of dogmatic knowledge, treating them as results of cognition, so as to be able to fit them into an all-comprehensive system where they would then have the same reality as the results of other sciences, results which, on the other hand, he denounced as essentially meaningless products of common-sense reasoning, or as "defective knowledge." And indeed the *system* with its strict architectonic organization can give the fleeting insights of speculative reason at least a semblance of reality. If truth is taken to be the highest object of thought, then it follows that "the true is real only as a system"; only as such a mental artifact does it have any chance to appear and acquire that minimum of durability that we demand of anything real—as a mere proposition it will hardly survive the battle of opinions. To make sure of having eliminated the common-sense notion that thinking deals with abstractions and irrelevancies, which indeed it does not, he asserted, always in the same polemical spirit, that "Being is Thinking" (*dass das Sein Denken ist*), that "the spiritual alone is the real," and that only those generalities with which we deal in thinking actually *are.*[48]

No one has fought with more determination against the particular, the eternal stumbling block of thinking, the undis-

putable thereness of objects that no thought can reach or explain. The highest function of philosophy, according to Hegel, is to eliminate the contingent, and all particulars, everything that exists, are contingent by definition. Philosophy deals with the particulars as parts of a whole, and the whole is the system, a product of speculative thought. This whole, scientifically speaking, can never be more than a plausible hypothesis, which by integrating every particular into an all-comprehensive thought transforms them all into thought-things and thus eliminates their most scandalous property, their realness, together with their contingency. It was Hegel who declared that "the time has come for the elevation of philosophy to a science," and who wished to transform philo-sophy, the mere love of wisdom, into wisdom, *sophia.* In this way he succeeded in persuading himself that "to think is to act"—which this most solitary occupation can never do, since we can act only "in concert," in company and agreement with our peers, hence in an existential situation that effectively prevents thinking.

In sharp contrast to all these theories, framed as a kind of apology for speculative thought, stands the famous, strangely unconnected and always mistranslated remark that occurs in the same Preface to the *Phenomenology* and that expresses directly, unsystematically, Hegel's original experiences in speculative thought: "The true is thus the bacchanalian revel, where no member [i.e., no particular thought] is not drunken, and since every member [every thought] no sooner separates itself [from the train of thought of which it is a mere part] than it dissolves straightaway, the revel is just as much a state of transparent, unbroken quiet." To Hegel, this was how the very "life of truth"—truth that has come alive in the process of thinking—manifests itself to the thinking ego. This ego may not know whether man and the world are real or—see especially Indian philosophy—a mere mirage; it knows only of being "alive" in an elation that always borders on "intoxication"—as Nietzsche once said. How deeply this feeling underlies the whole "system" may be gauged when we encounter it again at the end of the *Phenomenology:* there it is contrasted with the "lifeless"—the emphasis is always on *life*—and expresses itself

in Schiller's verses, badly misquoted: "Out of the chalice of this spiritual kingdom / foams forth the mind's infinity." (*"Aus dem Kelche dieses Geisterreiches / schäumt ihm seine Unendlichkeit."*)

11 *Thinking and doing: the spectator*

I have been speaking of the special predicaments of thinking that may be ascribed to the radicalism of its withdrawal from the world. By contrast, neither willing nor judging, though dependent on thought's preliminary reflection upon their objects, is ever caught up in these reflections; their objects are particulars with an established home in the appearing world, from which the willing or judging mind removes itself only temporarily and with the intention of a later return. This is especially true of the will, whose withdrawal phase is characterized by the strongest form of reflexivity, an acting back upon itself: the *volo me velle* is much more characteristic of the will than the *cogito me cogitare* is of thinking. What all these activities have in common, however, is the peculiar *quiet*, absence of any doing or disturbances, the withdrawal from involvement and from the partiality of immediate interests that in one way or another make me part of the real world, a withdrawal referred to earlier (page 76) as the condition prerequisite for all judgment.

Historically, this kind of withdrawal from doing is the oldest condition posited for the life of the mind. In its early, original form it rests on the discovery that only the *spectator*, never the actor, can know and understand whatever offers itself as a spectacle. That discovery greatly contributed to the Greek philosophers' conviction of the superiority of the contemplative, merely onlooking, way of life, whose most elementary condition—according to Aristotle, who was the first to elaborate it[49]—was *scholē*. *Scholē* is not leisure time as we understand it, the leftover spare time of inactivity after a day's work "used for meeting the exigencies of existence,"[50] but the deliberate

act of abstaining, of holding oneself back (*schein*) from the ordinary activities determined by our daily wants (*hē tōn anagkaiōn scholē*), in order to act out leisure (*scholēn agein*), which in turn was the true goal of all other activities, just as peace, for Aristotle, was the true goal of war. Recreation and play, in our understanding the natural activities of leisure, belonged, on the contrary, still to *a-scholia,* the state of being deprived of leisure, since play and recreation are necessary for the restoration of the human labor force charged with taking care of life's necessities.

We find this act of deliberate, active non-participation in life's daily business, probably in its earliest, certainly its simplest, form, in a parable ascribed to Pythagoras and reported by Diogenes Laertius:

> Life . . . is like a festival; just as some come to the festival to compete, some to ply their trade, but the best people come as spectators [*theatai*], so in life the slavish men go hunting for fame [*doxa*] or gain, the philosophers for truth.[51]

What is stressed here as more noble than the competition for fame and gain is by no means a truth invisible and inaccessible to ordinary men; nor does the place the spectators withdraw to belong to any "higher" region such as Parmenides and Plato later envisioned; their place is in the world and their "nobility" is only that they do not participate in what is going on but look on it as a mere spectacle. From the Greek word for spectators, *theatai,* the later philosophical term "theory" was derived, and the word "theoretical" until a few hundred years ago meant "contemplating," looking upon something from the outside, from a position implying a view that is hidden from those who take part in the spectacle and actualize it. The inference to be drawn from this early distinction between doing and understanding is obvious: as a spectator you may understand the "truth" of what the spectacle is about; but the price you have to pay is withdrawal from participating in it.

The first datum underlying this estimate is that only the spectator occupies a position that enables him to see the whole play–as the philosopher is able to see the *kosmos* as a harmonious ordered whole. The actor, being part of the whole,

must *enact* his part; not only is he a "part" by definition, he is bound to the particular that finds its ultimate meaning and the justification of its existence solely as a constituent of a whole. Hence, withdrawal from direct involvement to a standpoint outside the game (the festival of life) is not only a condition for judging, for being the final arbiter in the ongoing competition, but also the condition for understanding the meaning of the play. Second: what the actor is concerned with is *doxa,* a word that signifies both fame and opinion, for it is through the opinion of the audience and the judge that fame comes about. It is decisive for the actor, but not for the spectator, how he appears to others; he depends on the spectator's it-seems-to-me (his *dokei moi,* which gives the actor his *doxa*); he is not his own master, not what Kant would later call autonomous; he must conduct himself in accordance with what spectators expect of him, and the final verdict of success or failure is in their hands.

The withdrawal of judgment is obviously very different from the withdrawal of the philosopher. It does not leave the world of appearances but retires from active involvement in it to a privileged position in order to contemplate the whole. Moreover, and perhaps more significantly, Pythagoras' spectators are members of an audience and therefore quite unlike the philosopher who begins his *bios theōrētikos* by leaving the company of his fellow-men and their uncertain opinions, their *doxai* that can only express an it-seems-to-me. Hence the spectator's verdict, while impartial and freed from the interests of gain or fame, is not independent of the views of others—on the contrary, according to Kant, an "enlarged mentality" has to take them into account. The spectators, although disengaged from the particularity characteristic of the actor, are not solitary. Nor are they self-sufficient, like the "highest god" the philosopher tries to emulate in thought and who, according to Plato, "is forever . . . solitary by reason of his excellence, able to be together, he himself with himself, needing nobody else, neither acquaintance nor friend, he sufficient with himself."[52]

This distinction between thinking and judging only came to the fore with Kant's political philosophy—not surprisingly,

since Kant was the first, and has remained the last, of the great philosophers to deal with judgment as one of the basic mental activities. For the point of the matter is that in the various treatises and essays, all written late in Kant's life, the spectator's viewpoint is not determined by the categorical imperatives of practical reason, that is, reason's answer to the question What ought I to do? That answer is moral and concerns the individual qua individual, in the full autonomous independence of reason. As such, in a moral-practical way, he can never claim the right to rebel. And yet, the same individual, when he happens not to act but to be a mere spectator, will have the right to judge and to render the final verdict on the French Revolution on no other grounds than his "wishful participation bordering on enthusiasm," his sharing in the "exaltation of the uninvolved public," his basing himself, in other words, on the judgment of his fellow-spectators, who also had not "the least intention of assisting" in the events. And it was their verdict, in the last analysis, and not the deeds of the actors, that persuaded Kant to call the French Revolution "a phenomenon in human history [which] is not to be forgotten."[53] In this clash between joint, participating action, without which, after all, the events to be judged would never have come into being, and reflecting, observing judgment, there is no doubt for Kant as to which should have the last word. Assuming that history is nothing but the miserable story of mankind's eternal ups and downs, the spectacle of sound and fury "may perhaps be moving for a while; but the curtain must eventually descend. For in the long run, it becomes a farce. And even if the actors do not tire of it—*for they are fools* —the spectator does, for any single act will be enough for him if he can reasonably conclude from it that the never-ending play will be of eternal sameness" (italics added).[54]

This is a telling passage indeed. And if we add to it Kant's conviction that human affairs are guided by the "ruse of nature," which leads the human species, behind the backs of acting men, into a perpetual progress, just as Hegel's "ruse of reason" leads them to the revelation of the Absolute Spirit, we may well be justified in asking if all actors are not fools, or if the spectacle, revealing itself only to the spectator, would

not just as well be served by the acts of fools. With more or less sophisticated qualifications, this has always been the secret assumption of the philosophers of history, that is, of those thinkers of the modern age who, for the first time, decided to take the realm of human affairs—Plato's *ta tōn anthrōpōn pragmata*—seriously enough to reflect upon it. And are they right? Is it not true that "something else results from the actions of men than what they intend and achieve, something else than they know or want"? "To give an analogy, a man may set fire to the house of another out of revenge. . . . The immediate action is to hold a small flame to a small part of a beam. . . . [What follows is] a vast conflagration. . . . This result was neither part of the primary deed nor the intention of him who commenced it. . . . This example merely shows that in the immediate action something else may be involved than is consciously willed by the actor."[55] (These are Hegel's words, but they could have been written by Kant.) In either case it is not through acting but through contemplating that the "something else," namely, the meaning of the whole, is revealed. The spectator, not the actor, holds the clue to the meaning of human affairs—only, and this is decisive, Kant's spectators exist in the plural, and this is why he could arrive at a political philosophy. Hegel's spectator exists strictly in the singular: the philosopher becomes the organ of the Absolute Spirit, and the philosopher is Hegel himself. But even Kant, more aware than any other philosopher of human plurality, could conveniently forget that even if the spectacle were always the same and therefore tiresome, the audiences would change from generation to generation; nor would a fresh audience be likely to arrive at the conclusions handed down by tradition as to what an unchanging play has to tell it.

If we speak of the mind's withdrawal as the necessary condition of all mental activities, we can hardly avoid raising the question of the place or region toward which the movement of absenting oneself is directed. I have treated the withdrawal of judgment to the spectator's standpoint prematurely and yet at some length because I wanted to raise the question

first in its simplest, most obvious form by pointing to cases where the region of withdrawal is clearly located within our ordinary world, the reflexivity of the faculty notwithstanding. There they are, in Olympia, on the ascending rows of theater or stadium, carefully separated from the ongoing games; and Kant's "uninvolved public" that followed events in Paris with "disinterested pleasure" and a sympathy "bordering on enthusiasm" was present in every intellectual circle in Europe during the early nineties of the eighteenth century—although Kant himself was probably thinking of the crowds in the streets of Paris.

But the trouble is that no such incontestable locality can be found when we ask ourselves where we are when we think or will, surrounded, as it were, by things which are no more or are not yet or, finally, by such everyday thought-things as justice, liberty, courage, that are nevertheless totally outside sense experience. The willing ego, it is true, early found an abode, a region of its own; as soon as this faculty was discovered, in the early centuries of the Christian era, it was localized *within* us, and if somebody were to write the history of inwardness in terms of an inner *life*, he would soon perceive that this history coincides with the history of the Will. But inwardness, as we have already indicated, has problems of its own even if one agrees that soul and mind are not the same. Moreover, the peculiar reflexive nature of the will, sometimes identified with the heart and almost always regarded as the organ of our innermost self, has made this region even harder to isolate. As for thinking, the question of where we are when we think seems to have been raised only by Plato, in the *Sophist*;[56] there, after having determined the sophist's locality, he promised to determine the philosopher's proper locality as well—the *topos noētos* he had mentioned in the earlier dialogues[57]—but he never kept this promise. It may have been that he simply failed to complete the trilogy of *Sophist-Statesman-Philosopher* or that he had come to believe that the answer was implicitly given in the *Sophist*, where he pictures the sophist as "at home in the darkness of Not-being," which "makes him so hard to perceive," "whereas the philoso-

pher . . . is difficult to see because his region is so bright; for the eye of the many cannot endure to keep its gaze fixed on the divine."[58] That answer could indeed be expected from the author of the *Republic* and the Cave parable.

12 *Language and metaphor*

Mental activities, invisible themselves and occupied with the invisible, become manifest only through speech. Just as appearing beings living in a world of appearances have an urge to show themselves, so thinking beings, which still belong to the world of appearances even after they have mentally withdrawn from it, have an *urge to speak* and thus to make manifest what otherwise would not be a part of the appearing world at all. But while appearingness as such demands and presupposes the presence of spectators, thinking in its need of speech does not demand or necessarily presuppose auditors: communication with our fellow-men would not necessitate human language with its intricate complexity of grammar and syntax. The language of animals—sounds, signs, gestures—would be amply sufficient to serve all immediate needs, not only for self-preservation and the preservation of the species, but also for making evident the moods and emotions of the soul.

It is not our soul but our mind that demands speech. I referred to Aristotle when I drew a distinction between mind and soul, the thoughts of our reason and the passions of our emotional apparatus, and I called attention to the extent to which the key distinction in *De Anima* is reinforced by a passage in the introduction to his short treatise on language, *De Interpretatione*.[59] I shall come back to the same treatise, for its most interesting point is that the criterion of *logos*, coherent speech, is not truth or falsehood but meaning. Words as such are neither true nor false. The word "centaur," for instance (Aristotle uses the example of "goat-stag," an animal that is half-goat, half-stag), "means something, though nothing true or

false, unless one adds 'non-being' or 'being' to it." *Logos* is speech in which words are put together to form a sentence that is totally meaningful by virtue of synthesis (*synthēkē*). Words, meaningful in themselves, and thoughts (*noēmata*) resemble each other (*eoiken*). Hence speech, though always "significant sound" (*phōnē semantikē*), is not necessarily *apophantikos*, a statement or a proposition in which *alētheuein* and *pseudesthai*, truth and falsehood, being and non-being, are at stake. This is not always the case: a prayer, as we saw, is a *logos*, but neither true nor false.[60] Thus implicit in the urge to speak is the quest for meaning, not necessarily the quest for truth. It is also noteworthy that nowhere in this discussion of the relation of language to thought does Aristotle raise the question of priorities; he does not decide whether thinking is the origin of speaking, as though speech were merely an instrument of communicating our thoughts, or whether thought is the consequence of the fact that man is a speaking animal. In any case, since words—carriers of meaning—and thoughts resemble each other, *thinking beings have an urge to speak, speaking beings have an urge to think.*

Of all human needs, only "the need of reason" could never be adequately met without discursive thought, and discursive thought is inconceivable without words already meaningful, before a mind travels, as it were, through them—*poreuesthai dia logōn* (Plato). Language, no doubt, also serves communication between men, but there it is needed only because men are thinking beings and as such in need of communicating their thoughts; thoughts do not have to be communicated in order to occur, but they cannot occur without being spoken—silently or sounding out in dialogue, as the case may be. It is because thinking, though it always takes place in words, does not need auditors that Hegel, in agreement with the testimony of almost all philosophers, could say that "philosophy is something solitary." And it is not because man is a thinking being but because he exists only in the plural that his reason, too, wants communication and is likely to go astray if deprived of it; for reason, as Kant observed, is indeed "not fit to isolate itself, but to communicate."[61] The function of that soundless speech—*tacite secum rationare*, to "reason silently with one-

self," in the words of Anselm of Canterbury[62]—is to come to terms with whatever may be given to our senses in everyday appearances; the need of reason is to *give account, logon didonai,* as the Greeks called it with greater precision, of whatever there may be or may have occurred. This is prompted not by the thirst for knowledge—the need may arise in connection with well-known and entirely familiar phenomena—but by the quest for meaning. The sheer naming of things, the creation of words, is the human way of *appropriating* and, as it were, disalienating the world into which, after all, each of us is born as a newcomer and a stranger.

These observations on the interconnection of language and thought, which make us suspect that no speechless thought can exist, obviously do not apply to civilizations where the written sign rather than the spoken word is decisive and where, consequently, thinking itself is not soundless speech but mental dealing with images. This is notably true of China, whose philosophy may well rank with the philosophy of the Occident. There "the power of words is supported by the power of the written sign, the image," and not the other way round, as in the alphabetic languages, where script is thought of as secondary, no more than an agreed-upon set of symbols.[63] For the Chinese, every sign makes visible what we would call a concept or an essence—Confucius is reported to have said that the Chinese sign for "dog" is the perfect image of dog as such, whereas in our understanding "no image could ever be adequate to the concept" of dog in general. "It would never attain that universality of the concept which renders it valid of all" dogs.[64] "The concept 'dog,'" according to Kant, who in the chapter on Schematism in the *Critique of Pure Reason* clarifies one of the basic assumptions of all Western thinking, "signifies a rule according to which my imagination can delineate the figure of a four-footed animal in a general manner, without limitation to any single determinate figure such as experience, or any possible image that I can represent *in concreto,* actually presents." And he adds, "This schematism of our intellect . . . is an art concealed in the depths of the human soul, whose real modes of activity nature is hardly

likely ever to allow us to discover, and to have open to our gaze."[65]

In our context, the relevance of the passage is that our mind's faculty of dealing with invisibles is needed even for ordinary sense experience, for us to recognize a dog as a dog no matter in what form the four-footed animal may present itself. It follows that we should be able to "intuit," in Kant's sense, the general character of an object that is never present to our senses. For these schemata—sheer abstractions—Kant used the word "monogram," and Chinese script can perhaps be best understood as monogrammatical, so to speak. In other words, what for us is "abstract" and invisible, is for the Chinese emblematically concrete and visibly given in their script, as when, for instance, the image of two united hands serves for the concept of friendship. They think in images and not in words. And this thinking in images always remains "concrete" and cannot be discursive, traveling through an ordered train of thought, nor can it give account of itself (*logon didonai*); the answer to the typically Socratic question What is friendship? is visibly present and evident in the emblem of two united hands, and "the emblem liberates a whole stream of pictorial representations" through plausible associations by which images are joined together. This can best be seen in the great variety of composite signs, when, for instance, the sign for "cold" combines "all those notions which are associated with thinking of cold weather" and the activities serving to protect men against it. Poetry, therefore, even if read aloud, will affect the hearer optically; he will not stick to the word he hears but to the sign he remembers and with it to the sights to which the sign clearly points.

These differences between concrete thinking in images and our abstract dealing with verbal concepts are fascinating and disquieting—I have no competence to deal with them adequately. They are perhaps all the more disquieting because amid them we can clearly perceive one assumption we share with the Chinese: the unquestioned priority of vision for mental activities. This priority, as we shall see shortly, remains absolutely decisive throughout the history of Western metaphysics and its notion of truth. What distinguishes us from

them is not *nous* but *logos*, our necessity to give account of and *justify* in words. All strictly logical processes, such as the deducing of inferences from the general to the particular or inductive reasoning from particulars to some general rule, represent such justifications, and this can be done only in words. Only Wittgenstein, as far as I know, ever became aware of the fact that hieroglyphic writing corresponded to a notion of truth understood in the metaphor of vision. He writes: "In order to understand the essence of a proposition, we should consider hieroglyphic script, which depicts the facts that it describes. And alphabetic script developed out of it without losing what was essential to depiction."[66] This last remark is of course highly doubtful. What is less doubtful is that philosophy, as we know it, would hardly have come into existence without the Greeks' early reception and adaptation of the alphabet from Phoenician sources.

Yet language, the only medium through which mental activities can be manifest not only to the outside world but also to the mental ego itself, is by no means as evidently adequate for the thinking activity as vision is for its business of seeing. No language has a ready-made vocabulary for the needs of mental activity; they all borrow their vocabulary from words originally meant to correspond either to sense experience or to other experiences of ordinary life. This borrowing, however, is never haphazard or arbitrarily symbolic (like mathematical signs) or emblematic; all philosophic and most poetic language is metaphorical but not in the simple sense of the Oxford dictionary, which defines "Metaphor" as "the figure of speech in which a name or descriptive term is transferred to some object different from, but analogous to, that to which it is properly applicable." There is no analogy between, say, a sunset and old age, and when the poet in a hackneyed metaphor speaks of old age as the "sunset of life" he has in mind that the setting of the sun relates to the day that preceded it as old age relates to life. If therefore, as Shelley says, the poet's language is "vitally metaphorical," it is so to the extent that "it marks the before unapprehended *relations* of things and perpetuates their apprehension"

(italics added).[67] Every metaphor discovers "an intuitive perception of similarity in dissimilars" and, according to Aristotle, is for this very reason a "sign of genius," "the greatest thing by far."[68] But this similarity, for Aristotle, too, is not a similarity present in otherwise dissimilar objects but a similarity of relations as in an *analogy* which always needs four terms and can be presented in the formula B:A = D:C. "Thus a cup is in relation to Dionysus what a shield is to Ares. The cup accordingly will be metaphorically described as the 'shield of *Dionysus*.'"[69] And this speaking in analogies, in metaphorical language, according to Kant, is the only way through which speculative reason, which we here call thinking, can manifest itself. The metaphor provides the "abstract," imageless thought with an intuition drawn from the world of appearances whose function it is "to establish the reality of our concepts"[70] and thus undo, as it were, the withdrawal from the world of appearances that is the precondition of mental activities. This is comparatively easy as long as our thought merely responds to the claims of our need to know and understand what is given in the appearing world, that is, so long as we remain within the limitations of common-sense reasoning; what we need for common-sense thinking are *examples* to illustrate our concepts, and these examples are adequate because our concepts are drawn from appearances—they are mere abstractions. It is altogether different if reason's need transcends the boundaries of the given world and leads us on to the uncertain sea of speculation where "no intuition can be given which shall be adequate to [reason's ideas]."[71] At this point metaphor comes in. The metaphor achieves the "carrying over"—*metapherein*—of a genuine and seemingly impossible *metabasis eis allo genos*, the transition from one existential state, that of thinking, to another, that of being an appearance among appearances, and this can be done only by *analogies*. (Kant gives as an example of a successful metaphor the description of the despotic state as a "mere machine (like a hand mill)" because it is "governed by an individual absolute will. . . . For between a despotic state and a hand mill there is, to be sure, no similarity; but there is a similarity in the rules according to which we reflect upon these two things and their

causality." And he adds: "Our language is full of indirect presentations of this sort," a matter that "has not been sufficiently analyzed hitherto, for it deserves a deeper investigation."[72]) The insights of metaphysics are "gained by *analogy,* not in the usual meaning of imperfect resemblance of two things, but of a *perfect resemblance of two relations between totally dissimilar things.*"[73] In the often less precise language of the *Critique of Judgment* Kant also calls these "representations in accordance with a mere analogy" symbolical.[74]

All philosophical terms are metaphors, frozen analogies, as it were, whose true meaning discloses itself when we dissolve the term into the original context, which must have been vividly in the mind of the first philosopher to use it. When Plato introduced the everyday words "soul" and "idea" into philosophical language—connecting an invisible organ in man, the soul, with something invisible present in the world of invisibles, the ideas—he still must have heard the words as they were used in ordinary pre-philosophic language. *Psyche* is the "breath of life" exhaled by the dying, and idea or *eidos* is the shape or blueprint the craftsman must have in front of his mind's eye before he begins his work—an image that survives both the fabrication process and the fabricated object and can serve as model again and again, thus taking on an everlastingness that fits it for eternity in the sky of ideas. The underlying analogy of Plato's doctrine of the soul runs as follows: As the breath of life relates to the body it leaves, that is, to the corpse, so the soul from now on will be supposed to relate to the living body. The analogy underlying his doctrine of ideas can be reconstructed in a similar manner; as the craftsman's mental image directs his hand in fabrication and is the measurement of the object's success or failure, so all materially and sensorily given data in the world of appearances relate to and are evaluated according to an invisible pattern, localized in the sky of ideas.

We know that *noeomai* was first used in the sense of perceiving by the eyes, then transferred to perceptions of the mind in the sense of "apprehend"; finally it became a word for the highest form of thinking. Nobody, we can assume, thought that the eye, the organ of vision, and the *nous,* the

organ of thinking, were the same; but the word itself indicated that the relation between the eye and the seen object was similar to the relation between the mind and its thought-object—namely, yielded the same kind of evidence. We know that no one before Plato had used the word for the artisan's shape or blue print in philosophical language, just as no one before Aristotle had used the word *energos,* an adjective indicating someone active, at work, busy, to frame the term *energeia* denoting actuality in opposition to *dynamis,* mere potentiality. And the same is true for such standard terms as "substance" and "accident," derived from the Latin for *hypokeimenon* and *kata symbebēkos*—what underlies as distinct from what accidentally accompanies. No one before Aristotle had used in any other sense but accusation the word *katēgoria* (category), signifying what was asserted in court procedures about the defendant.[75] In Aristotelian usage this word became something like "predicate," resting on the following analogy: just as an indictment (*katagoreuein ti tinos*) hands something down (*kata*) to a defendant that he is charged with, hence that belongs to him, the predicate hands down the appropriate quality to the subject. These examples are all familiar and could be multiplied. I shall add one more that seems to me especially telling because of its great importance for philosophical terminology; our word for the Greek *nous* is either mind—from the Latin *mens,* indicating something like the German *Gemüt*—or reason. I am concerned here with the latter only. Reason comes from the Latin *ratio,* derived from the verb *reor, ratus sum,* which means to calculate and also ratiocinate. The Latin translation has a totally different metaphorical content, which comes much closer to the Greek *logos* than to *nous.* To those who have an understandable prejudice against etymological arguments, I would like to recall the common Ciceronian phrase *ratio et oratio,* which would make no sense in Greek.

The metaphor, bridging the abyss between inward and invisible mental activities and the world of appearances, was certainly the greatest gift language could bestow on thinking and hence on philosophy, but the metaphor itself is poetic rather than philosophical in origin. It is therefore hardly sur-

prising that poets and writers attuned to poetry rather than to philosophy should have been aware of its essential function. Thus we read in a little-known essay by Ernest Fenollosa, published by Ezra Pound and so far as I know never mentioned in the literature on the metaphor: "Metaphor is . . . the very substance of poetry"; without it, "there would have been no bridge whereby to cross from the minor truth of the seen to the major truth of the unseen."[76]

The discoverer of this originally poetic tool was Homer, whose two poems are full of all kinds of metaphorical expressions. I shall choose from an *embarras de richesses* the passage in the *Iliad* where the poet likens the tearing onslaught of fear and grief on the hearts of men to the combined onslaught of winds from several directions on the waters of the sea.[77] Think of these storms that you know so well, the poet seems to tell us, and you will know about grief and fear. Significantly, the reverse will not work. No matter how long somebody thinks about grief and fear, he will never find out anything about the winds and the sea; the comparison is clearly meant to tell what grief and fear can do to the human heart, that is, meant to illuminate an experience that does not appear. The irreversibility of the analogy distinguishes it sharply from the mathematical symbol used by Aristotle in trying to describe the mechanics of metaphor. For no matter how successfully the metaphor may have hit upon a "perfect resemblance" of relation between two "totally dissimilar things" and how perfectly, therefore, since A obviously is not the same as C and B not the same as D, the formula B:A = D:C may seem to express it, Aristotle's equation implies reversibility—if B:A = D:C, it follows that C:D = A:B. What is lost in the mathematical reckoning is the actual function of the metaphor, its turning the mind back to the sensory world in order to illuminate the mind's non-sensory experiences for which there are no words in any language. (The Aristotelian formula worked because it dealt only with visible things and actually was applied not to metaphors and their carrying over from one realm to another but to *emblems,* and emblems are already visible illustrations of something invisible—the cup of

Dionysus, a pictograph of the festive mood associated with wine; the shield of Ares, a pictograph of the fury of war; the scales of justice in the hands of the blind goddess, a pictograph of Justice, which weighs deeds without consideration of the persons who did them. The same is true of outworn analogies that have turned into idioms, as in the case in Aristotle's second example: "As old age (D) is to life (C), so is evening (B) to day (A).")

In common parlance of course there are a great many figurative expressions that resemble metaphors without exercising the true function of the metaphor.[78] They are mere figures of speech even if used by poets—"white like ivory," to remain with Homer—and they, too, are often characterized by a transference when some term belonging to one class of objects is referred to another class; thus we speak of the "foot" of a table, as if it were attached to a man or animal. Here the transference moves within the same realm, within the "genus" of visibles, and here the analogy is indeed reversible. But this is by no means always the case even with metaphors that do not directly point to something invisible. In Homer there is another, more complex kind of extended metaphor or simile which, though moving among visibles, points to a hidden story. For instance, the great dialogue between Odysseus and Penelope shortly before the recognition scene in which Odysseus, disguised as a beggar and saying "many false things," tells Penelope that he entertained her husband in Crete, whereupon we are told how "her tears ran" as she listened "and her body was melted, as the snow melts along the high places of the mountains when the West Wind has piled it there, but the South Wind melts it, and as it melts the rivers run full flood. It was even so that her beautiful cheeks were streaming tears, as Penelope wept for her man, who was sitting there by her side."[79] Here the metaphor seems to combine only visibles; the tears on her cheek are no less visible than the melting snow. The invisible made visible in the metaphor is the long winter of Odysseus' absence, the lifeless frigidity and unyielding hardness of those years, which now, at the first signs of hope for a renewal of life, begin to melt away. The tears themselves

had only expressed sorrow; their meaning—the thoughts that caused them—became manifest in the metaphor of the snow melting and softening the ground before spring.

Kurt Riezler, who was the first to associate the "Homeric simile and the beginning of philosophy," insists on the *tertium comparationis,* necessary for every comparison, which permits "the poet to perceive and to make known soul as world and world as soul."[80] Behind the opposition of world and soul, there must be a unity that makes the correspondence possible, an "unknown law," as Riezler calls it, quoting Goethe, equally present in the world of the senses and the realm of the soul. It is the same unity that binds together all opposites—day and night, light and darkness, coldness and warmth—each of which is inconceivable in separation, unthinkable unless mysteriously related to its antithesis. This hidden unity becomes then, according to Riezler, the topic of the philosophers, the *koinos logos* of Heraclitus, the *hen pan* of Parmenides; perception of this unity distinguishes the philosopher's truth from the opinions of ordinary men. And in support he quotes Heraclitus: "The god is day night, winter summer, war peace, satiety hunger [all opposites, he is the *nous*]; he changes in the way that fire, when it is mixed with spices, is named according to the scent of each of them."[81]

Philosophy, one is inclined to agree, did go to Homer's school in order to emulate his example. And one's tendency to agree is considerably strengthened by the two earliest, most famous influential of all thought parables: Parmenides' voyage to the gates of day and night and Plato's Cave parable, the former being a poem and the latter essentially poetic, using Homeric language throughout. This suggests at least how right Heidegger was when he called poetry and thinking close neighbors.[82]

If we now try to examine more closely the various ways in which language succeeds in bridging the gulf between the realm of the invisible and the world of appearances, we may tentatively offer the following outline: From Aristotle's suggestive definition of language as a "meaningful sounding out" of words that in themselves are already "significant sounds"

that "resemble" thoughts, it follows that thinking is the mental activity that actualizes those products of the mind that are inherent in speech and for which language, prior to any special effort, has already found an appropriate though provisional home in the audible world. If speaking and thinking spring from the same source, then the very gift of language could be taken as a kind of proof, or perhaps, rather, as a token, of men's being naturally endowed with an instrument capable of transforming the invisible into an "appearance." Kant's "land of thought"—*Land des Denkens*—may never appear or manifest itself to our bodily eyes; it is manifest, with whatever distortions, not just to our minds but to our bodily ears. And it is in this context that the mind's language by means of metaphor returns to the world of visibilities to illuminate and elaborate further what cannot be seen but can be said.

Analogies, metaphors, and emblems are the threads by which the mind holds on to the world even when, absent-mindedly, it has lost direct contact with it, and they guarantee the unity of human experience. Moreover, in the thinking process itself they serve as models to give us our bearings lest we stagger blindly among experiences that our bodily senses with their relative certainty of knowledge cannot guide us through. The simple fact that our mind is able to find such analogies, that the world of appearances reminds us of things non-apparent, may be seen as a kind of "proof" that mind and body, thinking and sense experience, the invisible and the visible, belong together, are "made" for each other, as it were. In other words, if the rock in the sea "which endures the swift courses of whistling winds and the swelling breakers that burst against it" can become a metaphor for endurance in battle, then "it is not . . . correct to say that the rock is viewed anthropomorphically, unless we add that our understanding of the rock is anthropomorphic for the same reason that we are able to look at ourselves petromorphically."[83] There is, finally, the fact of the irreversibility of the relationship expressed in metaphor; it indicates in its own manner the absolute primacy of the world of appearances and thus provides additional evidence of the extraordinary quality of thinking, of its being always out of order.