

VILÉM FLUSSER

THE HISTORY OF
THE DEVIL

TRANSLATED BY RODRIGO MALTEZ NOVAES

FLUSSER ARCHIVE COLLECTION

EDITED BY SIEGERIED ZIELINSKI

UNIVOCAL

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A História da Diabo
- published by Editora Martins, 1965 -
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Translated from Portuguese by Rodrigo Maltez Novaes
as *The History of the Devil*

Edited by Siegfried Zielinski

First Edition
Minneapolis © 2014, Univocal Publishing

Published by Univocal
123 North 3rd Street, #202
Minneapolis, MN 55401
www.univocalpublishing.com

This book has been published with support from the
Brazilian Ministry of Culture / National Library Foundation.

Obra publicada com o apoio do
Ministério da Cultura do Brasil / Fundação Biblioteca Nacional.



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Thanks to Edith Flusser, Dinah Flusser, Miguel Gustavo Flusser,
the Vilém Flusser Archive at the Universität der Künste Berlin,
Daniel Irrgang, Jamie Allen, Annie Goh, and Jon Thrower.

Cover design by Jason Wagner
Distributed by the University of Minnesota Press

ISBN 978-1-937561-57-4
Library of Congress Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
A catalog record for this book is available from the Library of Congress

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION.....	XI
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
2. THE DEVIL'S CHILDHOOD.....	11
2.1. HIS BIRTH.....	11
2.2. PLAYING WITH A SPINTOP.....	15
2.3. PLAYING WITH CUBES.....	19
2.4. PLAYING OF COMPOSING ELEMENTS.....	24
3. LUST.....	37
3.1. LIFE.....	38
3.2. THE CELL.....	43
3.3. THE ORGANISM.....	45
3.4. MAN.....	56
3.5. SEX.....	63
3.6. NATIONALISM.....	72
3.7. LOVE FOR THE MOTHER TONGUE.....	79
3.8. LOVE FOR READING AND WRITING.....	82
4. WRATH.....	95
4.1. FREEDOM.....	96
4.2. THE LAW.....	101

4.3. CHANCE.....	106
4.4. WRATH REVISITED.....	110
5. GLUTTONY	113
5.1. THE MECHANISM.....	115
5.2. THE PROGRAM.....	118
5.3. RAW MATERIAL.....	119
5.4. THE PRODUCT.....	123
5.5. THE INSTRUMENT.....	126
5.6. THE FEAST.....	129
6. ENVY AND GREED	131
6.1. SOCIETY.....	133
6.2. RETRIBUTION.....	136
6.3. JUSTICE.....	141
6.4. CONVERSATION.....	143
7. PRIDE	153
7.1. LANGUAGE.....	157
7.1.1. POETRY.....	157
7.1.2. MUSIC AND CONCRETE POETRY.....	160
7.1.3. PAINTING.....	163
7.1.4. SCIENCE.....	166
7.2. PINCERS OF THE WILL.....	170
7.2.1. SCIENCE AS YOGA.....	171
7.2.2. YOGA AS SCIENCE.....	174
7.3. CONTRITION.....	179

8. SLOTH AND THE SADNESS OF THE HEART.....	187
8.1. THE VOICE'S AURA.....	191
8.1.1. STRUCTURE.....	193
8.1.2. REENCOUNTER.....	196
8.2. THE IVORY TOWER.....	201
8.2.1. HONESTY.....	206
8.2.2. THE PURIFICATION BATH.....	208
8.2.3. LET US NOT SPEAK ABOUT THAT.....	209
8.3. INVERSION.....	211
8.4. THE BRONZE GONG.....	213
8.5. LUST ONCE AGAIN.....	214
9. POST SCRIPTUM.....	217
9.1. THEY ABOUND.....	218

Uxori omnia mea

*Gott ist ein lauter Nichts, ihn rührt kein Nun noch Hier: Je mehr
du nach ihm greifst, je mehr entwidet er dir.*
- Angelus Silesius

TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

"The Devil on the street, in the middle of a whirlwind."

João Guimarães Rosa, 1956

Vilém Flusser met Edith Barth, his future wife, at the age of fifteen in 1935. The ensuing experiences they shared during the prewar years of escalating fear and uncertainty, including their subsequent flight from the Nazi invasion of Prague in 1939, a few months before the outbreak of war, cemented a strong emotional bond between them that remained unbroken, even after his tragic death in 1991.

Flusser escaped Prague in March of 1939 with the Barth family to London, where they spent one year before immigrating to Brazil, fearing that the Nazis would also invade England. His father, Gustav Flusser, had been offered a position at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, but chose to stay in Prague under the belief that the situation would not be as bad as others expected. Unfortunately, all of Flusser's immediate family perished in concentration camps including his father Gustav, his mother Melitta, and his ten-year-old sister Ludvika.

In his haste when leaving Prague, Flusser was only able to take along two of his material possessions: a small Jewish prayer book, given to him by his mother at the last minute, and a copy of Goethe's *Faust*. The four years between meeting his future wife and the escape from Prague was a period of increasing fragmentation and confusion. In his autobiography, *Bodenlos*,¹ Flusser writes about the increasing sense of groundlessness that emerged among the Prague Jewish community during those years prior to the Nazi invasion. The resulting philosophical and cultural absurdity and fragmentation, generated by the

1. *Bodenlos (Groundless)*, São Paulo: Anna Blume, 2007.

impending arrival of the Nazis, marked him so deeply that it became one of the central tenets of his existential project from then on; a sense of groundlessness that manifested itself through an immediate experience of the absurd nature of existence, as well as through a loss of meaning and a subsequent search for a new meaning of life and of the human condition. In a short self-portrait, written in 1969, entitled *Em Busca de Significado*,² he describes the preceding thirty years in a succinct but poetic style:

I am the son of well-off, intellectual, bourgeois, Prague-Jews; I spent my childhood and adolescence in the inebriating, spiritual and artistic atmosphere of Prague between the Wars. I survived, stunned, the bestial and stupid Nazi “earthquake” (which devoured my world, that is: not only my others and my things, but also the scales of values that structured my world). The fury of the events spat me out in Brazil – which was a plastic, very amorphous, hungry, and thirsty situation in every sense, including the ontic sense. I was spat out in Brazil at a plastic and assimilable age, therefore I have spent the last thirty years of my life searching for myself in Brazil and for Brazil within myself. If to live is to try to orient oneself, then I have lived intensely, that is, in a philosophical manner. But if to live is to be oriented, then I have not yet started to do it, by engaging myself. I have been available all my life, and I am still available. [...] If I have not found myself in Brazil or Brazil within myself, it is because I have not found the foundation of my being-in-the-world. By formulating it in this way, my failure acquires a religious flavor. My life has been a life without religion but in search of religion; could this not be, perhaps, a definition of philosophy, or at least of a type of philosophy? I am a failure because I live philosophy, which is equivalent to saying that philosophy is my life.

2. “Em Busca de Significado” (In Search of Meaning), *Rumos da Filosofia Atual no Brasil*, São Paulo: Edições Loyola, 1975.

This quote illustrates some of the fundamental aspects that the reader will encounter in *The History of the Devil*, although in allegorical form. The first manuscript of the book was written in German in 1958, during the time that Flusser began his engagement with the Brazilian intellectual scene. The years between his arrival in Brazil and the late 1950s, were a time of intense autodidactic studies but also of a feeling of intellectual isolation. During these years, he worked as an accountant in a radio transistor factory during the day and spent his evenings reading. It is important to note that Flusser never received an academic degree. Despite initiating a Bachelor's Degree in Prague before fleeing, and studying for two semesters at the London School of Economics, once in Brazil, he never continued his formal academic studies, preferring to study alone. Throughout this period, continuously encouraged by Edith, now his wife, Flusser never stopped reading and writing. In the early 1950s he wrote several early essays and in 1957 he concluded his first full monograph, *Das Zwanzigste Jahrhundert*, which remains unpublished. This text already touched on many of the themes, albeit in a less elaborate form, that he would later include in *The History of the Devil*.

Flusser's main intellectual contact during this period was with his compatriot Alex Bloch, a freethinker and a free spirit, who also found himself in Brazil escaping the Nazis' terror. The dialogue between Flusser and Bloch was of an intense philosophical nature,³ and Flusser names Bloch as one of the main intellectual influences of his early development in addition to his wife Edith and his cousin David Flusser, with whom he corresponded throughout his life. In the 1950s, during one of his many intellectual excursions, while working as a general assistant to a Buddhist monk, Bloch introduced Flusser to Zen Buddhism, which both of them studied and practiced. Flusser eventually convinced Bloch to abandon the practice. However, the study of Zen Buddhism, as well as the Veda, had a profound effect upon Flusser, which eventually led him to write *The*

3. *Briefe an Alex Bloch (Letters to Alex Bloch)*, ed. Edith Flusser and Klaus Sander, Göttingen: European Photography, 2000.

History of the Devil with the intention of contrasting Eastern and Western cultural values. Flusser and Bloch disagreed on many philosophical aspects, but as Flusser states in *Bodenlos*, they agreed strongly upon two things: the groundless nature of human existence, and the need to existentialize Neopositivism. Hence, these concepts form some of the matrixes that appear in *The History of the Devil*.

After Flusser completed the first manuscript of the monograph in 1958,⁴ seven years would go by before the second version, written in Portuguese, was published in Brazil. In the 1960s he started to teach at the Polytechnic School of the University of São Paulo through the help of Milton Vargas, who became his closest friend and correspondent. Starting in September 1961 he began to be published in the literary supplement of the *O Estado de São Paulo* newspaper. These activities eventually led to him becoming a member of, and giving lectures at, the Brazilian Institute of Philosophy. This inaugurated what would become Flusser's first period of intense literary production in which his intellect burst into action. Between the years of 1961 and 1965 alone he produced four books, twelve courses (which were written as series of ten to twenty essays and subsequently structured into books, but never published), fifty-six essays for newspapers, sixteen essays for philosophical magazines, including the magazine of the Brazilian Institute of Philosophy and the magazine of the Institute of Technology and Aeronautics, as well as many uncomissioned, independent essays, which remain unpublished to this day. In fact, his level of production remained intense throughout his life, writing everyday for at least four hours in the morning, and always re-writing, translating and re-translating his texts in German, Portuguese, English, and French. However, during the early 1960s his intellectual production was mainly in Portuguese.

4. *Die Geschichte des Teufels (The History of the Devil)*, Göttingen: European Photography, 1996.

It was around the early 1960s that Flusser met João Guimarães Rosa, perhaps Brazil's greatest Modernist writer. Guimarães Rosa's most important work *Grande Sertão: Veredas*,⁵ earned Flusser's admiration and when Curt Meyer-Clason, the prominent German translator of Brazilian literature, translated the book to German in 1964, Guimarães Rosa asked Flusser to assist with some aspects of the text revision.⁶ Both Guimarães Rosa and Flusser shared an appreciation for Goethe's *Faust* and declared it to be the main inspiration behind *Grande Sertão: Veredas* and *The History of the Devil* respectively. Indeed, Flusser started to write his book immediately after having read Guimarães Rosa's book, such was the impact it had on him. The principal aspect of Guimarães Rosa's work that impressed Flusser was his syntactic innovation and the resulting poetic possibilities afforded to the creation of textual images. Guimarães Rosa's style encouraged Flusser to develop his own syntax in Portuguese, which was widely praised for its unique flavor. Flusser was proud of his command of the Portuguese language, which he developed a deep love for in the 1950s, when he started to open up emotionally and intellectually to Brazil and began to accept the fact that he was not going back to Prague. Flusser never wrote in Czech, his native language, instead he focused on German and Portuguese as his main languages, and English and French as subsidiary ones, especially after his return to Europe in 1972. When asked why he did not write in Czech, he responded that in fact he did, but that he wrote "in Czech" through many different languages. According to him the syntax of the Czech language is too soft to generate the levels of articulation that he sought. In an unpublished essay from the 1960s, titled "O Estilo de Guimarães Rosa" Flusser focuses on the syntax of Guimarães Rosa's work, which hints at the significance punctuation would eventually have in his own work:

5. *Grande Sertão: Veredas* (*The Devil to Pay in the Backlands*), Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio, 1956.

6. The review of Rosa's book for the German periodical *Mercur* (issue March 1965) became Flusser's first text published in Germany; its title was "Guimarães Rosa oder: Das große Hinterland des Geistes."

The Portuguese language has, as every literary language does, a set of rules for punctuation, a fluid and not so rigorous set, but even so, relatively fixed, traditionally. The commas, the full stop, the semicolons etc. are visual symbols, ideograms that interrupt the flux of the phrase, which consists of words notated in alphabetical letters, which in turn are musical notations. Therefore, they work in two ways: they open gaps in the structure of the phrase, and they introduce foreign elements into these gaps. However, the ritualization of the use of these interruptions veils their character to the reader's eyes, who passes over them, since he is used to them. He does not notice that the comma, for example, has torn the compactness of the phrase, and opened something like a window toward the unarticulated, within which the phrase articulates itself. Therefore, Guimarães Rosa breaks with tradition, dismisses the rules, and ends the ritual. He puts commas, colons etc. in unexpected places, and takes them out of the usual places. Through this apparently simple trick, these ideograms reacquire their revealing character and force thought into deliberate movements. The effect of this is a kind of awakening from a dogmatic sleep (to speak with Kant), and a new sensibility toward the unarticulated.

This prolific period and his different modes for publishing — books, newspaper essays, courses etc. — allowed Flusser to experiment with slightly different styles of writing, which later, in the 1970s, would condense into a fluid style of prose, at least for the books. In his texts from the 1960s, it is possible to identify three distinct syntactic approaches in his work. For the shorter forms of media such as magazines and newspapers, he adopted what could be called a “telegraphic” style that featured very short, punchy, compact phrases that appear like a string of one-line aphorisms. The style of the essays from his courses is also compact but has a more conversational style as he addresses the audience directly. These were designed to deliver

the maximum amount of concepts as clearly as possible within the time assigned so that discussions could follow. Lastly, there is his “formal” style, which he adopted for the books. *The History of the Devil* is from this formal period and it is also the first book in which he makes full use of irony as a stylistic tool. In *Bodenlos*, he refers to his writing style as follows, “I write in the way I speak, and I speak in the way I write.”

The History of the Devil is Flusser's first major attempt at allegorical philosophy, or philosophical fiction, as he would later refer to it. In terms of style, *Lingua e Realidade* stands diametrically opposed to *The History of the Devil*, in that it presents the formal aspects of what is essentially the same argument but in a non-allegorical and analytic style, namely, the power of the creative human Will, but especially its creative action through language. This period of his production was mainly focused on the philosophy of language and its relation to the human intellect. For the development of *Lingua e Realidade* Flusser systematically re-studied the works of Wittgenstein and Heidegger, as well as several contemporary works on linguistics, philology, psychology and biology. But it was Wittgenstein and Heidegger whom he decided to engage with in a deeper sense. For the catalog text of the 1965 edition of *The History of the Devil*, Flusser wrote:

The argument of the book is silently accompanied by the accords of Existential philosophy and Logicism, both tendencies of current thought that seem to the author to be modern forms of Manichaeism. It also appeals, with polemic intentions, to the nomenclature and terminology of both these philosophies, and the numbering of the paragraphs is a caricature of the Wittgensteinian method. However, the book tries to keep this philosophical backdrop distant from the argument on the surface, so as not to obstruct thought with technicalities.⁷

7. *A História do Diabo (The History of the Devil)*, São Paulo: Martins, 1965.

A caricature with polemic intentions, this is indeed the essence of *The History of the Devil*, and it should be read as such. This particular approach in his work, which he debuts with this text, was to become more and more present throughout his later work. In 1981 he wrote *Vampyreuteuthis infernalis*,⁸ which he refers to as a reworking of the themes of *The History of the Devil*, namely the arbitrary nature of values and their reversibility. However, in the *Vampyreuteuthis infernalis*, the chiasmic pairs that he explores are between man/vampyreuteuthis or man/animal, culture/nature, reason/emotion, rational/irrational, whereas in *The History of the Devil* the project is larger and therefore the chiasmic pairs presented are of a wider scope: God/Devil, Good/Evil, Heaven/Hell, East/West, life/death etc. The important thing to note here is, therefore, the underlying structure of these relations: Flusser was not a dialectician and as he mentions in the quote above, his aim was to overcome a Manichean, binary, approach to values.

The History of the Devil has a circular, expansive structure, which under close scrutiny could be said to mirror the structure of Flusser's oeuvre. To approach it from a structural perspective, one could say that his entire body of work has a fractal-like structure, where both the macro and micro levels are self-similar. Most of his essays have this circular flow of arguments; the books from the 1970s onwards also have a pseudo-circular structure, especially in the way that the essays are arranged, often having the last essay serve as a kind of introduction. The arguments in most of his books expand instead of contract, and at the expected point of conclusion they return to the beginning of the argument. In *The History of the Devil* this structure is very evident, therefore, it works better if the book is read continuously, in order to follow the flow of ideas and the gradual expansion of the argument, which is structured as a chain. If read in sections, the expansive nature and flow of ideas is easily lost and the arguments risk being interpreted as outlandish when taken out of context.

8. *Vampyreuteuthis infernalis*, New York: Atropos Press, 2011.

The Portuguese version of the book is slightly larger than the first German version of the manuscript from 1958. This is mainly due to the experiences that Flusser underwent during the seven years between 1958 and 1965, plus the staggering amount of work that he produced during the same period. By the time he rewrote the book in Portuguese, his intellect had not only suffered many impressions which altered him as a thinker, but it had also become more confident and mature, which invariably produced a different work. This was the only one of his main books in which the first version and the second, final version, were written so many years apart. His usual approach was to simultaneously rework his texts through self-translation and to have both final versions ready at the same time. However, the final version of *The History of the Devil* in Portuguese was never translated back to German. The current German version of the book was published posthumously from the 1958 manuscript, by European Photography in 1993, supervised by Edith Flusser, who continued to edit, translate and publish his work well into the early 2000s.

In 1965, Flusser reworked some of the chapters by adding sub-chapters to include, in the argument of the book, many of the topics that he had explored through his lectures at the Brazilian Institute of Philosophy. The numbering system of the chapters and paragraphs was also introduced, in order to visually resemble the *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus*. However, this visual resemblance is, as previously mentioned, more of a caricature rather than a true application of Wittgenstein's structural method. Indeed the numbering system is not consistent, for example there are many paragraphs that do not have numbers, but that are not outside the flow of the argument.

The manuscript of the Portuguese version is not currently stored at the archive, therefore, for this translation I have used the first edition, the second edition, and Flusser's corrections on the proofs of the first edition. There is a slight difference between the numbering system between the first and second

XIV

editions. In this respect I have chosen to follow the system of the second edition, which is more coherent and consistent, and I have also made minor corrections to obvious misprints. As for the style of the text, I have tried to keep it as close as possible to Flusser's own syntax and turn of phrase, as always. The advantage of translating the text from Portuguese into English is that most of what he does with the language can be reproduced without losing much of its rhythm or chromatic effect. As far as the terminology is concerned, Flusser generally avoids neologisms, often choosing to re-signify a word, or even strip it of its accumulated semantic layers in order to apply it in its strict sense, instead of generating a new lexicon (which is not to say he did not also engage in neologizing). This is particularly exemplified in the manner in which Flusser uses certain terms interchangeably in order to mean the same thing. For example, in this text the expression "the all-different" [*o de todo diferente*], which is a reference to Kierkegaard, is used to mean that which is our absolute Other, a concept which frequently recurs in other works from the same period, but was sometimes rendered in other terms such as "the ineffable," or "the inarticulable," or "the unarticulated," which could also mean "God," "Nature," "the world," or in other words, that which perplexes us and therefore frightens us into thought, into the need to articulate, to philosophize.

Lastly, some say that Flusser allegedly felt this book had magical qualities and for this reason he would not allow it in his house. This myth is difficult to prove or disprove, although it is clear he was aware of how much of himself he had poured into the book. In many ways, this book is an x-ray of his intellect; it is his mind stripped bare. The most telling sign of this is his enigmatic dedication *uxori omnia mea*. This is probably a reference to Cicero, but it gains a different dimension in Flusser's reformulation. In this case, he is not simply dedicating to his wife everything that belongs to him (material or immaterial), he is dedicating himself to her. *In nuce*, Vilém Flusser dedicates to Edith Flusser, through this book, all of what he is, was, and is

still to become; powerful evidence of the strength of the mutual love that was born in the shadows of some of the most horrific events of the 20th century. *Amor omnia vincit*.

Rodrigo Maltez Novaes
Berlin 2013

INTRODUCTION

If seen etymologically, the expression “history of the Devil” has deep roots. The term “history” relates to layers that succeed each other, and the German language links the term “history” (*Geschichte*) with the term “layer” (*Schichte*). The term “Devil” relates to the concept of confusion, and in a disturbing way, to the concept of “God.” However, these etymological accords, which the expression “history of the Devil” evokes, shall only be registered by our naive ears, and shall be emotionally but uncritically accepted, as we attempt to get closer to the Prince of the inferior layers. Divinity¹ presents Herself, through several aspects, to whoever seeks Her, so that through an “*embarras de choix*” She becomes unreachable. The same is true in the attempt to grab hold of the Devil. However, Divinity is atemporal. She simply is and the current of happenings goes by elsewhere. The Devil is possibly immortal, but he certainly emerged at a given moment. He swims in the current of time, and maybe even drives it – he is historical in the strict sense of the term. It is possible to affirm that time started with the Devil, that his emergence, or his downfall, represents the beginning of the drama of time, and that “Devil” and “history” are two aspects of the same process. Therefore, we may affirm that our attempt to escape from the Devil is another aspect of our attempt to emerge from temporality and enter the realm of the immutable Mothers. However, a similar statement would

1. Throughout the text Flusser applies the terms God, Lord, Divinity, and Divine One interchangeably. In Portuguese all nouns are gendered and the term *Divindade* (Divinity) is female, hence the use of the personal and possessive pronouns in the third person feminine in this phrase. [TN]

demonstrate a negative attitude in relation to the Devil, and would turn against us the prejudices we nurture against him. If we wish to do him justice, we must avoid the influence of the anti-diabolic propaganda that has distorted his image for such a long time. A prince that filled so many with enthusiasm along the course of history, in whose name so many confronted the flames with ardent dedication – so many martyrs, witches, sorcerers – such a glorious prince, deserves that our minds be free of prejudices, when we wish to come close to him, in order to know him, at least in part.

We, Westerners, are products of an official tradition that paints the Devil with negative colors, that is, as God's opponent. This tradition seems to be waning. Lately, only a few Westerners have dedicated themselves to painting the Devil. Even the religions no longer seem to have the Devil incarnate. The West is silent in relation to the Devil, and pretends to have forgotten him, according to the rule: "do not think about him." This is a questionable attitude. There were times, for example the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries, when the theme of the Devil was publicly and passionately discussed. These were uncomfortable times for the Devil's dominion. A brief consideration of present times and of recent history seems to demonstrate how this dominion became consolidated. This consideration is one of the motives of this book.

I said that our official tradition conceives of the Devil negatively, as a seductive, deceitful spirit, and as the annihilator of souls. These diabolic attributes do not necessarily need to be evaluated negatively, since they allow for the question: "what is the Devil's justification in his procedure?" However, these attributes undeniably predispose our mind against the Devil. They do not mark the starting point for the investigations of the diabolic character intended by this book. In order to know his motives, his methods, and his deeds, it is necessary to seek other, more positive, aspects of his character. This should not be difficult, since his effects and manifestations are so many in the external world, and within us, that indications of his positive

aspects abound. The whole of civilization's symphony, every one of humanity's advances against the limits imposed by the Divine, this Promethean struggle for the fire of freedom, all of this, from the Devil's perspective, is nothing more than his own majestic opus. Or from the opposite perspective, all of this is nothing more than an illusion created by the Devil. Science, art, and philosophy are the noblest examples of this opus. If we consider how these activities developed along the course of history, and how they distanced themselves from the original, naive sin, we shall have achieved a first sighting of the multiple positive aspects of the Devil's character.

However, we shall have difficulties in distinguishing, within the vast river of phenomena, the diabolic influence from the Divine one. This difficulty is well known to us. It forms the theme of our consciousness, therefore of our life. I propose to simplify the problem and to make this difficulty obvious along the course of this book. I shall call "Divine influence" all of that which tends toward an overcoming of time. And I shall call "diabolic influence" all of that which tends toward keeping the world within time. This is a simplification, but it has as an excuse, the West's millennial tradition. The "Divine" shall therefore be conceived (if it can be conceived) as that which acts within the phenomenal world in order to dissolve and save it, and to transform it into pure Being, thus into atemporality. And the Devil shall be conceived as that which acts within the phenomenal world in order to maintain it, and to keep it from being dissolved and saved. From the point of view of pure Being, the "Divine" is the creative agent and the "Devil," annihilation. But from the point of view of our world, the "Devil" is the conservative principle, and the "Divine" is, euphemistically speaking, the ironsmith's purifying fire. These considerations alone already confuse our traditional concepts of Heaven and Hell. It is the Devil's duty to maintain the world within time. A definitive defeat of the Devil (as inconceivable as it may be) would be an irredeemable cosmic catastrophe. The world would be dissolved. But our tradition teaches us that God

created the world. We have started to notice the Devil's positive motives, but the motives of the Divine still remain obscure. We have already intuited the fact that the Devil is much closer to us than the Lord, and that to follow the Devil is a lot more comfortable and simple than to pursue obscure Divine paths. The first sympathy for the Devil sketches itself within our innermost being, and we recognize a kindred spirit in him, perhaps just as unhappy as our own. But we must be careful not to exaggerate the similarity. The Devil (in our conception of the term) knows his duty and we doubt ours. His project is clear and he realizes it, especially today, with admirable success. But we are "free," that is, we may follow the Devil as well as Divinity, and we err, therefore, within poorly drawn circles. Rectilinear progress is the Devil's thing. Humanity progressed, and did so thanks to him. In terms of stages, as "free" beings, this is our first day. The Devil follows his path, and history sings the glory of his deeds. Humanity is as close, or faraway, from his aim, as Adam and Eve. It is true to say that a few among us seem to have reached God, and that others seem to have found the path to Hell. But the great majority continues to err in the middle. The history of the Devil is the history of progress. Our book should have been titled "evolution," but this term would have caused misunderstandings. Evolution as the history of progress is the history of the Devil. This evolution is processed in several layers. The Devil acts in a different way within each layer, and his progress provokes our admiration and fright. If we were to randomly choose some examples of his deeds, and if we were to contemplate the progress from the elixir of love up until vitamin E, or from the witch's broomstick up until "sputnik," we would have sketched the first view of the ingenious methods he employed.

The attempt to describe the Devil's path within multiple layers is certainly one of the most exciting tasks. It shall not be, however, the method employed in this book. We shall point to several phases of diabolic progress, in passing, but this will not be our aim. Our intention shall be a comprehensive overview

of the Devil. Our problem shall be, therefore, that of choosing a watchtower, climbing it the best way we can, and describing the unfolding landscape. Two towers offer themselves immediately. The first is called "history" and commands the following landscape: a metamorphosis of diabolic aspects that follow each other. We shall see from this tower, the great mother serpent, Ahriman, Prometheus, and how they progressively transformed into that scientific and cultivated philosopher that represents the Devil today. But history's tower unfolds a misleading landscape. In reality, the apparently overcome forms continue to be active, and "depth psychology" demonstrates their vitality. The Devil continues to act archetypally within the warm and obscure subconscious regions; effectively, it is within these regions that he feels at ease. It is under the more or less clear light of waking consciousness that he undergoes metamorphosis. The Devil's evolution, and that of life, are at least parallel. The reptile is perfectly identifiable in the sophisticated Devil of our elegant age. One of the theses of this book will be, in effect, the statement that the evolution of life is nothing more than the incarnation of the Devil's evolution. The reader must refrain their righteous indignation. There will be opportunity in the course of the book to freely vent it. What I intend to do at this stage is only to sow the seed of the following doubt: who is more possessed by the Devil, the almost inert protoplasm of immemorial times, with its humble patience, or a devouring ant and a speculative humanity? The tower of history unfolds, therefore, as an ever more superficial landscape in order to serve as an observation point for this book.

The second tower that offers itself, as an observatory, is called "introspection." From it the Devil shall be revealed as the motivating force for the majority of our actions and desires. It is a highly seductive tower, but I fear that if we were to climb it and describe the landscape that offers itself to our view, the present book would not be publishable. We must, therefore, refuse both of these possibilities and seek a third. Happily it exists, and it is even the Catholic Church that offers it. We shall

appeal to an old wisdom of the Church as a method for the development of our argument.

This wisdom teaches us that the Devil appeals to the so-called “seven deadly sins” in order to seduce and annihilate souls. It is evident that the Church, in its anti-diabolic propaganda, appeals to somewhat biased nomenclatures in order to denominate these sins. It calls them “pride,” “greed,” “lust,” “envy,” “gluttony,” “wrath,” and “sadness or sloth.” However, essentially, these archaic terms are innocuous, and easily exchangeable for neutral and modern terms. This is what I propose. Pride is self-awareness. Greed is economy. Lust is instinct (or the affirmation of life). Gluttony is the improvement of the standard of living. Envy is the struggle for social justice and political freedom. Wrath is the refusal to accept the limitations imposed upon the human Will; therefore, it is dignity. Sadness or sloth is the stage reached by calm philosophical meditation. The Church teaches us, therefore, that these are the methods with which the Devil appeals to us in his attempt to eliminate Divine influence. This book shall obediently follow the classification of sins. It shall even maintain their traditional names, touched by a respect for their age. However, given its initial disposition to avoid prejudices, it shall not consider these names as pejorative. This book shall try, therefore, to give a description of the evolution of the diabolic arms and instruments within the fields of the seven sins. In this sense, its task shall be historical, even though this is a rarely applied meaning of the term “history.” Thus, this book expects to be able to sketch a view of our current situation, which is not as obvious as the views which we are accustomed to reading in books and magazines currently in vogue.

Clearly, the seven sins emerge from different ontological layers and encompass several distinct planes. For example: economy, politics, and technology are sins of the social layer of reality; self-awareness, dignity, and philosophical calm are sins that have to do with a psychological reality; instinct and the affirmation of life sin within biology’s reality. But this question

of layers is, despite all of traditional philosophy's ontologies, a complex question. The layers crisscross and do not allow themselves to be organized or separated. Essentially, all of the seven sins are, therefore, a single one – they are seven sins of the same attitude. Every sin includes the others, and the Church is right in avoiding the creation of a hierarchy of the seven sins. A soul possessed by the Devil, by the biological method of lust, tends toward pride in the psychological field and toward envy in the social field, and all the possible combinations of sins surpass the writer's imagination. The deadly sins form a single torrent that unfolds itself below and above humanity, in order to drag it toward progress. But the present book sees itself forced, due to methodological reasons, to create a hierarchy of sins.

Thus ordered, the sins shall serve as stages of the diabolic activity to be described. However, all of the sins refer to man. The Church is exclusively interested in human souls. We know, nonetheless, that the diabolic opus, as it has been defined above, goes well beyond merely the scope of man. It is evident that we are also primarily interested in the "human" Devil, but a certain intellectual honesty demands that we equally consider the diabolic activity within inhuman fields. This intellectual honesty (which could also be referred to as an "aesthetic sense") led our first chapter to present a pre-human Devil, that is, pre-historic from our point of view. And this first chapter offers the following advantage: within it the Devil shall appear as an ethically neutral agent, disinterested in man, which will allow, on our part, a contemplation exempt of prejudices. All of the remaining chapters shall be dedicated to the sins "*sensu stricto*," and these shall be ordered within a hierarchy that I shall call, "pseudo-historic," because it has been copied from the image of history that the so-called natural sciences offer us. Therefore lust shall be considered as the first and oldest of the sins, because it is thanks to it that the Devil became incarnate in dead matter in order to eliminate Divinity. Philosophical distance, therefore that which the Church calls "sadness or

sloth," or "*dégagement*," to speak in a modern tone, shall be considered the last and gravest of all sins because it denotes an already almost supra-human stage of evolution, a stage in which man overcomes himself in order to almost entirely fuse with the Devil. The other sins, which will form the themes of the intermediary chapters, shall have their hierarchical gradation designated somewhat more casually. For example: wrath shall be considered as a consequence of the impotence of uninterrupted lust. Gluttony is another form of lust, a sublimated lust, which once sublimated, becomes transferred onto another layer of reality. Envy shall be conceived as the dialectic antithesis of greed, and both of these sins as the consequences of gluttony. Pride, as a shift onto new layers, shall be considered as a reflexive turn of the social sins, therefore as "self-absorption" [*ensimesmamento*]. Sadness, or sloth, is a complete reversal; it is therefore a negative lust, the negation of life. Lust and sloth are the two poles of the magnetic field of sins; they are thus antithetic in a more fundamental sense than envy and greed. And the magic circle of sins that this book intends to present to the reader closes within this dialectic tension. As it is a circle, it may be penetrated from any point, and shall lead, always, unfailingly, to Hell, even though it gyrates. The hierarchy proposed by this book is purely accidental, slightly resting upon the "historicity" of nature, and informed by Freudian prejudices. Lust is taken as a starting point, because this sin is considered by the Freudians as the very source of reality. Naturally, we could have built our circle starting from, for example, greed, which is considered by the Marxists as the main tension spring of history, and therefore of reality. In this case the course of the book would have been slightly different, but its result would, I believe, have been very similar. Other sins, that are less in vogue today, are also worthy. The reader must be content with our invented, "ad hoc" hierarchy.

In the chapter on lust, we shall observe the diabolic activities of life production. It shall be a chapter full of vital juice. Wrath, the field of science, is a little dryer, but no less diabolic, as

we shall try to demonstrate in the corresponding chapter. Following this, we shall take an ontological leap in order to land on gluttony, within the field of technology and of paradise on Earth. After we have delighted in the pleasures of this type of hell, we shall follow our path that leads to the meadows of the *Dioskouroi* envy-greed, therefore the meadows of political and social struggle. And without wading too far into this diabolic struggle, but not without admiring the beauty of the Devil's artifices in such struggle, we shall advance toward pride. As we mention this chapter, we feel our pulse beat stronger: this is the chapter of the arts. Within it, there shall emerge, or so we hope, the outlines of the Devil's quintessence – beauty. Effectively: “pride” and “sadness,” the last two chapters of this book, therefore art and philosophy, sound different as terms and words than the melody of the names of the previous chapters. As we mention these words, we feel the diabolic power that they exert. All of our energy will have to be mobilized so that we do not precipitate the course of this book toward these two last chapters, which powerfully attract us and form the aim of this book in more than one sense. That is because “pride” and “sadness” are sins of the spirit, and in this sense, perhaps they are the Devil's aim, as well as that of the history of humanity.

This is, therefore, this book's program, which must be called “diabolic” not only because of its theme, but also because of the ethical confusion from which it springs; a confusion that is characteristic of the present moment. He who writes it is aware of the sin he is committing by writing it. And is equally aware of the sin that he would have committed had he not written it. So that is the program. As for the motive, this has already been partially mentioned – it is the attempt to sketch out the current scene, in which the Devil seems to dominate in a way never before achieved. This almost uncontested domination encompasses the external world as well as the intimate one, or that which was once called the “soul.” The program and the motive have thus been mentioned. It now remains to speak about the intention of this book. As we confess it, we hold our

breath, because our confession is equivalent to a betrayal of our mask, which up until now had been held between us and the readers. This mask is related to the notion of objectivity in relation to the Devil. This book's intention is not, let us say it already, objective. It is true that objectivity shall be an ideal that we will pursue within the various parts of the considerations that we shall expose. However, as a whole, it could not be maintained. It is impossible to talk about the Devil in abstract and cold terms. To pose as such, yes, that is possible, and perhaps productive, but it is still just a pose. Fundamentally, it is necessary to fear the Devil, and to fear means to surrender or to run away with full strength. The third possibility would be to fight, but it shall be at the end of this book that we shall know how to answer, subjectively, if this struggle is existentially realizable. But we must at least be able to run away, and this is the subjective intention of this book: subjective in both an individual and collective sense. Why fear the Devil? Why run away from him? These are the types of existential questions that this book shall explicitly and implicitly propose. Who can predict the answers? Who can know the end of a book when one starts to write it?

The reader now knows the internal doubts and tensions that provoked this book. Nevertheless, we ask the reader to risk taking the journey to Hell with us. We can promise that it shall not be a Dantesque journey. On the contrary, it shall provide so many pleasures, perhaps even greater than the pleasures of Heaven. And may this promise serve as bait, made no less diabolic for having been confessed.

2. THE DEVIL'S CHILDHOOD

2.1. His Birth

How he was born. It is written thus: in the beginning God created Heaven and Earth. Within this phrase, every word is mysterious. We do not want to confuse our minds with the concepts "to create" and "God" in the attempt to analyze it. "God" is not a proper concept, since it points to the territories of faith and goes beyond the conceptual terrain of thought. The concept "creation" contains problems of an ethical and aesthetic order, and we may only approach it authentically as artists and saints. It is preferable to leave this complexity aside for the time being. What is left of the cited phrase, the concepts of the beginning, Heaven, and Earth, seem sufficiently difficult. These concepts confuse and surprise us for two different reasons: the naivety, with which we accept these concepts, as a general rule, without paying attention to their deeper meaning, surprises us. And we are confounded by the fact that the gigantic treasure trove of commentaries, with which science and philosophy adorned the Bible's first phrase, did not succeed in adding or subtracting anything from the simple spell that it has preserved for thousands of years. It is true; our wise men have succeeded in pushing the beginning ever further into the abysmal well of time. They have succeeded in dilating, distorting, and curving the heavens and to give them entirely unimaginable dimensions. They have succeeded in making the Earth round, they made her small and manipulable, and they are close to precariously abandoning her. But the beginning remains the beginning, the heavens are still the heavens, and Mother Earth continues to shelter us in her fertile bosom, just as it was on the

first day. Something tempted humanity, since primordial times: to break the three limits imposed by the Bible's first phrase, or at least to dilate them. Something incited men to always want to see beyond the beginning, to conquer the heavens with their instruments, or at least with their spirit, and to free themselves from the Earth in a literal sense, or at least in a figurative one. These attempts shall be our theme when we examine wrath. The Devil was never satisfied with these handcuffs. Our imagination refuses to let us draw a hypothetical situation in which these three limits are eliminated by a human effort, inspired by the Devil. An infinite world and an eternal world go beyond our imaginative capability. The Devil has managed to loosen his limits in the course of the history of thought. However, the spirit pursues these limits in retrocession like an expanding gas, and continues to feel handcuffed. At this point it is necessary to introduce a curious consideration. An infinite and eternal world is unimaginable. But a finite and fleeting world is at least equally unimaginable. The infinite world poses the insoluble problem of its limitation, and the finite world poses the equally insoluble problem of going beyond limits. Our wise men currently teach of a finite world. What they teach is unimaginable. The founders of our religions taught of an infinite world. Their teaching is equally unimaginable. Our attempt to loosen the limits is absurd, and typically diabolic in this sense. It is an attempt to escape from an unimaginable world into another equally unimaginable world. It is an attempt to change one unreality for another. From this point of view, much of the splendor of the researching and progressive spirit is lost. Given this fact, we cannot expect our scientists to clarify the Bible's first phrase and to undo the mysterious aroma that envelops it. Any judgment that they may formulate from it is just as unimaginable as any opposing one. The naive acceptance of this first phrase imposes itself upon us.

2.1.1. However, this circumstance does not devalue the attempt to interpret the cited phrase from a different angle. It is evident that "beginning" relates to time, and that "Heaven and

Earth" relate to space. The phrase says that "Heaven and Earth" unravel in the "beginning," and the image that is offered is that of a spring mechanism. "In the beginning" the Lord wound up the spring, and once the spring unravels completely, the beginning will have ended. The Lord, the donor of the spring, sees the spring in its entirety. For Him, beginning and end are confused. However, this naive interpretation of ours cannot be correct. It demands a reformulation of our phrase. It should have been written: On Heaven and Earth, God created the beginning. But this reformulation is pure heresy. The Devil has already started to take possession of our thoughts. We must establish contact with the first phrase. It is necessary to accept its formulation, despite being obscure, because the meaning of the phrase hides within this obscurity, and reveals: it is within the beginning that Heaven and Earth were created. In other words: space is what was created. Time ("the beginning") was not created as such. If this is the meaning, it is completely incomprehensible. We cannot conceive of a time independent from space, and modern physics teaches that time is a dimension of space. Our conceptual capability sinks when confronted with this interpretation of the phrase. But we can conceive of the following: as He created "Heaven and Earth," the Lord tore out a piece of "Being as such," of "pure Being," in order to plunge it into the current of time. And this current of time alters the pure Being, turns it phenomenal, because time drags the pure Being along and submits it to successive modifications. It is in this sense that "Heaven and Earth" were created, and it is in this sense that we may conceive of the meaning of the phrase.

In the introduction to this book we suggested that time and the Devil are identical. He is the very principle of modification, of progress, and therefore, of phenomenalization. It is the principle of the transformation of reality into unreality. This is what Guimarães Rosa has in mind when he says that the Devil does not exist. The current of time, into which the Lord plunges pieces of Being as He creates "Heaven and Earth," is the

Devil himself. Time is incredible; it is not possible to believe in it. Kafka says that it is not possible to have faith in the Devil, because there cannot be more Devil than the Devil, and it is precisely this process of creation that Kafka has in mind. The Bible's first phrase, in order to be conceivable, should say the following: God created space and time. Or to speak in a Kantian sense: God created forms of seeing ("*anschauungsformen*"). Or, to speak within the spirit of this book: God created the phenomenal world and the Devil. This seems to me to not only make creation conceivable, but also the Devil's fall. This fall is the current of time itself, and the progressive distancing of the world from its origins.

2.1.2. In the formulation that we have just given to the Bible's first phrase, the Devil appears as the Creator's principle creation, as His masterpiece. The Devil is identical to time, but also inspires space, because it is he who makes it so that the world is our world. This interpretation of ours, this identification of the Devil with the world, is a radicalized puritanism. I must confess that this radicalism startles me. I propose that we voluntarily moderate ourselves. I propose this in the interest of the present book. How could one continue to write if this identification Devil-world were to be accepted? The moderation that I propose shall reside in the following: let us accept "Heaven and Earth" as the Devil's stage, but a stage upon which a second character acts. Let us accept "Heaven and Earth" as the stage for the struggle between the Devil and his opponent, which the Bible calls "Our Lord," because we cannot pronounce His name. The present book shall also be part of such a stage thus conceived. Hence, the Devil shall be nothing more than a mere part of the creation, that is, the part which makes the world sensible. This is therefore the provisory definition that I propose: the Devil (in his external aspect) is the flux of time, thanks to which phenomena appear. This definition has the second advantage of undressing the illusory, deceiving character, the "*Māyā*" character, which our tradition attributes to the Devil. We shall work with this definition until we say otherwise.

2.2. Playing with a Spin Top

Our considerations have already gone beyond the first situation in which the Devil was born. He has already started to fall, and our obligation is to follow the young Devil's fall toward the first sin, toward lust, toward life. Modern cosmogony describes the path of his fall, although perhaps it is not aware of the diabolic character of the process it reports. It says that maybe "Heaven and Earth" did not emerge together, but that the Earth condensed from the heavens. If we existentialize the mathematical abstractions of this modern cosmogony, and if we translate its abstruse propositions to this book's language, the resulting image is this: "in the beginning," "the heavens" had a zero-dimension and an infinite weight. The heavens served as a spintop for the Devil during his fall. The Devil whiplashed his spintop so that its infinitely heavy point started to spin intensely. In its diabolic rotation, it disintegrated. Pieces of gigantic dimensions but of limited weight became unstuck from this initial point and millions, and millions of millions of pieces spread in an ungoverned run. This run continues to this day. The pieces of the disintegrated spintop run furiously away from each other, and from their abandoned center. In their precipitated run, these pieces also disintegrate and form sub-spintops. A small piece, of a piece, of a piece of that first spintop is our Mother Earth. The diabolic rotation provoked by the first whiplash continues in a constant impulse and animates all of the other pieces in their run. The larger pieces (the "spiral nebulae") continue to gyrate and continue to run away from each other and from their center, toward the void. They run from zero to zero, as is appropriate for a toy that belongs to the Devil. In their run from nothing to nothing, the pieces transform mass into energy. They become ever "larger" and "lighter" and the whole universe becomes "larger" and "lighter." At the "beginning" of the spintop's explosion, the heavens were infinitely small and infinitely heavy. At the end of the explosion, the heavens will be infinitely large and infinitely

light. At the current and intermediary stage, the heavens are a world of infinite dimensions, and yet graspable, dimensions and weight.

2.2.1. This is the myth of modern cosmogony. Let us try to interpret it. From the celestial army's perspective, this does not represent a problem. It is evident for angels and other "beings as such" that this entire explosion, of which the cosmogony tells us, is illusory and has nothing to do with reality. The phenomenal world is not real; therefore it is evident that its apparent phases are also not real. The beginning is dimensionless, therefore, nothing. The end is weightless, therefore also nothing, and the current intermediary stage is the Devil's phantasmagoria. However, the interpretation of the myth will be different from the diabolic perspective. For the Devil, this is a story full of wonder, which tells of the emergence of reality. It tells of how things emerge from nothing. The nebulae, the stars, the planets, and the moons are products of a creative activity "*ex nihilo*," they are works. It is obvious that this opus has an explosive and violent character, as it is the Devil's work of art. However, this catastrophic and infernal character of the heavens is only one of its aspects. There is another aspect: that of the spintop's rotation, and this one is harmonious. The heavenly bodies follow circles, ellipses, and parabolas of crystalline beauty, which are perfect consequences of the primordial rotation and that will have, in their turn, equally perfect consequences. Thus, the first dialectic tension of the Devil's character emerged within our considerations: the work of art of his childhood, the starry sky, illustrates it. The explosion that gives origin to this work of art is catastrophic, but the rules that guide it are laws, that is, they seem to exclude future catastrophes. From his childhood, we can already discover the duplicity of the Devil's character: brutality and aestheticism. Furthermore: because the Devil is still quite innocent at this tender age, we can verify how this duplicity works: it is a brutal catastrophe that makes possible the beauty of spheres. And these spheres, in their turn, which are apparently such well-behaved bodies, are the conditions

for a new catastrophe, that is, the violent emergence of life. We shall speak of that later. The Devil is a criminal in order to be an artist, and is an artist in order to be a criminal. He creates laws in order to break them, and breaks laws in order to create new ones.

Our Western tradition praises the harmony of the spheres as a Divine work. It must therefore come as a shock to the reader that our argument sees itself forced to conclude with the attribution of this harmony to the Devil. A short moment of meditation shall soften the shock. What we admire in the starry sky is not its order, but its gigantic duration. If compared to the duration of our lives, the celestial spheres are effectively eternal. This relative eternity is what seems Divine to us. We know, however, that this is our misunderstanding. The heavenly bodies are temporal phenomena, as is everything else within our sensible world. Effectively, the heavenly bodies are "*imperpetua mobilia*" like the machines that we produce. If reduced to dimensions and duration, the starry sky is nothing more than an example like the machines that are produced by our own technology. With only one difference: our machines generally work with greater precision than the celestial machine, a fact that astronomers verify with a slight smile. It would be blasphemy to attribute this imperfect machine to the Divine Creator. By the same right, we could attribute our own machines to Him, destined to produce instruments and deaths. No, the gigantic machine of heavenly bodies is the work of the Devil. And our industrial park is the Devil's late progeny. Our apparatus are perfected copies of the diabolic standard that appears every night above our heads. They are more refined copies, as they are products of the creative effort of a more mature Devil.

Let us frame Newton within this order of ideas. He is the provisory discoverer of the celestial machine's structure. This structure is expressible as simple mathematical propositions. The way the machine works diverges from these propositions in very small, but detectable degrees. Newton attributed

the machine's autonomy to God, and therefore said "God is a mathematician." The author of the celestial machine is, effectively, a talented mathematician, but an imperfect one. In him we recognize the young Devil playing with his little spintop. The discovery of a mathematical structure in astronomic phenomena is very rewarding to the human spirit of research. Thanks to this discovery we can recognize a spirit similar to our own in the stars. Thus, in the stars we recognize the little Devil that inspires us inside our researching minds. That is why the contemplation of the starry sky is, for us, a type of self-recognition. That is one of the explanations for the attraction that the stars exert upon us. The other explanation is the following: the Newtonian sketch of the celestial structure is being overcome. We are starting to convince ourselves that we could be able to build a more perfect celestial machine. Hence, we have begun our attempts in this direction, and our artificial satellites and guided missiles are the first symptoms of these attempts. This is because the little Devil within us has grown-up and seeks, through us, to rectify the acts he committed in his childhood.

2.2.2. There is, however, a fundamental difference between the celestial machine and our apparatus. Human machines have a purpose, they have duties to accomplish and tasks to execute, or in other words: they are products of life. This intentional and entelechial character is proper to life. We shall deal with this in the theme of lust. The inorganic world is unaware of purposes, and the very term "purpose" sounds false within this world. But what is this "inorganic" world of which we are talking? After all, is it not an organ, is it not organized? Are not the stars organs of the nebulae, the planets organs of the stars, the moons organs of the planets, and the nebulae themselves organs of a gigantic cosmic animal? Why is this world called "inorganic?" Because it lacks purpose, because it is completely useless. In the realm of life the situation is different. The liver serves to keep the body alive, the fly serves to keep the spider alive, and all the plants, and all the animals, with all of their

intricate organization, serve to keep man alive (at least from our point of view). But Mars is useless for the sun, or even for Venus, it does not serve for anything. Being entirely useless, the celestial machine is a perfect example of "*l'art pour l'art*," it is a work of "abstract" art. This machine's creator, the Devil, is a pure artist. Unless we want to consider this machine as a condition for life. In this case, the celestial machine would be an instrument conceived to produce life on Earth. It would be the famous mountain that gives birth to a mouse. The celestial machine thus conceived, would be nothing more than a gigantic and unnecessarily complex diaper. And the Devil, its author, would go from pure artist to the father of life. Future arguments may clarify this point.

2.3. Playing with Cubes

The celestial machine is not solid and compact. The little Devil built it with cubes. It is pointless to ask if the Devil used a box of cubes to build his machine, or if he took the machine and decomposed it into cubes. Or to speak pseudo-scientifically, to ask if atoms united in order to form stars, or whether atoms are nothing more than aspects of stars. This type of question stays unanswered. It is like asking if the triangle emerges from the angles, or if the angles are its aspects. It depends on the perspective. For nuclear physics, astronomy is nothing more than the application of the rules discovered in the atom, and for astronomy, nuclear physics is nothing more than astronomy in miniature. Science managed, today, to build a bridge between unimaginably large, and unimaginably small worlds. Our spirit travels, without any apparent effort, from the proton to Sirius, and from Alpha Centauri to the *meson*. It travels without effort but equally without any gain. The bridge built by science is totally useless for an existential comprehension of our world, and it is a faulty bridge, as demonstrated by its recent results. The atom is not a planetary system in miniature, as our fathers expected. And within the atom, which is more

serious, the harmonious laws start to behave in a very suspect manner. Physics seems to want to suggest that the harmony of the spheres is a fiction created by statistics, or, that stars behave in an ordered manner because they consist of so many little cubes. On the terrain of these tiny components (I dare not say “particles” so as not to become too concrete), the harmonies do not seem to work, because they do not have what they need to effectively function. They do not have an object, since these tiny components are not objective. These “little things” have a very curious existence; they are sometimes mass, sometimes energy, and sometimes mathematical symbols in thought. Sometimes they gyrate like the stars, sometimes they oscillate like rays, and sometimes they leap from place to place in no time, unlike specters. May lightning strike them! (And effectively, it often does.) They are all from the same family, these *electro positrons*, *neutrons*, and other “ons,” however; they are everything but *onta* (beings). Despite being from the same family, a common ancestor cannot be found for all of them. The infra-world in which their ontologically dubious existence takes place, has none of the majestic simplicity of the world of the heavenly bodies. And as for the harmony of the world of the heavenly bodies that impresses us so much (despite its exceptions), it cannot be found within this little world, where the exceptions are the rules.

2.3.1. What is this abyss, which the bridge between astronomy and physics tries to overcome but fails? There is a possibility that this abyss is created by these sciences themselves. Has astronomy, as the older science, already discovered a fundamental harmony that nuclear physics (the younger one) has not yet discovered? Has nuclear physics, as the more advanced science, by any chance already discovered a fundamental chaos that astronomy (the more traditional one) has not discovered yet? I believe, however, that the abyss is much deeper and that it was not these sciences that created it. The Devil is responsible for the abyss. The world of the heavenly bodies is an objective world. Within it, time flows

unmistakably. Therefore, causality functions within it. The world of atoms is not objective; it finds itself on the border between object and thought. Time becomes problematic within it. Cause and effect become a couple that dances around itself. Hence, this is the reason why our spirit, when contemplating this little world, immediately starts to philosophize, instead of waiting for more complete results. Existentially, we feel that we are entering forbidden places. A cold fear overtakes us as we contemplate the atom ("*des Pudels Kern*") because we feel that we are getting in touch with the Devil. The moral confusion of the nuclear scientists is a symptom of this fear, and must be called "religious." For methodological reasons, but with an undisguised relief, I will now abandon this line of thought and leave it for the last chapter of this book, which will deal with sadness or sloth.

2.3.2. Within the world of atoms, time becomes confused. It just so happens that the future and the past exchange places, and the effect precedes the cause. We have defined the Devil as time. Within the world of atoms, the Devil becomes confused. At this blurred border between object and thought, within this world that is not yet material, but is no longer ideal, the Devil is an intruder. This border is the edge of the Divine robes, that is, the edge on which the Devil seeks to realize the sensible world. This is, effectively, the main stage for the struggle between the Devil and the Divine One. Modern physics has recently uncovered this stage, but still does not know how to evaluate it. However, we already feel its existential impact. This is an entirely inhuman struggle; it is an ontological struggle that seems to have nothing to do with ethics or values. On this terrain the Devil behaves in an entirely different manner from the way he behaves within our souls: he is not a seductive Devil, he does not operate with sins. On this terrain he seeks to violently infiltrate the atom's nucleus in order to make it phenomenal, and therefore to distance it from a pure symbolic Being, in order to infernalize it. He creates a whirlpool of electrons around the nucleus in order to make the atom a thing, therefore a thing of

his doing. He seeks to form new super heavy nuclei; he seeks fissions and fusions, at last, he seeks to objectify the process of thinking. Despite the enormous progress that the Devil has recently had through nuclear physics – which he inspired – the atom continues to be essentially a thought, a diabolic thought, a well-understood thought, but a thought nonetheless.

2.3.3. Let us try to interpret the situation mentioned above. During his fall into space the Devil created a vortex (a spintop), which is what we call “matter” within the Western philosophical tradition. However, this matter hides, in the deepest part of its fabric, the secret of its origin, that is, “pure Being.” Nuclear physics is beginning to uncover this secret. Let us consider for a moment the Devil’s situation after this discovery. In a certain way, this discovery is a step forward, because it is due to this that the Devil can influence matter through human minds. But the discovery also has another aspect. Let us imagine a soul that has managed, thanks to an absurd faith, to overcome the phenomenal world and thus attains a vision of that “pure Being.” This soul is a loss for the Devil, but this is a legitimate loss, it is well within the rules of the game between the Devil and the Divine One. Let us now imagine a soul that has overcome the phenomenal world thanks to nuclear physics and has thus attained a vision of “pure Being” through the Wilson Chamber. Nuclear physics is a type of sin, therefore, how could one lose that soul? However, there is some solace for the Devil: just imagine a situation where St. Peter is at the Gates of Heaven, when a soul demands to enter because it overcame the world of illusions and tries to prove this fact producing a certificate issued by a laboratory for advanced experimental physics. I believe that for the first time in the history of human thought the Devil has started to fulfill his promise that *eritis sicut Deus, scientes bonum et malum*. Evidently, he starts to fulfill this promise infernally. However, this stage has not completely been reached yet. The atoms are still almost material, and nuclear physics is not yet an automatic liberation from the world of *Māyā*.

2.3.4. Atoms are the cubes with which the Devil builds stars. They are, therefore, the inorganic world *in statu nascendi*. However, atoms are equally good to build living bodies. Hence, it is not surprising they contain the characteristics of life *in nuce*. The confusion that reigns within the sub-world of atoms is a theme that the symphony of life shall develop later. Disorder is proper to life. Order is the enemy of life – it is death. To order life means to kill it. The almost perfect order, which reigns within the inorganic world, could be considered as the degeneration of the confusion – full of virtuality – that reigns within the world of infinitely small particles. The world of stars could be considered as a frustrated and aborted attempt to create life. The celestial machine could be considered as a frustrated organism. Teilhard de Chardin, who certainly could not be accused of being a Devil's advocate, seems to want to advocate this point of view. But at this point in the argument, I do not want to force this hypothesis. I simply want to insinuate that the disorder, which confounds us within the atomic world, may be interpreted as a sign of its fertility for future progress. The attempts by nuclear physics to introduce a system into the territory of atoms are perhaps just as inadequate as the parallel attempts by biology. Besides, it is perfectly possible to consider physics as a preliminary stage of biology. The 19th century nurtured the hope to be able to demonstrate that biology is nothing more than an especially complex type of physics. The 20th century makes the other alternative equally plausible: physics as abstract biology. The catastrophic and disorderly element, which characterizes certain nuclear phenomena, would be a precursory sign of life, which after all, is nothing more than a chain of catastrophes interconnected by very fine threads of order. However, these somewhat premature considerations within this context point directly to the chapter of lust, and shall be relegated there.

2.4. Playing of Composing Elements

The heavens, which retained our attention up until now, were the Devil's kindergarten. Now we shall take into consideration his more restrictive playground, the Earth. I suggest that this is a complete change of environment. It is in vogue nowadays to affirm that the Earth is not an exceptional body among the spheres that make up the celestial machine. Given the enormous quantity of gyrating balls, there must be at least a few that are very similar to Earth. This is an apparently reasonable argument. This is a new way to articulate an old problem. Does our Earth have a central and unique position within the cosmos, or not? The quarrel between Ptolemy and Kepler is one of the themes that constantly accompany the West's conversation. To every Copernican revolution, there is an almost immediate Ptolemaic restoration. At the moment Copernicus reigns; Ptolemy is considered as "backward" by the majority, and as "too forward" by a small minority. The astronomers and the so-called "astrobiologists" are committed to the feverish search for a second Earth. Let us suppose, for a moment, that they find it. That would not be the end of the quarrel. A second Earth would certainly not be a faithful copy of ours. There would be considerable differences. And these differences would be enough for the defenders of Ptolemy to proclaim the uniqueness of our Earth. I must confess, however, that I do not believe in the possibility of such a discovery in the slightest. The contact with beings from other "planets" is a thing of science fiction, and the Martians that speak Latin, or the human eating plants of Betelgeuse are the things of Hollywood and of sanatoriums for the mentally ill. If we wish to converse with other stars, we must consult anthroposophists and spiritualists, and not astronomers. The search for a second Earth is a product of our despair and sense of isolation. It is the refusal to admit the brutal fact that life is not only restricted to time but also to space. We do not want to conform ourselves to the characteristics of our Earth and to the isolation of life as a result of these exceptional characteristics.

2.4.1. Let us consider the exceptional and unique situation (and in this sense, central) of our Earth within the cosmos. In the first place, the Earth is an exceptionally moderate body. It does not burn like incandescent ember. It does not revolve in the unimaginable cold of absolute zero. It does not consist of rigidly compact matter. It does not float like rarified gas. It does not turn violently on its axis. It is not accompanied by thousands of moons (at least not when these lines were written). It is not isolated and lost in space. However, almost all the bodies that we know of are radical in one way or another as listed above, with the exception of two or three planets near to us. Except that the Earth is exceptionally mutable. Its clouds move, its mountains rise and disappear, its continents and its seas travel. The Earth is a paradox: exceptionally moderate and exceptionally mutable. It represents, if compared to the other celestial bodies, a stage of extreme instability, a fleeting and transitory stage between two extremes. How did this precious stage, which gave origin to life, emerge? The circumstances and influences that made this state of things possible are of such complexity that to imagine that they repeated themselves, or shall be repeated, is not a sign of imagination, but a sign of a lack of knowledge. If a single circumstance were to be missing, and if a single influence were to have failed, life would not have emerged. That is because a single link can break the precarious chain of this precious instability. For example: the Earth had to be a planet. The terrestrial conditions are unimaginable on a star. Planets are rare, and as a planet, the Earth had to be at the exact distance from a star of an exact size. A little closer to this star and it would be an incandescent body like Venus. A little farther and it would be as cold as Mars. It was necessary for this planet to be accompanied by a moon of a certain size and specific distance. The chemical elements that are part of its composition had to have some precisely determined absolute and relative relations. The same applies to the chemical elements that were to compose the Sun and the Moon. Its rotation had to have a specific speed, and the path around

the star had to have some specific characteristics. Its specific weight, its gravitational field, its electromagnetic field, and thousands of other characteristics had to be as they are, and not otherwise, in order for that phenomenon called "life" to have emerged. The reader cannot say that other circumstances would have generated another type of "life." We only know one type of life, that is, the particular behavior of albumins and ribonucleic acids, and any other type of behavior, of any other type of substance, we do not recognize as life. It absolutely would not suffice to find this type of different "life" on other celestial bodies: we would not recognize it. Perhaps it does exist here, close to us, but without being considered as life. And from this concept, it is necessary to affirm that the Earth is an exceptional body in every sense, and that the possibility of finding another body like this is a lot more than improbable.

2.4.2. We could say that the conjunction of circumstances, and the constellation of influences, which made life on Earth possible are a gigantic case of pure chance. But what does "chance" mean within this context? From the celestial machine's perspective, which is totally fortuitous and exempt of purpose, this "chance," which allowed for the emergence of life on Earth, is uninteresting. It is not, therefore, "chance," but one among millions of possible constellations. From the Earth's perspective, the celestial machine's purpose was to produce the necessary constellation for life on Earth to emerge. The gigantic "chance" is therefore, the very aim of the heavens. Hence, we must content ourselves with the statement that from our perspective, the Earth is the center of the universe, in the sense that it is the pinnacle of the celestial purpose. This does not exclude the possibility of the universe having more than one "purpose," perhaps even as many purposes as there are celestial bodies. However, these other purposes do not concern us. They are existentially uninteresting.

Let us reinterpret this view of the Earth's position from the Devil's perspective. The celestial machine, his first work of "abstract" art, is a diabolic achievement, as it consists of

temporal phenomena, therefore distant from the realm of “pure Being.” But it is a childish opus, since it is purely aesthetic, and ethically neutral. The Devil recognizes his obligation to widen his opus, in order to apply his method of “sin.” In this sense, the celestial machine is a frustrated opus. It does not allow for sin. Perhaps the Devil chose our Earth as the only stage for sin; perhaps all bodies are stages for different sins. Given our limitation as terrestrial beings, we can only conceive of terrestrial sins. The Devil that shall interest us from now on shall be the terrestrial Devil. The attention of our argument shall be, therefore, turned toward Earth as the Devil’s playground.

2.4.3. Hence, we shall define the Earth as the celestial machine’s aim. The Devil created the heavens in order to create the Earth; the Earth in order to create life; life in order to create humanity; and he created humanity in order to create the human spirit, this spirit that knows Good and Evil, therefore, the field of sin. In other words: the Earth is the stage for sin. It is the workshop where the Devil forges his weapon for the conquest of reality: the human spirit. This forged work continues to progress, but this weapon is far from being perfect. For dozens of thousands of years the Devil sharpens the human spirit, in order to make it perfect. The deadly sins are abrasive. The finished product, the perfectly diabolic human spirit, is an ideal not yet reached. However, this diabolic perfection is the Earth’s purpose.

2.4.4. The Earth is a celestial body. It is composed of the same atoms that compose the rest of the heavens. However, on Earth, these atoms behave in a different manner. They have the tendency to form combinations among themselves, which are varied to an almost unimaginable level. On the other celestial bodies that we know of, atoms tend equally toward combinations, but toward poorer combinations. Generally, only atoms of the same type combine, in order to form that which chemistry calls the “elements.” Simple combinations between different atoms rarely emerge. The situation on Earth is entirely different. On Earth, the Devil uses the atoms as pieces of a

jigsaw puzzle. It is toward this diabolic toy – called “chemistry” in other contexts – that I direct the readers’ attention. In paragraph 2.2 I told you about the myth of astronomy, and in paragraph 2.3, about the myth of modern physics. Now allow me to tell you about the myth of chemistry. Chemistry says: since atoms are composed of semi-abstract particles, they are a problem for physics, and do not interest me. For me, atoms are the indivisible components of my reality. I find myself within a reality different from that of physics; effectively, physics’ “reality” is nothing more than a virtuality of my reality. Within my reality, atoms are ontologically problematic, but in a sense that physics, in its naivety, cannot even dream of. Atoms are little things that become real *sensu stricto* only when in society. We must imagine the situation in the following manner: atoms are hands in search of reality, and this reality is reached when hands find each other. Held hands are called “molecules,” and these are indeed the foundational blocks of reality. However, the atoms, such hands in search of reality, are not something unreal, because we may distinguish them within the structure of the molecules that they form. Hence, the ontological problem of chemistry is much more philosophically complex than the parallel problem of modern physics. Physics searches the ontic territory between thought and thing. Chemistry acts within the ontic field between structure and function, it is the work of a more mature Devil. Let us consider this problem a little closer.

2.4.5. Atoms are not equivalent, they form a hierarchy. The measure of the hierarchy, the “value” of each atom, are the hands with which the atoms tend toward reality. There are atoms with only a few hands, and poor hydrogen has only one little hand with which to wave toward reality. And there are valiant and polyvalent aristocrats who have hundreds of hands that point in different directions. This feudal system of atoms is a closed system. The number of hands is not infinitely large. Effectively, there are only 92 types of atoms in the cosmos. It is obvious that the number of types of atoms is limited, since the very number of atoms must be limited, given the finitude

of the weight of the cosmos. However, the number 92 is not of a mold to satisfy the aesthetic demands of thought. If there were, for example, two types of atoms we could exclaim: oh how beautiful it is, the economy of nature! Or if there were 100,000,000 types of atoms, we could admire: oh how beautiful it is, the richness of nature! But 92 is quite frankly an ugly algorithm. This algorithm represents, for the spirit that seeks the foundation of reality in beauty, a disturbing ontological problem. This explains the attempts to change the number of types of atoms in two directions, that is, by enlarging or diminishing the algorithm. Both of these attempts have had success recently. The Devil is improving, thanks to the human spirit. The types of atoms may be reduced into each other. Atoms that infiltrate the scale of 92, given by "nature," may be produced. And ultra heavy atoms, which surpass the scale, can be built. What I have just said may seem like an innocuous game with algorithms, but it is equivalent, effectively, to the discovery of the Philosopher's Stone and it is the crowning of alchemy. We may playfully produce gold from "vile" substances (by reducing or raising the dignity of atomic values), but we can produce even more impressive miracles. For example: we can produce atoms lighter than hydrogen, therefore, little things that are no longer little things. Or we can produce monstrous atoms such as Thorium and Plutonium, whose names already demonstrate their origin. Thor and Pluto are archetypal forms of the Devil. The Middle Ages, as a wiser period than ours in relation to the Devil, knew well why it burned alchemists.

2.4.6. The hands, with which the different types of atoms stretch out in order to reach reality, sometimes meet. When that happens, they hold on to each other in order to form several types of molecules. Molecules are the little pebbles (mechanically indestructible) that compose matter; they are therefore, finally something concrete, although no one has ever had immediate experience of an isolated molecule. The concreteness of the molecule is therefore not very impressive. How do the hands meet in order to form these little concrete

pieces? The myth of chemistry appeals to the myth of Democritus to explain this inconceivable ontological miracle. The hands are the hooks of these hard atoms, according to this devoted archaic Greek, who is wrongly considered as the father of materialism. The atoms float in the void like snowflakes, and when, by “chance,” they meet, they form reality because their hooks link. Reality is a type of crochet and the void infiltrates it from all sides and through every pore. And the “chance” that produced this crochet is the same that produced the Earth. Some of the molecules have a simple structure; a few hands that hold each other in a simple way to form them. Other structures are extremely complex. It is not only a case of knowing which atoms enter the combination, but also in which direction and in what form they enter it. This is the old problem of space that comes into the equation. The drawings that chemists make of these structures are vividly reminiscent of paranoid figures or Tibetan mandalas. Three-dimensional models of molecules are reminiscent of so-called “abstract sculpture.” Atoms are represented, within these models, by balls, and their hands by bars. However, it must be clarified that these balls and bars do not symbolize “realities,” but realities *in statu nascendi*. Chemically, only the structure is “real.” These models are a sensible demonstration of the diabolic effort to transform “pure Being” into a sensible phenomenon. But it is equally possible to approach these models from a different ontological level. It is possible to state that the balls of these models represent individual beings that become real only when in society. In this example, they are *zoa politica*, whose reality is the society called “molecule.” This ontological model, which we may call “social,” reveals an entirely new reality to us. Molecules are nothing more than phenomena that are structurally homomorphic to other phenomena such as a living organism. In this case the organs are only a virtual condition of the organism. The isolated organ needs a reality. The same can be said of the ecological “environment.” The “environment” as structure is the only reality, and the “things” that compose

the “environment,” for example trees, animals, streams, clouds, and the forest floor, are nothing but virtualities of the reality that is the forest. Furthermore, we may say the same of human society. The human individual is nothing more than a virtual condition of the reality that is the society. In a word: reality is in the structure. This is what the models of molecules try to demonstrate to the senses.

2.4.7. Some of these models are, as I have said, greatly complex. The rules that govern their structure have something to do with electromagnetism, with thermodynamics, with optics, in sum, with the rules that govern the starry sky. From astronomy’s perspective, chemistry is nothing more than a limited example of astronomy. However, from chemistry’s perspective, astronomic phenomena are nothing more than examples of extremely simple chemical processes – a new example of how the ontological levels of this diabolic world called “the sensible world” cross each other. The complexity of molecules is not surprising. They only represent the realization of potentialities contained in the gigantic number of combinations between 92 elements. However, the complexity of molecules already has something to do with the catastrophic complexity of the phenomenon of life. As the Devil plays with the combining of atoms, he comes dangerously close to life. He is almost entering puberty. In the super complicated game of chess that chemistry is, the Devil already nearly provokes his game partner in a vital sense. Chemistry, as a whole, is pregnant with organic chemistry; such is the foundation of life. The more complex the molecules; the more fragile and corruptible they are; the more apt they are to transform themselves, through an unimaginable ontological leap, into the phenomenon of life. For the simpler molecules, the chemical game is limited. They react in a simple manner to a few acids and bases in order to form salts and water. Or they just innocently oxidize. However, the more complex molecules, are in that state of precarious instability, with which we have characterized the Earth. Even the slightest chemical influence corrupts these fragile structures.

Within the super-complex molecules, these are already pseudo-historical phenomena, since the slightest modification of the influences modifies their structure. Polymers, as super-complex molecules, as repulsively viscous grease, as sticky and slippery fats, already insist upon evoking the lust of life.

2.4.8. Our molecular considerations lead directly to the problem of aggregation. An aggregate is a society of molecules, it is the material body proper, it is therefore what the naive spirit calls palpable reality. However, an aggregate is, as I have said, a problem. The rational, classifying spirit distinguishes three states of aggregation: solids, liquids, and gases. In the ideal solid bodies, the molecules agglomerate by the heaps and form unimaginably enormous weights. Ideal solid bodies do not exist on Earth, and can only exist in conditions of absolute zero. They represent coldness and death. They would be that which the naive spirit calls “reality” *sensu stricto*, but we do not have direct experience of them. Maybe some celestial bodies are close to this absolute solidity. Gassy bodies are societies of molecules that do not want to be social. In these bodies, the molecules run from each other eccentrically, and the higher the temperature of the gas, the faster they run. The majority of the celestial bodies are gassy. A gassy aggregation does not satisfy the naive spirit’s sense of reality, since it represents bodies that do not want to be so. For these spirits, the air is, and with every reason, a kind of void. The liquid aggregation is a fleeting and precarious stage between solids and gasses. It is very doubtful whether there are liquids in the cosmos, except on Earth and one or two planets immediately near to it. However, on Earth the situation is a lot more complex than it may appear according to the description just offered. “Solid,” “liquid,” and “Gas” are relative terms. I shall not speak of the Earth’s center, whose state is debatable, not even of the Earth’s gassy cover, which is almost an emulsion in its lower part, and therefore almost liquid, and in its upper part, is so rarified that it is almost nothing. I shall speak of the Earth’s crust. The smallest change in temperature or pressure – ridiculously small, if compared with

the conditions that reign in the cosmos – transforms solids into gasses, and solidifies gasses. I repeat: the Earth is something very special in the cosmos. The temperature and the pressure in the Earth's crust are practically constant. Nevertheless, the tiniest of variations are enough for bodies to go from gas to solid and vice-versa. And during the passage from one state to the other, there is a small fleeting stage called "liquid." This preciously precarious stage is probably exclusively terrestrial; it is the cradle of life.

2.4.9. Life emerged from liquids, but life cannot be defined as a liquid *sensu stricto*. Life cannot be defined in relation to aggregation, just as it cannot be defined in relation to any of its aspects. The protoplasm is a type of viscous liquid, as its name suggests, but it contains solid grains and gassy bubbles. All the same, it is correct to speak of the fluidity of life in a somewhat figurative sense, because the chemical reactions that characterize vital phenomena are reactions typical of liquids, and it is within a liquid environment, within solutions, that their process occurs. The figurative sense of the phrase "the fluidity of life" has, therefore, within this context, two meanings: life is chemically liquid, and life is liquid because it cannot be defined.

0.0.0. Let us interrupt for a moment the thread of the argument. Let us cast a quick glance at the path that we have already followed in pursuit of the Devil. What has happened is frightening. The path followed is a short one. We are still far from life, even farther from man, and farther still from the human spirit. However, we have already lost all solidity and every support. Our concepts have liquefied; the contours of our definitions have become blurred – we are in a fluid, liquid environment, caught by the furious current of time. This current has already dragged us far away from the Divine one. We still nurtured the illusion of solidity in relation to stars and atoms, although with grave doubts. In the field of chemistry, the courtyard of life, several veils started to descend, in order to cover our vision of reality. They are veils woven by the

Devil; they are the veils of *Māyā*. The aim of this book is not to immediately tear these veils. It is, on the contrary, to allow itself to become enveloped by them, so as to see where they take us. And after all: the veils of chemistry are beautiful, and the veils that life promises us, are even more beautiful, do you not agree?

2.4.10. We cannot abandon this chapter without having pointed out two types of atoms that are especially noble: silicon and carbon. These two atoms form the basis of especially interesting molecules. As a historical reality, it was only carbon that gave origin to certain molecular structures, from which life emerged. However, modern chemistry is capable of producing almost parallel structures with silicon as a base. Within the feudal system of atoms (the periodic system), silicon and carbon are similar in certain aspects, and different in other. The lack of imagination of science fiction authors is really disappointing. They find organisms on Mars that are obviously carbonic, and they project, onto our cinema screens, vulgar phenomena such as eyes, claws, and trunks. I suggest to these authors that they should imagine a silent life. Chemistry's imagination is, however, a lot more fertile. Being inspired by the Devil, it continues to play the game of combining atoms in an impressive way. It produces fertilizer from the air and tissue from urine. It thus reveals, *malgré elle*, one aspect of the diabolic character, which the Middle Ages knew: the Devil stinks. The designation "century of plastics" has already been proposed in order to characterize our times. This is a very happy and suggestive designation. It suggests the Devil's aroma, the prince of our times.

2.4.11. Thus we are approaching life from all sides. The air is already full with its clamor to be articulated. We must therefore abandon the Devil's childhood, which happens on this side of life. We shall follow his footsteps in order to enter the green meadows of life. He is no longer unknown to us. We have come to know him a little, but only intellectually. He has not provoked either fear or wrath. He has only provoked

curiosity. This distanced atmosphere shall not be maintained in the field of life. There, he will have to reveal the ethical side of his character. Let us gather, therefore, all of our courage as we lift the backdrop for the scene of life, for that scene in which our own drama is processed.

3. LUST

The previous chapter attempted to demonstrate how innumerable influences spilled from the heavens over the Earth; how these causal, purposeful, and predestined influences gathered into millions of tributary streams upon the Earth's crust, and how finally, hundreds of million of years ago, they flowed into life's majestic current. The heavens and the Earth condensed from the spirit in order to produce the river of life, which flows in search of the ocean of the spirit. For poetic reasons we are purposefully appealing to the allegory of water circulation as we describe the phenomenon of life. Several aspects of life are condensed into a single image in this banal allegory: the aspects of liquidity, fluidity, and instability; life's plasticity; its spiritual origin and spiritual aim, and how aim and origin become confused; the wheel of life, which the Hindus call "*Samsara*," life's eternal return; the amorphous unity of life, in which apparently distinct individuals are nothing but illusions, like drops in a river or in the rain. Several other aspects hide in our allegory – aspects that point to the Devil and to Divinity, and which we do not even want to suggest, or even less, articulate explicitly. The parable of circulation is banal because it has been evoked innumerable times within Western tradition. However, this parable is pregnant with meanings, and it seems that the West has not yet begun to exhaust them. Eastern speculation has gone much deeper into the circularity of life. Eastern sages were the ones who authentically attempted to think about this circularity. As Westerners, we have intellectual knowledge of the fleetingness

and fluidity of life, and we know that individuals emerge from the river of life as superficial phenomena, only in order to submerge again, returning to the biological economy from which they precariously emerged. We know this because our sciences coldly describe this process. However, existentially, the iron-bars of our individuality imprison us, and they do not allow us to have a direct experience of the indivisibility of life. Being imprisoned prevents us from dedicating ourselves to this experience. The full impact of the water analogy is therefore restricted, and it will be necessary to have a different mental disposition in order to grasp it, a disposition that we may reach later in the course of this book. In this chapter, we shall attempt to understand only the Western aspect of the fluidity of life, that is, the literal meaning of the term “the fluidity of the processes of life.”

3.1. Life

Up until now we have attempted (with a problematic effect) to assume a distanced attitude in relation to the creation around us. We have attempted to face it as a beautiful and useless whole, and equally as an impetuous tendency in search of an aim. Now, it will no longer be possible to maintain the same *dégagement*, the same sadness or sloth, upon the terrain of life. And we will not even try. We shall describe the miracle of the “first life” with a palpitating, enraptured, and sacred heart. An enormous constellation of suns and planets, a gigantic conspiracy of physical, chemical, and God-knows-what influences, came together at a given moment, that great moment, which produced the first protoplasm, the first drop of life. The entire cosmos writhed in order to give birth to this tiny drop from its bosom. The spheres trembled, the Earth shook, the seas ebbed and flowed in furious tides, torrential rains hammered molten rocks, and on the beach of a forgotten sea, a little mucous thing became the Venus born from the surf; and this epochal happening (in the most literal sense of the

term), is veiled by the enormous distance that separates us. It is impossible to imagine the aspect and characteristics of the first drop of life. Scientific research, even if inspired by the Devil, has not yet been able to reproduce, in its laboratories, the conditions that gave origin to life. The *Homunculus* has not been produced yet, even though several attempts in this direction are in progress. The artificial life, which the future reserves for us, shall be a far superior diabolic achievement than the conquest of still life. Following the thread of this argument, I must lament, once more, the lack of imagination of our science fiction. It fills its worlds with mechanical robots and with several, relatively innocent Frankensteins. The future has mobile muscles, intestines, sexual organs, and brains in store. The world will be full of this type of scum. We should thank God for being the under-evolved grandparent rather than the evolved grandchild.

3.1.1. Our temporary inability to fabricate artificial life is due to several reasons. However, the first reason is our inability to even imagine orthogenesis. In the natural world that surrounds us, this does not happen. In this world, one rule is prime: *omne vivum ex vivo*. The careful observation of nature, undertaken by thousands of scientifically trained observers, seems to want to impose the following conclusion: the emergence of life was a unique and irreproducible happening. Nature seems to say: the breath of life inspired me only once. "Only once," is an expression, which the scientific spirit does not accept. It cannot accept it, because science stops functioning if it utters this expression. Science is a mental discipline that investigates phenomena that are at least theoretically repetitive. Science drowns when confronted with a solitary and irrevocable phenomenon. A phenomenon like this would be a miracle, and science is a self-confessed non-believer of miracles. However, life is a "scientifically" investigated phenomenon. It is not possible to admit that it is a miracle. The hypothesis of orthogenesis is therefore scientifically, almost inadmissible. Thus science seeks to circumvent the problem, and to dislocate

the origin of life to even greater distances, and possibly to other celestial bodies. We shall not accompany science in this escape; we shall accept, and conform, to the miracle of solitary and irrevocable incarnation.

3.1.2. Let us cast a brief glance through the biologists' microscope, which they direct against the protoplasm in order to examine it. However, it should be understood that they direct it against today's protoplasm, and not against the mysterious substance of which we have spoken. What biologists research is a drop taken from today's current of life. Therefore, there is a possibility that the incredible complexity, and the total confusion from the chemical, morphological, and electromagnetic points of view, which reign within the protoplasm, is a modern aspect; without even mentioning the possibility that this complexity and confusion may be an aspect of the observer and not of the observed phenomenon. The original protoplasm may have been of a crystalline clarity. I say this because science insinuates that the protoplasm is a liquid crystal, and that biology is nothing more than a special case of crystallography. If we accept this suggestion, we must conceive of life as one among a multitude of manifestations of the tendency of substances to crystallize. It is as if the Devil had tempted a multitude of substances in order to seduce them into sin, and the dead crystals (the inorganic ones) were merely frustrated attempts. These curious and somewhat sinister formations that are crystals, and which hide within the Earth's dark bosom, are unfortunately very similar to life. They have very similar structural, geometric, electromagnetic, and thermic properties. They propagate, feed, and in certain cases, they lustfully extend their tentacles in search of luminosity. They are a diabolic bridge between the amorphous mass and life. Given this bridge, it again becomes patent how futile philosophy's attempts to introduce clear barriers between the layers of reality are. I say this in order to rectify Nicolai Hartmann. All of our attempts to define it, drown in the realm of the multiple and shimmering veils of *Māyā*.

3.1.3. These initial considerations immediately introduce our minds to the method of the evolution of life. Thousands of species of crystals have been unsuccessfully tempted by the Devil, until he found the protoplasm and seduced it toward continued evolution. All of these frustrated species represent a dead end. These species are rigid and dead in the Earth's bosom. The Devil has abandoned them; he left and made himself absent from them. The same process of temptation, of trial and abandonment, of failed attempts, characterizes the course of biological evolution as a whole. The English call this method "trial and error." The Devil seems to know his aim, but seems ignorant of the shortest path in order to reach it. This is the reason why his path is so convulsive, and why so many times, it results in dead ends and grotesque constructions.

Theoretically, evolution is contained as a whole within the first drop of protoplasm. The first protoplasm is the project of every form that has ever emerged in the past, and of every form yet to emerge in the future. Every vegetable and animal body, every human body, either dead or yet to be born, every idea that has been thought or is yet to be thought, and all of the supra-men including angels and demons, are contained in germinal form within the first drop of protoplasm. It is no wonder, therefore, that the protoplasm obstinately refuses to be understood by the researcher who investigates it. On the contrary, it seems evident that an analysis (and *a fortiori*, a synthesis) of the protoplasm remains unreached. We have the slight suspicion that all of this effort by the biologists to analyze and synthesize the protoplasm is fruit of a naivety, which is itself a consequence of the simplistic mentality of 19th century science. It is still true that life emerged *in illo tempore* from the chemical layer of reality, and therefore that chemical methods relate to it in some way. However, it is not less true that there was a leap, and that these chemical methods simply seem to miss the target. Biology is in a crisis.

3.1.4. Despite all of this, the morphology of the protoplasm is perfectly possible. Its structure is called "cell" and we may

distinguish within it, in a somewhat imprecise manner – nucleus, content, and walls. However, it is necessary to introduce a warning, before attempting to describe what the biologists tell us about life by way of their myths. It is necessary to say that there are two types of protoplasm: dead and alive. Dead protoplasm is not inorganic matter, it is life that has died. During the chemical processes that act upon it, the dead protoplasm may be transformed into inorganic substance or life's current may reabsorb it. It is impossible to define what death is, even at such a primitive stage of life such as the one that we are considering. However, experientially, we feel that something has happened which should not have happened when a single drop is removed from the river of life. Something within us rebels against this happening, which seems absurd, against all reason, against even the economic reason of life itself. We know that life's current, if taken as a whole, does not know death. On the contrary, it flows in an ever wider and deeper torrent, and covers, with its warm and plastic waves, all of the terrestrial surface. It is therefore absurd that this current should be accompanied, from its source, by the shadow of death. Life's immortality is not an excuse for the fact of death; on the contrary, it makes death even more absurd. The fact that the vital current reabsorbs these cadavers does not console us, but revolts us even more; it demonstrates the profound brutality of life. In its immortal and impetuous advance, the protoplasm devours its own excretions, and this is unacceptable both ethically and aesthetically. When a single drop of protoplasm dies, and when this drop is reabsorbed in order to feed another, we are witness to a tragic process, a process that we can no longer only face intellectually. There has been a struggle in this process, and the protagonists of this struggle are backstage, as in a Greek tragedy. They are God and the Devil. And we cannot say who has won.

3.2. The Cell

Biology's difficulties start, therefore, even before the investigation of the protoplasm. In order to be able to investigate it, biology is obliged (most of the time) to kill it. The spirit's intervention kills life (most of the time). Nuclear physics teaches us that the observer influences the observed phenomena. This is a serious and fundamental problem for the theory of knowledge. However, in biology's case, the same problem acquires a new aspect. This is an epistemological, as well as an ethical problem, and protests against vivisection (that accompanied the birth of biology) are a proof of the awareness of this aspect.

The drop of life that the biologists remove from the river of life in order to observe it is generally a dead drop, despite all the care that investigators may take to keep it alive. Everything that biology tells us refers to this protoplasm that has been removed from its environment. However, what biology tells us is no less interesting because of this. Here is biology's myth: the structure of the protoplasm (that liquid crystal) is the cell. There is also the virus, which has no cellular organization, but a simple structure, a kind of double screw. This is a phenomenon located somewhere between cell and crystal *sensu stricto*. But the scientists doubt that the virus is a link between two realms. The virus is a parasite on the cellular protoplasm, and we cannot conceive how it could have existed before the protoplasm. The cell is therefore (at least at this stage of our knowledge), the structural project for the protoplasm's existence.

It is possible to shed light on the cell from several different angles in order to understand it. The cell is an engine that mysteriously runs on solar energy. It is a set of chemical substances that find themselves in a precarious stage of balance; a set which is always on the brink of decomposition, and within which chain reactions continuously take place. The cell is an electronic valve, whose properties are so intricate that our knowledge of them remains rudimentary. It is an electronic computer of gigantic efficiency, and the new science

of cybernetics begins to only vaguely notice the structure of “hereditary information” that the cell stores. It is a library, a safe-deposit box, and warehouse of all past experiences. It is the uterus of all future deeds, works of art, acts of goodwill, and visions of truth. The cell is the support base from which lust develops. It is as such that the cell shall be considered in this chapter.

3.2.1. Take this drop of life into consideration: its walls are permeable, but protect its content. Its sap articulates itself in a mysterious way: as grains and bubbles. Threads, which were thought of as necklaces in the old days, form its nucleus, and whose pearls, or “genes,” were the carriers of hereditariness. And this nucleus, which consists of “ribonucleic acids,” is the center of the mystery that the drop hides. This drop moves. It expands and contracts, turns in search of light, shakes and vibrates. It emits greedy pseudopods, and devours. In an inconceivably complex process, it assimilates what it has eaten, and evacuates the inassimilable. And, in an extreme paroxysm, it contorts its viscera, bubbles, and with extreme lust expels part of itself and creates new life. How could one speak of this pornographic process with a cold and objective spirit? The biologists do just that. They calculate “*more geometrico*” how the high and low tides of the cell emerge. How the chromosomes shamelessly intermix, only to run away afterwards, contrite, to their respective corners; how to introduce, *post festum*, a wall in the cell to hypocritically divide the libidinous act; how this wall divides the cell in two, and how both halves separate. This description method is wholly inadequate to grasp the ardent and violent desire, by which the Devil possessed the cell. On the terrain of celestial bodies and atoms, of polymers and crystals, this type of description is aesthetically acceptable. However, we feel an existential nausea on life’s terrain if we follow the same argument. When a living being contorts in extreme pleasure and torment, when it surrenders to lust to the point of bursting in an explosive birth, and when new life emerges from this explosion, how can one apply the calculation of probabilities

to this process as a method? However, the biologists are right from their perspective. The process is ardently diabolic, thus the description they offer is coldly diabolic.

3.3. The Organism

During several, uncountable millions of years, the cell was the only form of life. It was probably so for the majority of the history of life. The lustful and libidinous process that I have described was majestic during this period; it was the purpose and aim of all flesh. Death accompanied this process in a manner that is not strange to us, but which diverges from the concept of death that we consciously harbor. Death was the amorous act proper, and immediately resulted in new life. Death was the "*Liebestod*," the amorous death: the death of a single being, so that two beings could emerge. There was, perhaps, another form of death: accidental death. However, this type of death was not part of the cell's project. The cell is immortal, and dies only when it loves. The vast majority of beings, which make up the river of protoplasm, still consist, to this day, of unicellular beings. Today we may still observe this process of cellular division, such death by love, through microscopes, since this process happens all around us without interruption and within our bodies. The entire, enormous multitude of infusoria, bacteria, and leucocytes in our blood is dedicated to this libidinous suicide. These unicellular beings form the protective cover of the river of protoplasm – they nourish, decompose, and organize its currents. They are the river's geographic frontier, and are the advanced outposts of life in the depths of the humus, the heights of the atmosphere, on the surface of the sea, and in the oceanic abysses. All of the other beings are nothing but excrescences upon life's body, a kind of cancerous formation. They represent a diabolic disease on the immortal and continuously crescent body of life. They are like infernal plants that sprout from the protozoan level, only to be devoured by that same level and be reabsorbed into it. Why did

the Devil create these multicellular organisms? Because they are mortal in a new sense. Together with multicellular organisms, the Devil created a new type of death.

Organisms are cellular societies of limited duration. When the society dissolves, what we call “death” emerges in the conscious sense of the term. These cellular societies create a unifying principle, a type of government that permeates the whole organism. We call this principle “individuality” without ever being able to comprehend what this term means. Religions call it the “soul,” however, Western religions are inclined to reserve this term for human organisms. The reasons for this deliberate limitation are historically explainable, but they do not lean on facts furnished by biology. Eastern religions recognize souls in every inorganic being, and are therefore, more “scientific” than ours. By creating societies of cells, the Devil created an ephemeral biological phenomenon, because he created death *sensu stricto*. I said that this death is the dissolution of the society: but we recognize death before the dissolution becomes effective, and we speak of “death” at an indefinable moment, when the chemical processes that cause the dissolution come into action. The beginning of this process is decomposition, effectively, that is the moment of the decomposition of the unifying government of the organism. The religions say that this is the moment the soul is freed. Thus, it is in order to create souls that the Devil made multicellular organisms emerge from the protozoan level.

3.3.1. At a given moment in the history of life, individual cells no longer separated after having divided. Thus emerged a super-being that is no longer a family of beings (such as algae, the first attempt in this direction), but a new Self. The biologists say that biochemical processes produce this new inter-cellular connection. However, our imagination refuses to imagine “biochemical” processes that result, exothermically speaking, in a new Self. During the transition from protozoa to metazoa there was, evidently, a leap onto a new layer of reality. The societies that thus emerged are in an even more precarious

state of balance than the protozoa. They are mortal animals, precisely because the balance in which they find themselves is precarious. The cells that form the organism contribute to its functioning on the basis of a division of labor. They assume different roles within the organism's economy. This is why more optimistic eras viewed the organism as a kind of cooperative. However, a more exact knowledge does not permit this optimistic description. The division of labor among the cells in the organism is very imprecise and there is, also, a constant struggle among them. The imprecision of the division of labor, and the struggle among the cells is called "disease." We must, therefore, say that it is more of a field of struggle rather than a cooperative. When the organism's government, the "soul," loses control of the struggle, death emerges. Hence, organisms are, according to their project, not only mortal beings, but also sick beings.

3.3.2. It is possible to describe the same situation optimistically. The era of organisms is relatively small if compared to the era of life. They emerged only recently. If compared to protozoa, organisms are mere children. It is possible, therefore, to state that their imperfections are the result of their young age, and that future evolutions shall correct these mistakes. Thus, we could imagine that new progressions in the evolutionary process shall result in such perfect organisms that they shall be indissoluble. These beings shall be immortal in the ordinary sense of the term. What is even more impressive is that they shall be healthy beings. The human spirit does not conform itself to wait for this possible evolution. It already applies its methods in order to speed up evolution and to produce immortal and healthy beings. This is medicine. However, even the briefest consideration of the result, if ever reached, reveals its dubious ethical level. Immortal and healthy beings as perfect as protozoa would, therefore, perhaps not be such ethically desirable phenomena. Every progress, including that of medicine, is inspired by the Devil.

3.3.3. The intestinal struggle, which characterizes the organism, makes it mortal, but equally plastic in relation to

its structure. This is an internal restlessness, which means that the organism's structure is always ready to modify itself. This readiness for structural modification, which is built into the organism, is the basis for the biological evolution of organisms. In this chapter it shall be our duty to demonstrate that this internal restlessness of the organism is lust, and that it is thanks to it that organisms evolve. And the more they evolve, the more restless and lustful they become. The more evolved a being is, the less balance it has, and the more mortal and sick its organism is. Man, the most evolved being from our point of view, is the most mortal and sick of all beings. This biological observation may serve as an illustration to those who advocate development into other layers of reality.

3.3.4. The struggle between the tissue's cells and those of the organs, are the roots of the organism's evolution. Biology tells us the following myth in relation to this: cells that divided formed, *in illo tempore*, a society called "tissue." The disquieting lust, which thus no longer resulted in "*Liebestod*," in death by love, but in the growing expansion of the tissue, turned the existential project of the tissue into an unlimited expansion, until it covered the entire terrestrial globe or even the whole cosmos. However, the environment imposes resistance to this project. It does not allow the tissue to expand unlimitedly. This resistance creates a reaction in the tissue, better described as a violent "existential anguish." The tissue starts to violently contort. This grotesque and nauseating contortion lasts for millions of years, and is currently underway. The first result of this contortion is a tissue rolled up like a carpet, forming a tube. Today it is still represented by some primitive worms. This tube continues to twist and contort like a glove, thus complex organisms emerge. Then, the different cavities of the body, the three blastodermic layers, and the enormous variety of organs emerge progressively. The organism's existential anguish, which is frustrated lust, produces that infinity of genera and species that biology presents to us. The mere contemplation of some of these forms demonstrates, experientially, the diabolic fury that

produced them. The attempt to describe the evolution of some of the organs throughout the history of life would certainly be very exciting and would illuminate the Devil's methods. Just think, for example, of the aspect of evolution that starts with the nerve, and which results in the eye, the brain, and the antenna. However, there is not enough space in this book to allow us to dedicate more to such a task.

3.3.5. We shall try to follow the path of the organism in its evolution toward man, although we will necessarily have to do it in a superficial and skipping manner. This path is of general knowledge, and illustrates the Devil's methods. We shall be succinct because our impatience to reach man is great; man, the crowning glory of creation, if lust is taken to be the measure. We shall describe how this frustrated and anguished lust takes hold of the organism so as to turn it ever more precarious, ever more restless, ever more sick and mortal, until finally, after innumerable failed attempts and false steps, it results in man. And how this restless lust continues to function inside the human organism, to perhaps end in more perfect results, that is, more sinful. The evolution of the organism is the evolution of the capacity for sin, and that is why the Devil instigates it. However, it shall be necessary to briefly consider the method of evolution, before describing it.

3.3.6. We have already spoken about it when we mentioned the transition from crystals to protoplasm. It is the method of trial and error. The river of life progresses, violently propelled by lust; it erratically flows in every imaginable direction. In this violent flow, it divides into countless branches. Some of these branches, perhaps even the majority, demonstrate themselves to be unproductive according to their results. They are therefore to be abandoned by the "*élan vital*" and so they stagnate. They form swamps of genera and species, and little by little they dry up. The vast majority of the river of protoplasm (organized as organisms) fills up these swamps that surround us. The few main branches of life's current continue to be fluid and reabsorb, little by little, the stagnant substance. Thus, life's

path is not only marked by the countless graves of sacrificed individuals, but also equally, by the graves of genera and species abandoned by the Devil. In his impetuous advance, the Devil brutally and unscrupulously sacrifices the individual in favor of the species; the species in favor of the genus; the genus in favor of the phylum; and the enormous phylum, in favor of a single individual, which seems to him, at a given point, to be the spearhead of the evolution he is aiming at. This is the method of evolution, and biologists of the 19th century gave it the codename “survival of the fittest.” They tacitly accepted, therefore, the Devil’s norms of value. However, the 19th century seems to have nurtured sympathy with evolution in general, and with its methods in particular, without much respect for its norms.

3.3.7. The problem of such norms relentlessly emerges. Which is the “right” path of evolution? Which is the path intended by the Devil? This question brutally reveals the relativity of values within the realm of illusions that is the sensible world. From the perspective of the giant polyps that inhabit the ocean’s abysses, the cephalopods are the most “evolved” genus. The river of life’s aim is to produce cephalopods, and all the “posterior” genera (posterior from the human perspective), are nothing but degenerations in the exact sense of the term. The polyp’s perspective is humanly unacceptable. The relativity of values is existentially limited by our human condition. Existentially, all values refer to man. As the normative point of reference, man is one of the most beautiful products of ethical relativism created by the Devil. If we take this point of reference as a normative principle, then mollusks (to which polyps belong) are merely “primitive” ancestors of chordates, who are, in their turn, the uterus for vertebrates. Cephalopods march through a dead path, despite their multiple legs. Man is the aim of evolution, he is the crowned creation, and the proof of this is our existence as humans. However, as this experiential proof is “objectively” suspect, we seek circumstantial proof in order to strengthen it. We say that our brain, our hands, our ability to

articulate, and similar properties, “prove” that we are the most evolved species. Biologists, despite being human, hesitate to sign this certificate of guarantee. “Objectively” speaking, every species is the spearhead of evolution, and its existence proves this. Every species has certain special characteristics, which may be considered as proof of their superiority in relation to the human properties mentioned.

This book is human. It accepts man as the reference point of all norms. It obstinately refuses to compare electronic senses, and the social anatomy of ants, with the human biological organization, lest it become confused. For this book, life has only one aim: to evolve toward man. All the plants and all the animals have one of the following meanings: they are man’s ancestors, they feed man, or they harm him. However, a voice, whispering within some of us, poses the following objection to this argument: “I am a tapeworm who inhabits human entrails. And if all the plants and all the animals do have the meaning mentioned in the human argument, then I agree. However, it is evident that man is my shelter. Therefore, I am the aim of life.” How can one answer such an impertinent objection? By appealing to lust as the “absolute” measure of norms, according to the argument developed in the present chapter. Life is a lustful process. Man, as a being, is capable of more lust than the tapeworm, and is therefore more evolved. The tapeworm will answer that every link in the chain that forms it possesses an especially complex masculine and feminine sexual apparatus, and that therefore the tapeworm is more lustful. We may, however, refute this argument with a smile. Man’s masculine and feminine sexual apparatus, although primitive, are distributed in such a manner that the meeting between both is almost impossible. Anatomical, social, and religious barriers without parallel in the realm of life, separate both apparatus. In order for coitus to happen, it is necessary to break all of these barriers. It is easy to imagine how much lust is demanded for such a feat of admirable rupture. Thus, man is

unarguably the most lustful of beings, “objectively” speaking. *Quod erat demonstrandum*.

3.3.8. Now that we have proof of our human superiority, we may, with undisguised satisfaction, finally move on toward a description of evolution that aims at the human libido. Right at the start, the river of protoplasm divides into two branches: animals and plants. Plants have the duty to feed animals, and animals have the noble right to be parasites to plants. The distinction between these two types of life is not rigorous, just like any other distinction in the realm of life. Photosynthesis in animals is known. However, given our superiority, we resolved to disregard plants. Vegetal lust does not touch our souls, unless a sped up film humanizes it. Then, we suffer a shock of self-recognition. Let us imagine, for example, a sped up film of the forest’s vital processes. A diabolic scene unfolds in front of our eyes, in every sense parallel to the scene of our own lives. This scene is the stage of a struggle, in which individuals and species violently try to eliminate each other and conquer their loved one. Roots, branches, and vines contort, petals shamelessly solicit, and the air is full of pollen. However, as I have said, we disregard this infernal stage, which is not properly ours.

3.3.9. The animal kingdom is a symphony on the theme of sex, which ends on the splendid chord of human lust. The theme in itself is somewhat tedious, I have to confess. It is the old, forever repeated story of cell division. The sexual act is therefore an act limited to a single actor, or a maximum of two actors. In the beginning, it is the organism itself that divides, as did its ancestor, the cell. Afterwards, organs that specialize on the subject of lust emerge in the organism, in order to make lust more perfect. These organs are of two types, “masculine” and “feminine,” but they belong to a single organism. Later, the specialization process evolves, the organs separate into two distinct organisms, so as to make the act more varied and interesting. And this is, in a general sense, the whole theme. It is, as I have said, a thematically poor act. However, the variations of the theme compensate for its poverty. The Devil,

as a dramaturge is somewhat limited. But as a scenographer, he reached the height of genius. Strictly speaking, this is a classic drama in three acts. The first act, the coming together of the partners, introduces the theme in a veiled manner. The second act, the sexual act *sensu stricto*, starts with a high emotional tension and mercilessly leads to a predicted catastrophe. The third act represents the anticlimax, that *omne animal post coitum triste*. The history of evolution could be described as the story of this drama.

3.3.10. The first act is a pantomime, followed by a dance. Both actors appear in festive and colorful costumes, and they accompany their ritual steps with suggestive songs. We all know and appreciate this festive ritual. We admire the nuptial garments of the male and female. We vibrate with the cries of the female in heat. We attempt to interpret that proud walk, that slow circling, that hide and seek, those pretentious fugues, and those equally pretentious aggressions. The first act is festive. The second act changes character. It is brutal and violent. It is impossible to describe all the variations that unfold. We shall limit our considerations to a few vertebrates, in order to illustrate how this second act leads directly to man's sinful lust, *sensu stricto*. The sadness of the third act is reminiscent of the "Liebestod" of unicellular beings. Organisms become ashamed that they are still alive after the second act. This sadness after the act is difficult to interpret from the Devil's perspective. Perhaps this sadness is the first sign of an anti-diabolic interference in the symphony of life. I cast this suggestion to be meditated by the reader, but I abandon it immediately.

3.3.11. Fish, as relatively primitive vertebrates, represent the drama of entirely uninhibited sex. Fertilization is public and external. Males and females start the drama with intricate dances. These increasingly violent dances culminate in a simulated fight. At the moment of the highest tension, the bodies of the fish compress. Some species form compact layers with hundreds of fish. This compression of bodies generates the orgasm. Eggs and sperm are expelled to intermix in

the water. The sexual organs do not touch. This is a poorly individualized lust, the inauthentic lust of "us together." "All of us" compressed in the bus have a similar, equally primitive experience. Amphibians are far more evolved. The actors on stage assume individualized masks, and become "people." The frog squeezes the female's body so as to force her to expel the eggs, which are then publicly fertilized. However the act does have some intimacy. The frog intimately embraces his object of desire. The stage that lust reaches with the frog is identical to that which traditional religions discover in man. These religions deny that human lust is different from the frog's, and they seek thus to deny (with problematic success) the aesthetic evolution of sex. However, in the salamander's case, which is a relative of the frog, lust evolved. The male walks with wide, dignified steps and deposits the secretions, which contain the sperm. The female follows, obediently, the destiny of the lord of her dreams, and protects the secretion in her bosom. Fertilization occurs within her body. Thus lust evolves, and grows in intimacy, beauty, and segregation, so that we may interrupt this somewhat pornographic description and entrust to the reader's imagination its reptilian, mammalian, and human phases.

3.3.12. Lust becomes always more beautiful and more segregated. It becomes always more hidden and secret. The hiding place and the secret are synonymous with sin. Lust becomes always more sinful. The biological myth tells us, with its pseudo-cold language, that the female's hiding under the male, and that the male's hiding inside the female, are physiologically conditioned processes. The biologists pretend that these processes have nothing to do with the corresponding human behavior, and that to interpret it as such would be a false anthropomorphism. However, the biologists are human after all, therefore they anthropomorphize everything they tell us. The myth that they tell us has animals as a theme, but it is a human myth. "Physiological process" is a mythical term, which, when translated to the experiential layer of our life, means "behavior." If the animals behave as they do in the

sexual act, it is because they are conditioned by something that corresponds, in the human experience, to the term "shame." The more evolved the animal, the more shame it demonstrates in its behavior. The Devil's opposite emerges, ever more persistently, together with the emergence of shame within the scene of life, which has something to do with the sadness that I mentioned in paragraph 3.3.1.

3.3.13. The reader must have noticed that this chapter is gaining pseudoscientific airs in order to reinterpret the facts, of which science tells us, within the existential atmosphere that surrounds the Devil. In order to maintain such a pose, we must carefully avoid terms such as "God" and "soul," even though these terms are always on the tip of the tongue. Let us say, therefore, "inhibition" instead of saying "God." What a scientifically cold and ethically neutral term, "inhibition." We can speak of "inhibition" without any inhibition. However we know that in the myth of psychology, this term bears the name of God. Very well then, the more evolved the animal, the more inhibited it is. And the most inhibited of all animals is man. From life's perspective, inhibition is obviously a pathological phenomenon, but it is not a disease in the same sense of the term employed when we discussed the struggles within the organism. Physiological diseases are within the project of life. The Devil planned them. However, inhibitions are products of the Devil's own struggle. It is not within his program.

3.3.14. All animals are inhibited. Inhibition is the antithesis of life as a whole. But man's inhibition is as prominent as his lust, and it is also in this sense that man is life's aim (although this sense is non diabolic, and therefore does not fit within the present context). The passage from animal to man is gradual and not qualitative. Let us take lust and inhibition as a measure. To wish to define man in opposition to animals is a wish that is as frustrated as any wish to define levels of reality. And primates are mainly the ones who ape man. The observation of a cage with chimpanzees at the Zoo is one of the most disquieting experiences, not only from an ontological perspective, but also

from an ethico-aesthetic one. Ontologically, we have started to doubt up to which point chimpanzees are human, and up to which point we are chimpanzeean. But from the ethico-aesthetic perspective, the cage is a palpable demonstration of what the psychologists call the “subconscious.” Let us consider the following scene: the female leans over deeply and reveals to the male her charms. The male, victim of such fascination, starts a sentimental activity, while the female eats the bananas that he had peeled. This is a scene in which lust and greed combine in order to produce a phenomenon called “prostitution” within the human context. Effectively, we are already very close to our aim, in our efforts to follow the Devil toward man. What an incredible and exciting evolution this is: from naive crystallization to sophisticated prostitution. Really, the doors of our human homeland are already starting to open. As we contemplate primates, with their avid hands, their voracious mouths, and their greedy eyes, we see, as if through a very transparent veil, the human face and gesture, the Devil’s masterpiece. Thus we have reached life’s spearhead in its furious advance.

3.4. Man

We abruptly leap to the human layer of reality. It is true; man emerged, imperceptibly, from life’s current. However, today we are separated from the animal kingdom by an intellectually unbridgeable abyss. We may come into contact with animals through several levels of recognition, through all the levels that connect us. But the genuinely intellectual contact, the linguistic one, is not possible. As articulate beings we are isolated from life, and human conversation is a reality that hovers over life without ever fusing with it. Life is one of the themes of this conversation, perhaps even the only theme, but as a theme, life is ontologically external to the conversation. It does not surprise us that we cannot establish bridges connecting ourselves with the animals that surround us. None of the

existing species is our direct ancestor. And even in the fossil records we cannot find our parents or grandparents, although we have discovered uncles and cousins. According to biology's logic, we are primates, so we must have been born through mutation as the children of animal-like parents. However, historically it seems as if we emerged through a leap, completely equipped with language, therefore, with intellect. We were the Devil's sudden intuition, and we leapt from his head fully armed, as did Pallas Athena from Zeus' head. Our search for hominids and pithecanthropus, for sub-humans and similar cretins, says nothing of the human situation in which we are thrown. I resolved, therefore, to abandon, at this point in the argument, the pseudo-historical method, which I had applied. I shall forget that we are animals, and I shall start to describe the lust of our present, mature, and evolved days. However, I shall try to keep in mind, in the course of my description, the teachings that we learned on our path from the amoeba to the chimpanzee in its cage.

3.4.1. Freudian psychology explains that lust does not wait for our sexual maturity in order to take hold of our bodies and our minds. In this sense, this psychology destroyed our pious and chaste naivety. On the contrary, lust already molds us in the uterus, and not even in the cradle does it let go for even one instant. This fact makes it clear to us that lust is not an instrument for the spreading of life, at least not exclusively. Its aim is much wider, and the reader must already suspect this aim, if one followed the argument. In the uterus, when we recapitulate the lessons learned in the course of evolution, lust inspires us. It allows us to refresh our memories, as embryos, with all of the experiences of infra-human life, so that we may make use of them in our existence away from the motherly bosom. First we are the cells that lustfully subdivide, and we progressively advance toward the tissue, which violently contorts. We go through the stage of blastocoel and gastrocoel, and of other repulsive worms, we are then reptiles and mammals, before we graduate as humans. The worms that twist in the human uterus

are already sinful, that is, they already have a soul. Western religions admit it and therefore forbid abortion. However, what is the difference between these worms and earthworms? The worm in the uterus will be human within nine months, the earthworm took nine million years in order to transform into man. Religions allow for the murder of earthworms, because they are the victims of time. Depth psychology and Eastern religions rediscover the earthworm within our minds. Are these disciplines more, or less, diabolic than Western religions?

3.4.2. Given the lustful activity in the uterus, the discovery of the most infamous desires in the mind of the newborn is not surprising. Freudians point, in the chaste child, and in the mother's innocent pleasure, to the germinal stage of all illusions and all crimes: because in the diapers, lies a frustrated worm; a rebellious lizard.

Why frustrated and rebellious? Because at the moment of birth, a strange element to life, opposed to life, is introduced. When the umbilical chord is cut, and when the first bottle-feed is refused – midwife and nanny have served as an instrument to this strange element. We shall once again call this element “inhibition,” in order to keep our Freudian mask on. This first inhibition starts a chain of causes and effects. This chain forms a wall within the child's head and thus separates the libidinous region of the mind from clear consciousness. It is thanks to this wall that the being that has just been born, shall be human in the ethical sense of the term. The wall is responsible for that whole misery called “existential anguish,” for every madness, and all crimes. It is equally responsible for that type of anguish, madness, and crime called “human civilization.” But it also produces that disease (from life's perspective) called “salvation of the soul.”

3.4.3. Freudians seek to convince the public that the myth they tell us is “science,” and they appeal, whenever they can, to cold terms. They are not aware that science as a whole is a form of myth. They say, therefore, that the nanny is responsible for the inhibition of lust. The nanny, and similar actors, thus

appear as Divinities in the Freudian myth. This may be so, but this type of actor has a transparent mask. We can see, and be emotionally touched, by the powerful force behind their conquests. And this is the force that encourages them to act as they do against life.

The wall they introduced into the mind presses against lust in order to repress it. Lust rebels and tries to break the wall. This is an undecided struggle, because lust is repelled at certain parts of the wall, but manages to open cracks at other parts. The Freudian myth tells us here of a struggle between the Devil and “inhibition,” for the possession of our soul. This is the same myth that the ancient Persians tell us. We are a battlefield for the struggle between the children of light and the children of darkness. However, Freudians are more adept to follow the children of darkness: that which the Persians and this book call “the Devil,” the Freudians call “sanity.” This warning in relation to nomenclature is necessary if the reader wishes to grasp the following description.

3.4.4. The Freudian myth describes the struggle: lustful desires, repressed by inhibition, attack, either in isolation or as groups, so as to break the wall and invade the upper rooms of the mind. This attack is necessary because it is only on the surface of the mind that desires can be realized. However, inhibition resists, because its aim is to keep desires at the stage of virtuality. Essentially, this is the same struggle that we described when we talked about the atom and the Devil’s attempt to realize it. Our mind is the stage for a permanent civil war. Freudians, as typical children of the 19th century, sympathize with the oppressed classes. However, when the revolution triumphs, and when libidinous desires violently invade the first floor of the mind, a stage emerges, which the Freudians recognize as madness. In order to excuse this fact they say that inhibition is the one responsible for the madness, since it should not have resisted; and from their perspective, they are right. “Objectively” speaking, madness could be described as the destruction of the wall that splits the mind.

3.4.5. This destruction is not necessarily processed from the bottom up. It is possible to destroy inhibition by attacking from above. Thus a negative madness emerges. The attempts by Freudians and by the Jungian school are precisely the ones that try to produce this type of madness. They seek to advance into the subconscious, by breaking the wall of inhibition and shedding light upon the soul with the lights of heightened consciousness. But the expeditions that our psychologists embark upon are not deep enough to result in madness. In addition, these divers of the soul protect themselves with an ultra-modern breathing apparatus, and return to the surface generally unharmed. "Depth" psychology is not very dangerous for the psychologists that apply it. However, let us consider for a moment the "yogi." They throw themselves, unprotected, like the pearl divers of tropical seas, into the obscure abysses of the soul, so as to bring back treasures. These treasures that the discipline of Yoga promises were, until recently, ignored by Western tradition. The Jungian school seems to have seen at least a vague aspect of their contours. The "yogis" are the ones who really run the risk of negative madness. In their fight against lust, they become proud. I leave this problem to the chapter on pride.

3.4.6. Extreme cases of "positive" and "negative" madness are rare. They represent the Devil's definitive victory. The mentally ill and the sadhu have surrendered their souls to the Devil. They no longer have a soul. The mentally ill suffer from "dementia" and the sadhu fused the *Ātman* into *Brahman*. The situation of the "normal" mind, however dramatic, is less extreme. The wall continues to resist the constant attacks of lust, even though it yields here and there to these attacks. Individual desires as well as complex sets of desires always manage to infiltrate beyond the wall. Individual meditations, or meditative disciplines, always manage to infiltrate the subconscious. This constant transit through the cracks of inhibition is the ontological plane of psychology. Let us first consider the "top down" tendency, the meditative tendency.

"Know thyself" is one of the imperatives of the Western tradition. However, the tendency toward the vivisection of the mind was violently "repressed" in the course of Western history. We are not very meditative. Meditation, as I have said, is a form of pride. The West realizes its pride in other forms. And even when the West sets out to analyze the mind, as it has done recently, it prefers to do so in a non-meditative manner. It transfers the study from "I" to "you" and analyzes the patient. Such "transference" of pride (in the Freudian sense) was already started by the Church in the practice of confession, but it is in modern psychology that it becomes "sublimated." The sublimation of this pride is in the para-scientific jargon that psychologists employ. It is a transparent sublimation. Any meditation, even the transferred one, leads to mysticism. The Jungian school proves it. In any case, it is still too early to wish to predict the results of modern psychology. Psychology is just starting to penetrate the mind's depth, and the shock that it suffers is precisely the shock of coming to know itself. The phenomena that emerge within this field of reality are difficult to assimilate to our spirit because they have been neglected by Western tradition, and their ontological problematic seems to be impossible to overcome for the time being. Psychology discovered lust as the foundation of life without being able to interpret its finding. Myths are projected lust, and psychology is discovering them underneath lust. There seems to be a leap between layers from libido to myth. Traditional philosophy, the safe keeper of Western meditations until the emergence of psychology, is equally "inhibited" in dealing with these themes. With the exception of Existential philosophy, which starts to confront them. Nevertheless, it is perfectly possible that future developments in Western psychology will penetrate into those depths in which Eastern meditation has found itself for thousands of years. Then there will be a meeting between Western and Eastern thought within the jungles of the subconscious. We lament that we will not be able to witness this "Mr. Livingston, I presume," which shall signal a new era

in the history of humanity. We must not underestimate, as the West has done up until now, the importance of the primordial studies of the mind from the East. An enlightened subconscious, subjected to an awakened Will, would open sources of energy much more powerful than atomic energy. If compared to trips into the mind, trips to the Moon are innocuous and primitive forms of entertainment. However, it is true that trips to the Moon are much easier to realize. We shall reach the Moon, and even Sirius, much earlier than the abyss of the mind. Inhibition is an infinitely more formidable barrier than the Earth's gravity. Effectively, a trip within the mind is the search for a direct route to God. However, it leads directly to Hell. Our psychology has yet to discover this absurd fact, because it has not yet advanced very far along this path. India and China know of this danger. Their religious history and their arts are proof of this.

3.4.7. Let us consider the second, contrary tendency to overcome inhibition, the "bottom up" libidinous tendency. Lust seeks to infiltrate itself through the cracks of inhibition in order to dominate our conscious thought, and to govern our acts. To do this, lust appeals to tricks. The myths of the Freudian sect describe the masks that lust uses to fool inhibition and get beyond it. As the reader is familiar with these myths, we will not tire him or her with "censors," "sublimations," "compensations," "transferences" and all the other entities from the Freudian pantheon. These pseudo beings frightened our parents, but today they no longer manage to "*épater les bourgeois*," they only provoke yawns. The psychoanalysts are traffic wardens of lust's inroads into inhibition. Our tired gaze has already accepted the Freudian thesis that lust is the main coiled spring of the mind, and has long ago stopped following the juggling acts of these modern wizards.

A reading of the works of psychoanalysis opens, however, the following ontological problem: does psychology take the beings with which it populates the mind to be real, or is it "conscious of the fact that they are allegories?" the problem is slightly different from the parallel problem in the older sciences.

Physics believes in its “reality,” even though philosophy may doubt it. The same is the case with chemistry, astronomy, and biology. The ontological problem of these sciences is therefore an external problem. However, psychology seems to doubt its own reality. In this aspect, it is reminiscent of Greek philosophy. Did Socrates and Plato believe in Apollo? Does psychoanalysis believe in both the Oedipus and Electra complexes? This is the problem of faith, which poses itself in the reading of these works. Psychology is a new science. It emerged from the humus of religion and philosophy with a delay of more than two thousand years. Hence it still has several archaic aspects and this ontological doubt is one of them. Its mythological character is more evident than that of the more evolved sciences. Effectively, our psychology finds itself at the mental stage in which Western mankind found itself two thousand years ago. It is polytheist. Its pantheon consists of a multiplicity of gods, titans, demons, and fairies. Therefore, our psychology cannot be compared with the other sciences, which are monotheistic, in the sense that they operate with an extreme economy of terms, and it cannot even be compared with Eastern psychology, which is just as evolved as our “exact” sciences. The correct term for comparison is ancient Indian psychology. Our psychologists say “libido” as they said “*Kali*,” and our psychologists say “id” as they said “*Brahman*.” And psychology is also divided into sects, dedicated to several gods or titans, just as India was divided into different religious sects. Therefore, we shall continue to follow our argument without the support of one or more of these sects.

3.5. Sex

We are now penetrating the land of love, the wonderland. It is obvious that we shall use the term “love” with a limited meaning in the present context. The green meadows that stretch before us are a classical landscape, in which Love and Psyche court each other. But be careful, a snake hides in the grass.

The history of Western civilization progressively transformed this landscape and adorned the statue of Love with vines and perfumed roses. It was especially during the chivalrous Middle Ages that attempts were made to cover the shameless nudity of the god of love's statue. The idol's crotch, which is the phallus, is almost unrecognizable. Our traditions and our customs seek to cover it. However we know about this serpent, ever ready to raise its head. It is the one that inspires our poets in their sonnets, it is the one that lifts our virile spirits "*per aspera ad astra*." Neither the noblest crusade, nor the most beautiful tournament can fool us. This is the first act of lust's drama, just as we described it in the case of the salamander. All of our material and spiritual civilization can be framed within this first act. It is not, therefore, a new phenomenon in the history of life. Sex has nothing specifically human about it, unless we reformulate the problem, and shift it from biology to philosophy. Then, it presents itself in the following manner:

3.5.1. The salamander's behavior during the first act of the drama of sex belongs to a set of realities called "nature." A large part of human behavior during the same act belongs to a reality called "human civilization." When passing from the first to the second act, the salamander does not shift to another layer of reality. The poet, when passing from the lyrical phase to the carnal phase of his inspiration, shifts to another layer. The problem, which poses itself, is that of the relation between "nature" and "civilization," and encapsulates within it the problem of human creativity. Man is a being who creates reality in the first act of the drama of sex. This problem is fundamental for the understanding of the diabolical methods, and shall be relegated to the last chapters of this book. The present context demands sex to be considered within the ontological level of biology and psychology.

3.5.2. The salamander's behavior is "natural," humanity's is not "natural," it is "perverted." Human sex is a perversion of animal sex. The human is a sexually perverse being. To

disseminate a “healthy,” “uninhibited,” and “clean” sexuality, therefore an animal sexuality, is a lack of knowledge of the human situation. The sexually “natural” man does not exist, just as the “natural” man does not exist, which is a fiction by Rousseau and a few of the 19th century Romantics. Neither does the “pure primitive” exist, which the same Romantic current praised in their characteristically perverse poems. Man is a perverse being by definition, because he is an inhibited being. His sexuality is perverse because it is inhibited. Human sexuality is the battlefield between lust and inhibition, and it is this battlefield that needs to be taken into consideration in our argument.

3.5.3. The attempts to institute a “natural sexuality,” which have already been mentioned, do however deserve some careful attention. These attempts are called “the struggle for free love,” and pose, therefore, the problem of freedom. The theme of freedom shall be addressed in another context, but here it reveals something important. Let us imagine the situation of the victory of sexual freedom, where inhibition is overcome. Sex will no longer be a problem. Humanity will be completely transformed. There will no longer be any neuroses, complexes, or crimes. Humanity will be healthy. The first act of the drama of sex will consist of only a few gestures. There will not be, therefore, any science, art, or philosophy. Humanity will be free of all of these neuroses. The second act of the drama will be approximately the same as it is now, but the third act, that of sadness, will probably be more accentuated. This will be the real crowning of the drama. Sexual freedom will produce a type of Earthly paradise that needs to be looked at a little closer, because every freedom produces an Earthly paradise.

3.5.4. It is possible to describe the history of humanity as the history of sex. Let us imagine that the historian thus conceived, is Marxist. He will be the discoverer of the dialectic of sex. He will discover the laws of the evolution of sexuality. Sex will be the thesis and inhibition the antithesis of this

process. The reactionary forces of inhibition will seek to deter the progressive forces of sex. He will show how sex rebels against the handcuffs imposed on it by reactionaries, and how sex will break these handcuffs one by one. Today these handcuffs are represented by bourgeois prejudices. However, the immutable laws of the dialectic shall liberate sex. The final stage will generate free love. It will be the paradise of which we spoke above. Lovers of all lands unite.

3.5.5. The ideology that I have just proposed is attractive. However, despite Freud and Kinsey, it has not had a prophet. We are still lacking someone who could enthuse our youth with such good news. We could imagine the abnegation with which our youth would be ready to fight and die for such paradise. After all is it not at least as beautiful as the paradise of gluttony and greed promised by the Marxists? The paradise of lust may be more beautiful than the one of greed, but in essence, it is a similar stage. From an ethical perspective, it is equivalent. It represents a final stage, an "*Endzeit*." In this Earthly paradise time stops flowing, because nothing happens. However, this is not the annihilation of time. On the contrary, it is time's final victory. Everything becomes temporalized. Time no longer flows, since it does not have anything to flow with, so it no longer has a subject. There is nothing left, except time. It is the Devil's definitive victory. And this victory was reached thanks to freedom. Having freed sex, the Devil shall transform everything into lust, and there will no longer be an opening for atemporality. This opening is provided by inhibition, which oppresses sex. Sex, oppressed by inhibition, sees itself forced to seek openings. Unimpeded sex will be completely closed in on itself. Freedom within the phenomenal world is equivalent to absolute slavery. It is, as Engels said, the knowledge of necessity. An Earthly paradise is Hell. The Church describes the same situation with different words. Freedom resides in the "*peccare posse*" (possibility of sin). In the paradise of free love the potentiality to sin through lust would be completely realized. Nothing would happen anymore. If the Devil could

produce this paradise on Earth, he would no longer need to appeal to other types of sin. It is through the liberation of lust that he would conquer humanity. Paradise on Earth is sin completely realized. It is the last realization of history, it is evolution realized. However, this paradise is a paradox, just as is everything that the Devil creates. Realized freedom is slavery because it does not leave any leeway for choice. Paradise on Earth is hell because it does not leave any leeway for transcendence. The paradise of lust is a relatively naive paradise, if compared to the other sins' paradises. That is why its consideration is relatively easier.

3.5.6. Human sexuality is not free lust. It is lust handcuffed by inhibition, therefore a battlefield. The tension between lust and inhibition is love *sensu stricto*. Lust that has been freed would not be amorous. "Free love" is a contradiction in terms. Love is never free. It is, by its own definition, the loss of freedom. Being a product of the dialectic tension between lust and inhibition, love is a historical phenomenon, and can be described historically. In this attempt I shall ignore the forms of love that are infiltrated by non-lustful sins. My description shall be, therefore, abstract. In concrete experience, love includes a variety of different sins. Envy is, for example, the alliance between lust and greed. Wrath is never very distant from the amorous experience. Whoever loves is always the plaything of all sins, and whoever has not experienced every sin has not truly loved. However, it is abstract love that I shall describe next.

In this historical description of love I will subdivide my theme in two parts. First I will take love *sensu stricto* into consideration, however, in a very condensed form. Following that, I will take some of the "sublimated" forms of this love into consideration, however, this description shall be even more condensed, and the choice of forms extremely subjective.

3.5.7. Seen as the realization of lust, human love has sensibly distanced itself – in the course of history – from the pure tendency toward coitus, and this tendency has become

only one of the aspects of the phenomenon of love. The type of love that is prevalent today in the West, the one with which our young girls dream about, the one which our poets sing about, and the one with which Hollywood producers nourish themselves, is a historically conditioned love. Other eras and other civilizations do not have the experience of love in this sense. However, even in the West, today, love is a highly malleable concept. The amorous ardor of a Basque villager is, for example, a completely distinct phenomenon from the sentimentality of a Wall Street lawyer. Kinsey proved, in an impressive manner, how the forms of love depend on social layers, and other research will prove that they equally depend on other factors. The more civilized humanity is, that is, the more “evolved” it is, then the more inhibited it is, and therefore the more perverse it is. Increasing inhibition causes lust to increase, and the more evolved the mind is, the more furious the fight for lust is.

3.5.8. Let us compare our love with the type that inspired our Victorian grandparents. During that *belle époque*, inhibition assumed gigantic proportions because it was stuck onto things. The spirit of the 19th century was materialist, and inhibition followed the tendency of those times. Material things thus became stages for the struggle between inhibition and lust, hence, symbols of sex. The fan, the glove, and the shoe, were amorous objects. To speak about undergarments was pornographic; they were unspeakable terms. The atmosphere was charged with materialized lust. Social conversation inauthentically turned around sex. The founders of industry watched the can-can so they could forget the fast-paced economic progress for a moment. The Victorian age was a paradise of material lust, because it was materialistically inhibited.

The *belle époque* is overcome. Diabolic progress has overcome materialized inhibition. Fans and ankles no longer excite us. Soon the monokini will provoke yawns. Following the spirit of the age, our lust has become spiritualized. The new generation assumes, in relation to carnal love, the same

attitude of despondent boredom that characterizes it in so many other aspects. But is lust today less diabolic because of that? I do not believe so. Lust simply shifted from the field of materiality to a new one, and the struggle between lust and inhibition continues, intensified, in the new field. Take for example the hysterically mechanical gestures of jazz fanatics, the husky screams of “crooners” in heat, and the effeminacy of men’s fashion or the masculinity of women’s fashion, and you will comprehend what I have in mind. The inauthentic pseudo-asceticism that characterizes our time is proof of a more evolved lust and inhibition. The Devil has progressed during the last seventy years, but the inhibition that opposes him has also equally evolved.

3.5.9. The historical source of our type of love lies in the medieval relation between Knight and Lady. Antiquity was unaware of the structure that informs our type of amorous phenomenon. The amorous ideal was “pure” love, that is, love in the sense of art for art’s sake, a love without utility. The ideal was, therefore, homosexuality. The Middle Ages established the “Lady” as the Knight’s standard, and the relation between them as “high love” (*hohe Minne*). This is the existential project of the West, a project that realized itself progressively. At the beginning of the 19th century this project was reformulated by the Romantic poets as a kind of antithesis against progressive industrialization. The Romantics sought shelter in lust, so as to escape the greed and gluttony that surrounded them. The Romantic reformulation of our amorous structure continues to inform the phenomenon of love to this day. This reformulation is a moral and aesthetic plague that focuses on illustrated magazines and film studios, and which spreads within humanity, infesting, with its inauthentic myths (commercially explored), not only Western society as a whole, but also entirely different societies. The result is highly comic, and illustrates the humor that characterizes the Devil. Today we find medieval Knights and Ladies, in romantically reconstructed garments, on the Siberian steppes and in the forests of Congo. The

sentimental words that these Romeos and Abelards whisper in the ears of these Juliets and Heloises have been coined by troubadours, reformulated by the Romantics, and rigidly fixed in small talk by today's advertising agents. A phenomenological and existential analysis of Western love (whose first steps were taken by Ortega y Gasset) will certainly reveal its Christian and Germanic sources, and its progressive profanation throughout the ages. This book's scope does not allow us to go deeper into this problem. We shall weave only a few comments in relation to the Christian source of our concept of sexuality.

3.5.10. Medieval legends describe the lives of saints. What impresses us in these legends is the saints' violent lust. They ran away to secluded places, but lust was always on their heels. These saints' visions far surpass the most audacious pornographies of our times. Brueghel's paintings give a pale idea of their impressive virulence. The saints' souls were stages for the violent struggle between lust and inhibition, between the Devil and God. For medieval Christianity, the "flesh" was the Devil, and "woman" was the name of the flesh. This is the Christian aspect of our amorous project.

Our Modern minds, although fundamentally Christian, are less virulent. Our dreams are less disgusting than the saints' visions. The Devil does not exert himself too much to lustfully possess our minds. The explanation for this fact, from a diabolic point of view, is double. In the first place, the Devil has other, more powerful and refined weapons at his disposal; he has other sins with which to possess our minds. Gluttony for example, so naive and innocent during the Middle Ages, assumes gigantic proportions today. But in the second place, lust has today become a somewhat uncomfortable field for the Devil. Inhibition shifted the struggle onto a field that is not very convenient. We may call this shift "the evolution and realization of Christianity."

3.5.11. What has been fundamentally modified is our concept of "woman," and this change is a problem for the Devil. For the medieval Christian, woman is sin. For us,

a woman is gradually becoming the "Other." And the love for a woman assumes a different aspect. It is true, woman continues to be sin incarnate, and the Devil exerts himself romantically in order to maintain this fact. However, the new aspect of the love for a woman is the following: it is possible that we may come to "recognize" ourselves in the woman we love, and that in this recognition we may overcome the cage of our individuality. It is very difficult to describe this leap, because it is not situated within a discussable field. This leap entails the abandonment of the sensible world. It is as if we had seen, behind the face of the loved woman, in an act of concrete recognition, that atemporal foundation, above which hovers, inauthentically, the sensible world. It is as if the heavenly doors had been open behind the beloved face. At this fleeting and precious moment, we have the experience of the absolute fertility of such passing phenomena, and we are ready to sacrifice ourselves, since every sacrifice is nothing more than an act within fortuity. This instant is fleeting, but it shakes the very foundation of our minds. At this very instant the danger of losing us emerges for the Devil.

Could it be that this instant, which I have described in such an unsatisfactory manner, explains why the Devil and lust were created? Could it be that all of that enormous evolution from the amoeba to man was unleashed in order to produce this instant? We cannot speculate about the paths of Divinity. We can only say that the instant, which I have just mentioned, is the defeat of lust, because lust simply does not fit within it. This instant represents "love" in the same sense that Christianity applies the term. It is the instant of sacrifice, of the overcoming of life. Lust is therefore a dangerous weapon for the Devil, since it may lead to the overcoming of life.

3.5.12. However, the Devil is not so naive as to fall undefended into this trap. He has at his disposal, within the very field of lust, advanced methods in order to avoid the "love" catastrophe in the sense described above. Psychologists call these diabolic methods of improvement "sublimation."

Lust may become diabolically more sublime. It may exchange its object. Since woman has become dangerous for the Devil, he substitutes woman for other, ontologically more dubious objects. We shall now consider some of these objects.

3.6. Nationalism

Sublimated phenomena are elevated to a new level of reality. Sublimated lust acts within a new reality. It is a new sin. Nationalism is lust elevated to the level of social reality; it is therefore either envy or greed. In this chapter I shall deal, however, with that aspect of nationalism that still frames it within lustful reality, the psychological aspect of nationalism. Other aspects shall be aired in the appropriate chapter.

3.6.1. When dealing with sex, I waited for the right moment to point out the Romantic side of the Devil. The Romantic age illustrates his character better than any other. In the Classical ages the Devil acted more indirectly. The experiential climate of today's age is Romantic; it is a reaction to the Classical age of high capitalism, of the triumphant sciences, and of naturalism. In our age, the Devil acts directly. We are, therefore, experientially closer to the Romanticism of the 19th century than to ages that are closer in time. Many of our motivations spring from Romanticism. Nationalism is one of them.

3.6.2. Nationalism is a Romantic mask of the lust that managed to fool inhibition and that thus disguised, penetrated the surface of happenings. Nationalism is therefore an uninhibited lust. The nationalist mind behaves, rightly so, as if it were not sinful. It fills the air with its high-sounding exclamations, as if it had nothing to fear, and as if it were the very voice of tranquil conscience. Inhibition, when inebriated by the national mask of lust, does not manifest itself. Nationalism is an entirely liberated lust. If a mind is entirely possessed by nationalism (which, happily, is a rare thing), we must say that it is entirely possessed by the Devil. Nationalism

is one of the Devil's most impressive victories; it has all the diabolic characteristics to a high degree.

3.6.3. Let us compare the love for a people and a nation, to the love for a woman, so that we may admire the Devil's progress. We reencounter, intact, languor, orgiastic ecstasy, romantic gestures, small talk, and the taste for theatricality and inauthenticity. However, all of the traces that endanger the Devil's position within the field of the love for a woman are missing, for a very simple reason. The new love object, "the people" or "the nation," is an entirely fictitious object. The ontological problem of the love for a woman is a problem of recognition. If I do not recognize the woman I love, then she is, for me, a sinful fiction. If I recognize her, she becomes the path toward transcendence. But "the people" is a concept without foundation ("*bodenlos*"), and there is nothing that I can recognize in this deliberate fiction. Attempts to give a foundation to the people, employed by several sciences, and by a romantically poetic experience, are all "*ad hoc*" constructed attempts. "The People" is nothing but a cheap cliché. Therefore, an authentic dedication and an authentic sacrifice by way of love for the people are not possible. The Devil does not run any risks within nationalism.

Patriotic gestures that copy dedication and sacrifice, are innocuous and do not represent danger. Nationalism is a sublimated secretion from shriveled testicles, but even so, it periodically manages to provoke an extreme orgasm. I shall deal with this diabolic miracle now.

3.6.4. Nationalism is a recent phenomenon. It emerged in a corner of Western civilization, but has recently spread throughout the globe. The concept of "people" and "nation" is older, but has acquired its illusory meaning from nationalism. German Romantic thinkers were the ones who achieved this miracle. The fact of the division of humanity into "peoples" was, until recently, accepted as a fact without existential interest, or as a plague imposed upon humanity as a punishment for the construction of the Tower of Babel, a punishment to be

overcome by the universality of the Church, or humanism, or other cosmopolitan tendencies. "The people" was not a theme to be filled with lust, but a theme to be overcome. However, the German philosophers of "the people" managed to fill this concept with existential interest, and to transform it from a plague into a reason for pride. This innovation, introduced by "idealism," is enormously fertile. It has produced at least four wars, countless incineration ovens, and bloody revolutions. And as the flames of patriotic love continue to burn within countless hearts, it is impossible to predict future results. How is it possible to explain this miracle?

3.6.5. Nationalism is sublimated Western sex. It has, therefore, the structure of this type of sex. This structure is based, as I have said, on the medieval project of the "Lady." The Knight defends the Lady's colors, and these colors are his banner and his shield. The jousts between Knights are ritual acts that substitute coitus. But there is always the possibility of sleeping with the Lady. The sublimated Lady is the people. The sublimated Knight is the patriot. However, the patriot has an advantage over the Knight for not being able to, or having to, sleep with "the people." His virility is never put to the test. This is not his only advantage: the Knight belongs to a feudal organization that demands discipline. The patriot (who is either a fed-up bourgeois or an angry mob) can be entirely undisciplined.

Effectively, one of the attractions of nationalism resides precisely in the dissolution of discipline. Nationalism liberates. The patriot yields to the armed people precisely to be freed from discipline and the responsibility for his acts. Nationalism is a splendid way to transform man into "we" [*a gente*]. "We" do not need scruples, or to suffer from existential doubts concerning the norms of our behavior. "The people" is thus of the highest value, and individual existence is subordinated to the supreme "reality." The individual's existential project is only a sub-aspect of the "basaltic" or "monolithic" project of the people (as the *Führer* used to say). I will have practically overcome death

through my integration into the immortal, beloved people. It is therefore sweet and fitting (*dulce et decorum est*) to die for the people. Unfortunately, the patriot does not always achieve this desired death. He is sometimes forced to die by himself. I believe that in this death, nationalism is in danger. It is therefore better to pretend that death does not exist. Only then may we really be “we.” A good method to forget death is to sing patriotic songs and march in parades.

3.6.6. Internal and external enemies always surround the ardently beloved people. The beloved people suffer. The reason for this suffering is in the curious fact that all other peoples do not recognize the rights of our people. Maybe that is because other peoples are also made up of nationalists. This relates to our external enemies. As for our internal enemies, they are the ones who do not love the people, and who persist in a blind individualism, not wishing to be “we.” They are traitors. Our enemies are odious, and our hate in relation to them is in direct proportion to our love for the people.

The reader will agree that this way of looking at the so-called “social reality” is cretinous. However, German Romantic idealism achieved a memorable feat in transforming this way of looking into the historic doctrine that is taught to us, to all of us, in school. It is true that our teachers soften the profound stupidity of this doctrine a little so as to make it more acceptable. But this stupidity shines through from almost every chapter on history in schoolbooks. The history of humanity is thus reduced to a monotonous series of fights between peoples, intercalated by brief proofs of superiority of our own people, or by events that prove how our people, in their innocence, have been exploited. The result is that we are obliged to learn the names of generals and kings, and the dates of battles, all of which have a soporific effect and prepares our minds for nationalism.

3.6.7. In the first half of the 20th century, the European continent was characterized by a situation of radical and unmitigated nationalism. This nationalism has apparently been

repressed lately as the result of the incredible technological development of that continent. The inhabitants of Western Europe are apparently so preoccupied with devouring the products that their machines spill out that they do not have the opportunity to open their mouths to sing patriotic hymns in praise of the people. It is possible that gluttony will definitively substitute the lust of nationalism. It is possible that nationalist lust is the Devil's last stage on his advance toward gluttony. It is therefore possible that nationalism belongs, virtually, to the past. However, the contemplation of other continents makes this statement somewhat dubious.

The North American continent is the only place on Earth, which has been spared from nationalism *sensu stricto*. It is true that there are only few places where one would find as many fluttering flags as there are in the United States. And American patriotism is virulent. But could this patriotism be lust? American sociologists research the phenomenon in their own manner, which is full of statistics and short of conclusions, but their results seem to indicate that American patriotism has very little to do with the patriotism described above. It differs from the European way of transforming men into mass. The basis for this transformation in America is gluttony.

The Americanization of the world, which is a future possibility, is precisely what is happening in Western Europe.

The so-called "Latin America" (by those who do not know it) is, from the perspective of lust, an extremely active continent. In this continent, lust managed to break the majority of the handcuffs that imprison it elsewhere. The consequence of this is an unparalleled demographic explosion. And this explosion is obviously accompanied today by an unparalleled level of misery. This is probably a passing stage. The furious advance of technology will soon catch up with the population's growth-curve, and will transform material misery into a mental misery of boredom and nausea. Latin America shall soon be "developed." But this provisory stage is an excellent opportunity for nationalism. It is obvious that nationalism metamorphoses

as it penetrates territories that are so distant from the Romantic Idealism of Germany. It is less repulsive, because it is based on a less empty reality. There is a foundation for Latin American nationalism: hunger. However, its psychological aspects are very similar to the ones presented above. Once hunger has been satiated and gluttony has been installed (because the intermediary stages do not exist), nationalism will have been overcome. As I shall demonstrate in future chapters, Latin America is, possibly, a continent where the overcoming of gluttony is emerging.

From the perspective of lust, current developments on the black continent are far more exciting. Black civilization (that is if we can gather into the concept of “negritude” such diverse phenomena) is the result of a sexuality that is entirely different from ours. It is sacred sexuality, and the Devil makes use of it in an existential manner that is inaccessible to a mind informed by Christianity. Imagine what is happening: the witch doctor drops the symbol of the *phallus* in order to raise the flag of national liberation in defense of the people. Is this not wonderful? Look at how the lustful gods of rain and thunder are being substituted for the pale specters of Fichte and Hegel. White civilization managed to fill the vital trunk of the religions of fertility with the dry branch of our diseased and decadent lust. The flakes of nationalism fall like radioactive ashes upon the burning earth. Yes, it is true: Africa is evolving.

Lastly, let us take the millennial and sacred land of Asia – the cradle of humanity – into consideration, from the perspective of nationalism. For thousands of years a process has been developing on these lands, a process which tends to transform lust into its opposite, sadness and sloth. “Yogis” have been meditating for thousands of years, and for hundreds of years monks have been removing themselves from life’s current in order to avoid reincarnation and to become fused with nothingness. Asian civilization is marked, as a whole, by the attempts of its elite to escape from life’s prison. All of the sins of a young and impetuous West: wrath, gluttony, greed, and

envy, dilute before this elite's tired gaze, who dedicates itself entirely to pride and sloth. And as for the masses, they are left as if on the margins of history, victims of the eternal return of the forever identical, of the diabolic *Samsara*. But suddenly, this beast is being poked with the magic wand of nationalism, such sublimated lust. Thus, the veils of *Māyā* condense and once again envelop Asia with their misleading shimmer. The *muezzins* climb the minarets and call the crowd to the fight, instead of calling it to the afternoon prayer. The "*sadhus*" leave their retreat and work on electoral campaigns or income tax reforms. The Buddhist monks abandon their monasteries to burn themselves alive with gasoline (with gasoline!) in order to bring down governments. What has happened? From our perspective, there has been a "modernization" of Asia, and the Devil has taken over, just as he has done in the West. The Asian perspective is inaccessible to us. However, we can imagine that this wave of nationalism is only a superficial phenomenon, which does not affect the foundations of the reigning existential climate. We can imagine that Asia is only pretending to imitate us, in order to better devour us. In Asia, the Devil has reached heights that are completely unimaginable for our naivety. Perhaps it is in the Devil's program to transform Asia, the cradle of humanity, into the West's tomb? In this case, nationalism would be a mere pretext so that the Devil could complete this project.

3.6.8. We may, therefore, cast a retrospective glance at nationalism, before throwing it into the infernal caldron, from which we fished out the disgusting thing. Nationalism is the sublimation of lust, which manages to fool inhibition and governs, freely, a large part of that scene called "social reality," through those who are engaged with it. This is a safe method to reach Hell. This is why the consideration of today's political scene evokes a sublimated brothel. If our moralists really wanted to prohibit the distribution of pornographic literature, they should forbid the publication of the nationally inflated

speeches of our political leaders. And with this observation, I end the considerations about nationalism.

3.7. Love for the Mother Tongue

“The people” is an ontologically empty concept, unless we define it as a conversation that evolves within the field of a particular language. Under this aspect, it assumes a primordial position as the very foundation of reality. The problem of language and of its power to create and order reality is not fitting for the chapter that has lust as a theme. It shall be taken into consideration, if we manage to maintain this book’s program, only in the chapter on sadness. As a matter of fact, its formal aspect was the theme of my book *Lingua e Realidade* [*Language and Reality*]. What I intend to discuss within this context is the lustful aspect of our love for the mother tongue. This love is a form of sublimation of lust, which seems to have connections with nationalism, but which is, effectively, sublimation on a completely different ontological level. I draw the reader’s attention toward this level.

3.7.1. Our mother tongue shapes all of our thoughts, and supplies all of our concepts. It is responsible for our worldview, and for the system of values founded upon it. In other words: our mother tongue is the source of our sense of reality. Effectively: the love for the mother tongue is synonymous with this sense of reality. But to which reality does it relate? To a relative reality. The plurality of languages proves it. Every language produces and orders a different reality. If we abandon the territory of our mother tongue, if we start to translate, our sense of reality starts to dilute. The love for the mother tongue reestablishes our sense of reality, because it propitiates the direct experience of the superiority of our own language. The other languages are nothing but auxiliary systems that try very hard, with greater and lesser successes, to reach the translated articulation from the reality that springs from our own language. If we lose our love for the mother tongue, if we accept all languages as ontologically equivalent, our reality unravels into as many

pieces as there are languages. And then nothingness opens up – within the abysses between these pieces – very precariously transposed by the dubious bridges offered by translations. The loss of love for the mother tongue is equivalent to an infernal type of overcoming of lust by sadness. The Devil is identical to language. Language is that fabric of *Māyā* that establishes itself as a veil on the surface of atemporality. Reality, or the realities that language creates, is precisely that which we have called, until now, the “sensible world.” From now on, we shall call it the “articulable world.” And we shall also rectify our operative definition of the Devil. We have said that he is time. Now we can be more precise about the term “time.” “Time” is the discursive aspect of language. And we shall define the Devil as language. The love for the mother tongue is the highest sublimation of lust, because it is lust elevated to the Devil’s level of reality.

3.7.2. If we love our mother tongue, if we accept it without critique or doubt, as the source of reality, then we are integrated in the current of life. In this situation, we swim in the current of language; we allow ourselves to be dragged by it, and although it is fluid, it forms the foundation of our existence as thinking beings. This current of the mother tongue is life itself. It is thanks to this current that we communicate with our equals; we are therefore, thanks to her, members of the class: “humans.” This conversation establishes, in its turn, our contact with the extra-human world. This conversation is our only source of knowledge and values of this world. The mother tongue is therefore, the very structure of human lust, just as it was defined in this chapter. And since all forms of lust preceding the human form become articulated for us only within the structure of our language, they also result from our mother tongue.

3.7.3. When dealing with the sciences, I said that what they tell us are myths. Now I can justify the application of this term. The sciences are a set of propositions, which become existentially significant when articulated within our language. These propositions are word organizations. These words seek

to signify something that is, ultimately, ineffable. The attempt to articulate the ineffable is called myth. Conversation is the continuous development of myths. Conversation's progress is the constant demythologizing of myths. However, new myths constantly emerge within the progressing conversation. These new myths are new themes to be conversed. The sciences provide new themes. The sciences are the least conversed myths of the conversation of our time. The myths of Antiquity and of the Middle Ages have been conversed in the course of history, almost to the point of complete exhaustion; they find themselves almost demythologized. It is through the sciences that we are more intimately connected to the ineffable. Through the sciences and through other mental disciplines that shall be mentioned later. Since the sciences are one of the sources of our myths, I appealed to them in my attempt to describe the Devil as the fundamental myth, because he is identical to the structure of myths.

3.7.4. The love for the mother tongue is the shield that protects us against falling into the abyss that opens between languages. The love for the mother tongue is diabolical, because it keeps us inside an illusory reality, therefore inside a type of hell. Nevertheless, those who overcome this love, those who embark upon an analysis of the fabric of language, become victims of an even worse sin. They lose their sense of reality and fall into a bottomless hell. The mind imprisoned by the handcuffs of the mother tongue is within a relatively modest hell, if compared to the hell of grinding and gritting teeth, or of babbling without meaning, in which the logician finds himself. The victory that the Devil reaches in transforming the lust of the love for the mother tongue into linguistic analysis is a glorious victory. There is more joy for the Devil in acquiring the mind of a logician, than in acquiring a thousand minds imprisoned in language.

3.7.5. However, the logical analysis of language has, from the diabolic perspective, another aspect. When freed from the shackles of language, the mind may, in some instances, de-

articulate itself. These instances are very similar to those that I tried to describe in dealing with the love that overcomes itself. Saint Thomas seems to have experienced just such an instance as he became mute. This is the great silence that transcends language, into which the mind elevates itself. Although departing from an entirely different existential level, this experience leads to the same love, which is an overcoming of the illusion of the Devil. The danger for the Devil is not grave. The analyzer of language generally falls into silence, but also into the infernal teeth grinding silence. Nevertheless, there is another way out. At least that is this book's timid hope.

3.8. Love for Reading and Writing

The lust that sublimates itself in the love for the mother tongue, acquires its most radical character when this language is either read or written. Lust becomes so radical that it effectively reaches a new level of reality. For the author of this book, to read and write are the most violent and diabolic manifestation of lust that he has experienced, and it is for this subjective reason that he dedicates an entire chapter to it. I have already confessed my subjectivity. I believe that every attempt to form a worldview is autobiographic, even if one tries to hide it. However, this is not necessarily a defect. We are products of the conversation that surrounds us and in which we participate. We are all, therefore, more or less intimately linked to each other. That thing we call "our individual experience" is thus far less characteristic, and far more typical, than we suspect. An autobiography always has a far more general meaning than what the term "auto" implies. What prevails in it is the term "bio." With this proviso, I move on to the consideration of reading.

3.8.1. The mind, inspired by the lust to read, swims in a practically infinite current of books. Books are the objects of its libidinous desire. A mind, thus constituted, is exactly in that situation which the myth of Don Juan articulates. And it is only at this point in the argument that I introduce this mythical

figure that incarnates the lustful aspect of the Devil. It is true that the amoeba could be considered as a tentative realization of the project that the myth of Don Juan establishes. However, a mind, inflamed by the lust to read, seems to me to be the most perfect realization of this project reached by the Devil until now. And its violent frustration, its desperate hunt, and the insurmountable hell that are represented by the infinite, fluid library, seems to me like a diabolic work that is difficult to overcome.... When Camus sought to articulate the notion of the absurd, he was consciously or subconsciously influenced by the diabolic experience that I shall seek to articulate, in my own way, in the following considerations.

3.8.2. It is of the very essence of sin, to submerge the mind into a torrent of desires that increase while being satisfied. The more it drinks, the thirstier the sinful mind becomes. Every cup that touches its lips adds one more drop of this poison that increases its thirst. Behind every lover that embraces Don Juan, stands an infinite and ever growing queue of lovers to be embraced. The taste of the lips just kissed are still felt upon the kissed mouth, but the taste of the mouths that are there, ready to be kissed, are already anticipated. It is true that every lover represents a different challenge. Each one demands a different tactic to be seduced. But of what use is such a conquest? It serves only as a step toward the next conquest. However, cold and rational considerations such as these do not help the inebriate to overcome his thirst. They are existentially unproductive. He falls, ever deeper into his sin, with or without them.

3.8.3. Chalices and lovers have been sublimated into books in the situation that I am describing. This makes the situation even more terrible. Physiological thirst and physiological love are sins that are limited by their own layer of reality. They are limited by physiological exhaustion, which intervenes in order to soften the suffering. However, reading evolves within a level of reality where exhaustion is less merciful. Lust's race is therefore more unbridled on the level of the intellect. Its situation is thus:

3.8.4. The first stage is represented by an experience, which is interpreted by the mind as an overcoming of lust, therefore as liberation. The mind “discovers” the boredom of immediate experience. To live in the world of the senses is no longer adventurous. After all, all of these experiences are nothing but variations of very poor themes. The flooding of the senses is repetitive. Its pleasures are re-editions of pleasures already had. Sufferings may, in large part, be intellectualized and thus rendered uninteresting. It is true that it is not possible to abandon the sensible world. However, it is possible to accept it as a necessary but fundamentally uninteresting condition of the intelligible world. The ontological relation between the sensible world and the intelligible world is an intellectual problem, and a large part of traditional philosophy deals with this problem. Existentially, however, this problem is not posed for the mind that I am talking about. It chose the intellect. It believes, in its total illusion, to have been liberated from lust, to have become free. Thus it shall hover, unstuck, over life’s boiling mass as a calm and Olympic observer. It shall exist in the calm of libraries.

3.8.5. This mind starts to read. Reading is a slow acting poison. In small doses it acts merely as a stimulant. The reading mind, in its Olympic calm, chooses among the books available, one or another whose theme seems to be of interest. As we shall see, the theme is unimportant, and the apparent choice was a mere illusion of the mind. The reader opens the page of the “chosen” book, and the sweet poison of reading starts to seep into one’s mind. The mind opens its petals and passively allows itself to be carried by the words and thoughts of the book’s author. It enters into a passive conversation. It is as if the author had taken the reader by the hand in order to seduce him through his pathways. And the reader allows himself to be taken, anxious to be seduced. He arrives at the last page where the necessity to close the book emerges. This moment is full of sorrow. Perhaps it is for this reason that the reader devours, impatiently, the first pages, but takes his time on the last ones,

reading increasingly more carefully, so as to delay the inevitable ending. However, finally, the book is closed. The author is now inside the readers mind, and continues to move around it. This moving around of alien thoughts within one's own mind acts as a stimulant. The reader is not satisfied. Something within him demands something to happen. To use common language, so as to minimize the diabolic aspect of this phenomenon, we say that the reader's curiosity has been awakened. However, existentially, this is the lust for reading that was encouraged by its first "satisfaction." Hence, the reader picks up the second book.

3.8.6. Let us admit the hypothesis that this second book deals with a theme close to the one dealt with by the first book. This hypothesis is plausible. That is how "curiosity" functions, this innocuous synonym of the mind's lust. The more an intellect knows about a subject, the more it wants to know. The more the intellect knows, the more it knows that it knows nothing. The growing dissatisfaction generated by partial satisfaction is precisely the very characteristic of sin. The second book would, therefore, very probably deal with a theme connected to the first one. The reader opens the first page of the second book. However, his attitude is not exactly the same as with the first book. The reading of the first book already addicts his mind; so let us say that he has preconceptions. Existentially speaking, the mind has lost its virginity. There is an element of prostitution when the reader yields to the second book, as well as a betrayal of the author of the first book. The second author starts to penetrate the reading mind within this problematized situation and another element emerges. The reader has acquired what we may call "reading technique." A mechanical element starts to become manifest in his reading. The thought of the second author enters into a struggle with the one of the first author within this environment, having the lust of the reader's mind as a backdrop. The result of this struggle is an increased intellectual thirst. This thirst cries out for the third book.

3.8.7. This is the moment when the desperate interconnection of themes becomes manifest. It is not possible to know something about something if one does not know something about everything. Any single theme depends upon all the others. The problem is the following: if my first author dealt with, for example, the theme of crystallography, and if my second author dealt with the same theme, then it has become obvious in my mind that the struggle between them involves related themes. In order to get out of this struggle, I must know something about geometry, optics, chemistry, geology, etc. *ad infinitum*. I need to read everything that has ever been written in order to know something about crystallography. In my anxiety to read everything, it is not therefore a case of a desire to know everything. It is simply a case of knowing something about crystallography. My imaginary library, which initially consisted of well separated shelves, has been transformed, by my increasing lust, into a torrent of books that fall over me. My apparent, initial choice of theme has been revealed as an error. This mass of books starts to oppress me from all sides. Invitations, solicitations, and seductive gestures start to pour in from all sides. An apparently casual visit to a bookstore becomes a lustfully painful experience. The reading mind desperately seeks a criterion to orient itself before this amorphous mass of shameless solicitations. Since the theme is no longer a criterion, it has been substituted by "quality." I try to distinguish between "good" and "bad" books, but this criterion is fluid and uncertain. A "good" book would be that which satisfies my lust, that is, which provokes new desires. But I can only know if the book is "good" after having read it. So I need to read everything.

3.8.8. I cannot read everything. And even if I could, it would not suffice. I must read everything that has ever been written and is yet to be written. My mind has been transformed into a dominatrix. I must yield, with violently increasing greed, to any book that I pass by. I must devour every scrap of printed matter. The transformation that my obsession has produced

in my mind is tremendous. Nothing remains of that Olympic calm. The support columns of my intellectual edifice have crumbled. My mind has been transformed into a heap of pieces of quarrelling authors. I am a stage for scraps of information that fly, blown by the wind caused by the book that I am currently reading. My intellect has become the sewer through which the disgusting torrent of uncoordinated data flows, in which the deposited detritus pile up. This state of my mind is called "doubt."

3.8.9. Doubt is mental lust at full speed. The mind is torn into as many pieces as the number of authors that have seduced it. However, it cannot exist in this dilacerated state. It needs to become unified. It needs to regain structure. That which is called "faith" needs to be regained. It is only in this structural unity that the mind can realize its project. How can it regain this unity? Mental lust answers: reading more, knowing more, in order to be able to reach the unification of all knowledge and information accumulated. Doubt may be overcome, says mental lust, only through knowledge. What an infamous lie by the Devil. We know, at this stage of furious reading, that this is a lie. We know that doubt can only be overcome through faith, which is the opposite of knowledge. However, the knowledge of this does not help us. The books are there, waiting for us, pressuring us to read them. Thus the Ferris wheel of books spins, with an ever-increasing rotation, dragging our minds. We read voraciously, because the salvation of our minds depends on reading. And this is the stage called "the cultivated mind." The Devil has possessed us thanks to books. We are in an Earthly paradise called a "library," one of the most nefarious forms of hell. We still exist only precariously in this hell, because something continues to link the dilacerated pieces of our mind: the lust to read. And above this hell hovers a typically diabolic ideal: the last book. In it, is deposited the highest wisdom, the overcoming of doubt – certainty. We read every book just so we can read this last book. The lust to read is the introduction to pride.

3.8.10. During this dark night of hell in the library, a pale arm emerges and extends a torch. The flaming light of this torch illuminates, flickering and uncertain, the wreckage of our mind. This is the arm of “inspiration” that extends the library card to the mind; and it is the “torch” of critique that illuminates the mountain of doubt that we are. In a terrible effort, we try to gather together all the pieces of what we once were, so that we may reunite them around this light that so miraculously appeared. However, we feel very deeply, that this effort to gather the pieces is not an effort of ours. It was the external arm that provoked this incredible phenomenon. But something of our effort also participates in this process. During this highly dubious and suspect happening, our mind starts to reorganize itself. The piled up information starts to interlink through fine and transparent threads, the doubt, which we are, starts to acquire structure, starts to articulate itself. Formations – words organized into phrases – start to emerge, and these words and phrases are ours in a very dubious sense. A tide of words and phrases that pressures our mind outwards emerges. It is so lustful that it overtakes our nerves, our whole body, and we start to vibrate with an almost unbearable tension. In search for an orgasm that would liberate us from this unbearable tension, we concentrate the vibration upon the fingertips; we direct this tension onto the keys of a typewriter, and we do what everyday small talk calls “creative writing.” We are sitting in front of a typewriter, shaky and sweaty, because something caught us by the scruff of the neck and will not let go.

3.8.11. The typewriter’s keys clack. They have the rhythm of a drum that seeks to grind down doubt in order to transform it into malleable dough. This incandescent dough spills over into melting pots called “phrases” so as to take shape. The rhythm of the keys and the *pathos* of the phrases is not one of our works, we are being informed from outside. Ours is the doubt and the lustful experience that accompanies the process. We are being lustfully ground down and reformulated. We are possessed.

3.8.12. We desperately seek a “rational” and “ironic” position before this infernal happening; we want to save ourselves. We do not want to drown completely. We want to save something of our own. We say that we write because we want to, and that we write what we want. We say that we want to write in order to overcome doubt and reach clarity. Or to reach immortality. Or simply to make money. It is all a desperate lie, and we know this. We know within us that *scribere necesse est, vivere non est*. It is the diabolical lust that forces us to this libidinous act. We know perfectly well the sin we are committing, and the alternating cold and heat that flow through our spines, are existential proof of our knowledge of this. We know that the act of writing links us, ever more desperately, to the illusory world of the senses. We know that in making ourselves immortal within the conversation called “literature,” we are selling our immortal soul in a completely different sense. We are quickly falling into the Devil’s arms, waiting to receive us.

3.8.13. But why do we fall? Why do we run toward the Devil? There is a voice within us that whispers: because we want to defeat him. In writing, the voice says, we search for the Devil in order to overcome him. Whose voice is this that speaks? Is it ours? Is it one of those lies that I mentioned above? Maybe. But if we bend our ears to listen to it closer, it does not seem to fit within the atmosphere of lust. The voice has a different existential climate. The voice is stating the following: the sin of writing is so deep that in a mortal leap it may annihilate itself. To write, which is a diabolic path, may, if radically pursued, lead elsewhere. But how can it do that? Then, the voice falls silent.

3.8.14. Why did Don Juan fall into desperate lust? Because he sought love, that is, the overcoming of time. Why does the reading mind fall into the library’s lust? Because it searches for knowledge, that is, the overcoming of time. Why do we write? Because we are in search of the silence of no longer needing to write, that is, the overcoming of time. What we are all doing is absurd, Don Juan, readers, and writers alike, and we must admit it. However, this absurdity that we are committing

is curiously absurd. The sensible world, the phenomenal world, is absurd because it lacks meaning. However, within this absurdity, every diabolic act has a meaning: to keep this world absurd. The absurdity of which I am speaking now, is absurd within the absurdity of the world. Obviously, this is speculation, calculated within the convulsive argument that I am presenting. But within this calculation resides a germ of hope. To read and write – the feminine and masculine aspects of the mind's lust – have this germ of hope calculated within their project. The most evolved type of lust, the mental lust, contains the germ of hope. The path of reading and writing is torturous and full of suffering, and generally leads to Hell. But it is a path accompanied by hope. Not even the most evolved type of lust offers the Devil any guarantees.

3.8.15. It is now time for us to abandon the field of lust, even though we have clarified only a few aspects of its richness. The manifestations of lust are countless and the aspects that were chosen, were done so subjectively. We have detained ourselves for far too long on the meadows of Eros. Perhaps we have adored the Devil as the giver of life too excessively. The bridge that we have built, between the lustful amoeba and the possessed human mind, is perhaps too long to be used for the transport of heavy loads. It was built with materials provided by biology and psychology, which are suspect materials, and in addition, the bridge supports are few and far between. However, these building defects are not decisive, if this chapter managed to evoke in the reader's mind the following image:

3.8.16. Lust is the main coiled-spring of the brutal and absurd process called "life." Lust is what Schopenhauer calls "Will." And the mind is the spearhead of this lustful process. In this sense, the mind is not opposed to life, and in this Schopenhauer was wrong. This entire process is a single gigantic attempt through which the Devil seeks to dominate that from which he fell. It is a historical attempt that started at a given moment, millions of years ago. However, that moment is veiled for us, for being such late products of this process.

We are, together with our bodies and minds, very recent phenomena of evolution. But in the root of our being, with our lust, we participate in the process from its beginnings. As we contemplate the process of life, we are contemplating the Devil's evolution within us. "*De te fabula narratur.*" The further the arrow of life advances against the Heavenly Doors, in order to force them open, the better and more powerfully lust articulates itself. Our minds, with their linguistic structure and their lust for reading and writing, are the most perfectly articulated form of lust. Effectively, our minds are realized lust. The enormous river of life, made up of protoplasm, which flows ever more furiously against the celestial doors, is nothing but the virtual condition of the lustful reality that our minds are. Everything we say about this river is a myth, and the myths only become real within the linguistic structure of our minds. The enormous river of protoplasm was created and propelled by the Devil as a virtual condition for the emergence of our minds. We are, in this sense, the crowning achievement of nature.

3.8.17. The further our minds advance against the Heavenly Doors, the further the Devil evolves within us, and the further we evolve, we become what we are thanks to the Devil. This diabolic evolution within us further condenses and consolidates the reality we are. It is a negative reality, because it negates the heavens. It is the reality of language, which continually realizes itself in our impetuous advance. However, as this reality condenses and realizes itself, the resistance to it grows. There is a dialectic process between the evolution of our reality and a resistance to it. Our mind's lust intensifies in this process. It reaches a stage of intensity in which it shifts its ontological plane, so that from now on to speak of "lust" is nothing more than Freudian prejudice. It is therefore necessary, at this point in the argument, to abandon the Freudian mask, which even though it fit more or less loosely, accompanied our excursions within the territory of Eros.

3.8.18. Let us consider how this mask no longer functioned within the last paragraphs. In sexual love it still fit but with

severe limitations. In nationalism it offered, it is true, the opportunity for our articulation of disgust, but the reader felt, correctly, that the phenomenon of nationalism is not exhausted if considered only as a libidinous phenomenon. In the love for the mother tongue, lust was already almost a byword. It had already transformed into another sin, one that finds itself halfway between lust and pride. In reading and writing, lust, although easily diagnosed, already assumed the face of pride, and in its last stages, of sadness. A vehement lust already starts the dance of all other deadly sins.

3.8.19. The diabolic manifestations that we shall consider in the following chapters are all explainable as sublimated lust. However, we shall let go of this type of cheap explanation. From now on we shall follow the Devil's path through the methods chosen by him, and not through preconceived methods.

3.8.20. Let us try to comprehend why the Devil shifts methods: because he did not manage, through the method of lust, to reach his aim. Despite all of his artifices, the principle that opposes him always infiltrated the weave of the fabric of lust. We called this principle, which problematizes the Devil's work, "inhibition." The infiltration of inhibition is simultaneously an ontological and ethical problem. Ontologically it reveals, at each step, the illusory character of reality created by the Devil. Ethically, it reveals, with an equally undeniable force, the sinfulness and absurdity of all acts within this reality. It is true that the diabolic fabric is dense and that it covers its illusory and absurd character. But there is the phenomenon of death (if we can call it that). This phenomenon, which was introduced by the Devil in order to endow meaning to the reality that he created, is a window to the outside of this reality. Cracks open within this reality, at the least expected moments, through which minds may escape from the Devil. These cracks reach ever deeper, the further the Devil's work of realization advances. No, lust is not an entirely satisfactory method for the production of Hell's paradise. It is necessary – nay, urgent – for other methods to be invented.

3.8.21. The first new front, opened by the Devil in his war for absolute dominance, is the front called “wrath.” If seen historically, it is a recent front. It is true that wrath has always existed, ever since lust has existed as a realization of the Devil’s project. Wrath is nothing but an aspect of lust, a subordinate aspect. However, as a specific method, wrath was installed approximately four hundred years ago in Western civilization. Wrath is, as every diabolic manifestation, historically conditioned. In this new front the Devil appeals to a new tactic and new weapons. He lets go of Don Juan’s sword and appeals to heavy artillery. He lets go of his lustful method of trial and error, and appeals to the severe and wrathful method of the exact sciences. Thus he hopes to definitely eliminate Divine influence, as a useless and harmful hypothesis. Notwithstanding, he obviously does not abandon the old and lustful battlefield. However, he does not trust it. From now on it is through science that he hopes to win the war. We shall now start to consider the wrathful and aggressive Devil.

4. WRATH

Lust and wrath form, as an experiential sensation, a group separate from the other sins. All of the sins to be described in the following chapters could be characterized by the term “for me,” as they are sins that have some *Self* as center. These sins, of future chapters, are existentially egocentric situations. The circumstance that surrounds the Self is experienced as real, and is only valid when in relation to that Self. A deep ontological dubiousness characterizes these sins, and the ethics that are established around them are relativist due to this dubiousness. Speaking from an ontological perspective, we can characterize these sins in the following manner: gluttony is the attempt to devour the world in order to realize it, since reality is in the Self that devours. Envy and greed seek to organize and govern the devoured world. Pride and sloth seek to undervalue and ignore it. All of these sins are only possible in a climate where the world exists “for me,” which is at hand (*vorhanden*) and has no ontological dignity “in itself.” They are therefore, sins that are a consequence of a loss of faith in any reality “in itself,” except, perhaps, my own reality. Lust and wrath are different; they accept the phenomenal world as reality. This fact requires a moment of reflection in order to be evaluated.

Lust created, through our minds, a fabric called “phenomenal reality,” and it is within this fabric that it acts. In its action, lust increases and propagates this reality. From the perspective of the phenomenal world, this is a productive tendency. Wrath completely transforms the method and aim of this action, but operates within the same field. Given the anger for the

limitations that the fabric of the phenomenal world imposes on lust, wrath sets out to systematically reorganize this fabric. As a first step of this reorganization, it studies and analyses this fabric. However, this fabric is always taken, by both wrath and lust, to be the field of reality. The ontological problem shall only appear in its full force, once wrath, with its enraged anger, has crumpled the threads of the phenomenal world and destroyed its supporting pillars. Then the remaining sins shall emerge. This incursion into the future chapters of this book became necessary in order to ontologically place the following argument.

The lustful mind seeks to delight itself in the pleasures of the “objectively” given world, and in this search it sells itself to the Devil. The wrathful mind seeks to govern and lead the “objective” world, and that is why it sells itself. They are twinned minds. Don Juan and Dr. Faustus are twin brothers in their naivety in relation to the reality of “objects.” In the previous chapter we attempted to sketch out Don Juan and his world. We now ask that the reader abandon, together with us, the sunny landscapes of Estremadura, where the guitar playing and fencing provoke the Devil into providing the lusting soul with a lover in a shawl, playing the castanets. Let us now transport our thought into dusty rooms and dark alcoves, where the Devil is conjured up as formulas and distilled in order to provide the philosopher’s stone, the quintessence, and the secret of the world to the wrathful mind. Let us abandon the luxurious gardens of love, and penetrate the corridors and alleys of wisdom.

4.1. Freedom

Lust did not manage to eliminate the limitations that have oppressed matter since its origin. It did not manage to free the phenomenal world from its handcuffs. It is true that the evolution of protoplasm contains the aim to transform the entire material world into life within its project. The river of

protoplasm is entirely capable, within its future evolution, to absorb all of Earth's matter, and perhaps even that of other celestial bodies, and to assimilate it. To transform, in a manner of speaking, all matter into nerves. And the mind is entirely capable, within its future evolution, to encompass this objective world in its entirety. However, despite all of this, lust shall continue to be limited, and the Devil knows it. The frontiers of lust shall be pushed ever further by the march of evolution, but they shall remain frontiers. It is impossible to accept these frontiers. They are undignified limitations of the mind. Yes, life is condemned to be limited, and it is death that condemns it. But the mind rebels against this indignity. It wants to be free, but this freedom will not be reached through blind anger. It is of no use for the mind to throw itself against such imposed barriers. It is necessary for wrath to become disciplined. It is necessary to systematically destroy the indignity that is the limitation of the mind. If orgasm was the ideal of lust, then freedom is the ideal of wrath.

4.1.1. Freedom is, among other ideals, the most beautiful. It is synonymous with dignity. Handcuffs, prisons, and limitations are undignified for the mind. The mind demands an unlimited field. What limits the mind? We shall call these handcuffs "laws," and this term will substitute for the term "inhibition," which was employed within a different context. It is against the laws that wrath rebels. It cannot accept laws. Wrath does not accept laws as limitations, but it needs them nonetheless. Wrath needs them in order to handcuff that which it considers "reality." Laws must not be destroyed. They must be transformed from handcuffs of the mind into those of objects. Freedom is inconceivable without laws. Therein resides the deep problematic of freedom, and of wrath, which seeks to reach it.

4.1.2. For example, let us consider this problematic within the field of physics. Before wrath's intervention, blind laws, the laws of "nature," governed this field. And the mind – conditioned by physics up to a certain point – was, until then, limited by the laws of nature. Wrath changed all of that. It did

not conform to the laws, but did not forsake them. On the contrary, it miraculously transformed these laws into the very foundation of freedom. The laws of aerodynamics serve to lift airplanes, the laws of electromagnetics serve to transport TV programs over the airwaves, and the laws of thermodynamics serve to heat up water in bathtubs. Thanks to the laws of physics, the mind has become the owner of the physical layer of reality. This is how it is, in every field, at least in theory. The laws of economy will eventually produce the paradise of economic freedom on Earth. The laws of psychology will transform humanity, through subliminal propaganda and conditioning, into a group of happy beings. In a more distant future they will probably transform humanity into an agglomerate of saints. The mendacity of freedom almost becomes obvious through this abbreviated catalog of diabolic promises within the field of wrath. The internal dialectic of this terrible concept that is freedom almost becomes obvious, a dialectic that rips and dilacerates. It is almost incredible that Faust and the scientists, his heirs, are not aware of it. The scientists' wrathful minds, possessed by the Devil, do not seem to want to confront the problem. Effectively, as the Devil promises freedom, he promises that the known laws, that is, the laws that the mind formulated linguistically, shall be the mind's instruments. In other words, they shall continue to function as they have always functioned. And simultaneously, he promises that, in some mysterious way, the mind will not be subjected to them. Furthermore, the Devil promises the alienation of the mind and the overcoming of "nature." With his promise of freedom, the Devil establishes a division between knower and known, between subject and object, a division whose effects are just beginning to be delineated today as a form of collective madness. Wrath is the first stage of a schizophrenia that starts to be outlined. Science is the historical form of the disease. Descartes is its first theoretical formulator, and the vacuity of today's science is its first palpable clinical manifestation.

4.1.3. Wrath's existential project is a situation where nature is an object of the mind. Nature has been in this situation for four hundred years. Thus turned into an object, nature is a set of things governed by very rigorous laws. The last four hundred years have made this concept of nature so familiar that we are not aware of the fact that this concept lies in direct contradiction to our concrete experience. In our concrete experience, nature is still not completely an object of our wrath, but is still a place for our lust and our desires. In this situation, nature is chaotically arbitrary, and only a few islands of ill-defined periodicity stand out, such as, night and day, spring and autumn, birth and death. The school teaches of the world as a set of causal chains, as a fabric of cause and effect. Our experience teaches us of the world as a heap of chance happenings, through which the Will of living beings elbow each other in order to penetrate the world through their effort, if they are lucky. Thus we live in a double world; in the wrathful world of the school, and in the lustful world of life. On the wrathful side of this schizophrenic conception, on Dr. Jekyll's side, we speak of mathematical equations, of necessary relations, of the discovery of new relations, of the constant improvement of our view of phenomena, and of the progressive simplification of the already formulated and known laws. There is very little doubt, on this side of the mind, that the last vestiges of disorder are condemned to be eliminated, and that in a not so distant future, the mind shall be free. On the lustful side of the mind, on Mr. Hyde's side, terms such as luck and merit, revenge and punishment, struggle and transitory (or definitive) victory through death, predominate. There is not even the slightest doubt, on this side of the mind, that the world, this absurd heap, is fortuitous and disordered.

4.1.4. The world of lust does not know laws and does not accept them. The naive observer could think that there is complete freedom in this world. The absence of laws would be, for this observer, synonymous with freedom. This observer would not comprehend the Devil's reason for transforming

lust into wrath in order to free the mind. This observer would not comprehend the reasons that drive science to transform chaos into cosmos. Science postulates; it either discovers or formulates laws (or theories, or operating hypotheses); therefore, it fabricates handcuffs. It is true that, ontologically speaking, what science is doing in this activity is very dubious. However, from an ethical perspective, our observer argues, science is limiting freedom.

4.1.5. The naive observer is mistaken. The absence of laws excludes freedom. A disorganized set does not allow for choice. A chaotic world has no *Gestalt*, no structure. In having no structure, it has no direction, and in having no direction, it has no purpose. And where there is no purpose, there is no motive. Motive is a synonym of Will. Where there is no Will, one cannot speak of freedom. The world of lust is not, properly speaking, a world of Will, but a world of desire. The distinction between Will and desire is existentially graspable. Desire seeks an object. Will has an object. Wrath is desire turned into Will, because it has an object. The world is the object. Wrath is lust plus an object, in this case, the world. It is true that within the chaotic body of lust we have the experience of an uninterrupted wanting, but also a deep conviction of the fortuity and frustration of this want, since it has no defined aim. We have, truthfully, the sensation that our deeds are put into motion by our Will, and that we do what we do because that is how we want it. However, this sensation is accompanied by the certainty that we do not know why we want what we want. This Will within the world of lust, is a negative wanting. It is, essentially, the sensation of a lack of necessity. In the senseless world of the senses, there is neither necessity nor obligation (except the mysterious "inhibition"), and this lack of motivation is what the mind experiences as Will without an objective. The concept of freedom does not fit within a world of such negative wanting. Freedom is the act of choice. Choice presupposes aims and methods. Aims are objects, and methods are the laws that govern objects. It is for this reason that wrath

removes the mind from the world of lust, in order to oppose the mind against that world. Thus distanced and alienated, the mind becomes a subject. The world becomes an object. The relation between mind and world becomes knowledge. Knowledge is the basis for the manipulation of the world. The climate of lust is desire as the basis for orgasm. The climate of wrath is knowledge as the basis for manipulation, therefore, as the basis for the world. Within the world of lust, the mind begs; within the world of wrath, the mind rules. That is why the Devil transformed lust into wrath.

4.2. The Law

Necessity is the logical condition for freedom. It is only within the territory of necessity that freedom can emerge. It was necessary for the Devil to create the world of necessity in order to free the mind. Necessity is a situation ordered by laws, by unbreakable chains. Freedom is the breaking of the unbreakable chains. Therein lies its absurdity. The Devil created laws in order to break them. This is a typically diabolic situation being sketched. Existential philosophy, and especially Sartre, is wrapped and embroiled in this situation. The law limits freedom; in theory, it frustrates freedom, but the law is an indispensable condition for freedom. Science limits the mind as it formulates laws; in theory it frustrates the mind, but science is an indispensable condition for the freedom of the mind.

4.2.1. If seen from this perspective, the situation is diabolically complex. However, if seen as a historical process, it becomes comprehensible. Science, *sensu stricto*, emerged just over four hundred years ago. But the tendency toward organized wrath is much older. Above the world of lust hovered, since time immemorial, perhaps even since the origin of humanity, another ill-defined world, a vaporous, wrathful world, called the world of “magic.” This world of magic was a type of astral body of the sensible world. It hovered above it, but penetrated through it. Thanks to this “supernatural” world,

the natural world acquired a problematic type of order. This world represented an ordering principle, in a methodological and normative sense. Thanks to magic it was possible for the mind to orient itself in the natural world. Natural phenomena acquired, thanks to magic, a purpose and a meaning. The world of magic was a hermetic one. It was kept a secret. Only a few minds inhabited that world, the minds of the magi. Those were the few wrathfully disciplined minds within the dominant lustful environment. The magi sought to free their minds through disciplines that could be characterized by terms such as, "give to receive," "debt and retribution," and "promise and responsibility." These were the chains that the world of magic established, even though they were not properly causal, in the strict sense of the term. These chains were laws, although they were not laws in the scientific sense of the term. They were closer to the judicial meaning of the term "law," since they were more like obligations than necessities. The magi thought via imperatives, the scientists think via indicatives.

4.2.2. The world of magic did not satisfy the Devil in his attempt to free the mind. The failure of this diabolic method had two profound reasons. The first resided in the excessive complexity of the chains he established. These chains enveloped the mind of the magus from every side. At every step, the magus infringed some of the threads of the web of obligations that he had spun. It was necessary to almost uninterruptedly appease some of the "forces" that had been offended. An authentic freedom was not possible within this web. The second reason had to do with the ethical aspect of the chains established by magic. This ethics was somewhat uncomfortable for the Devil. There was always the danger of the defeat of the Devil through his own weapon. The distinction between "black magic" and "white magic," certainly a naive distinction, although symptomatic, illustrates what I have in mind. It was therefore necessary, from the Devil's perspective, to change tactics within this field. It was necessary to simplify the set of chains, and it was necessary to de-aestheticize them.

4.2.3. The scope of this book does not allow for an attempt

at describing the history of law, i.e., the Devil's history in the field of wrath. If we were to do it, this chapter would reach the same prohibitive dimensions that were reached in the chapter on lust. So let me just say briefly that in a history of laws the Devil would emerge as a founder, or at least the cofounder, of the traditional religions of the West. Let us abbreviate history and say only that the Devil removed the law from this magic environment; he made the law simpler, removed its ethical robes, and created the world of the exact sciences. In his Promethean incarnation, the Devil took hold of the laws deposited upon the altar of the gods (where he had surreptitiously deposited them in ancient times), and handed these laws to humans, so that they could become free through them.

4.2.4. This process of transference of laws from the region of magic to the region of science is a long process and it is still in progress today. It is called "the progressive scientification of the world." Increasingly larger chunks are being torn from the "supernatural" world of magic, in order to be incorporated into the "symbolic" world of exact science. Within these chunks, the principle of retribution is being substituted for the principle of causality. Magic formulas are being substituted for pure mathematical formulas. However, the magical origin of mathematical symbols remains evident. The "=" still symbolizes the scales of justice and the "x" its sword. Today's situation, created by this ongoing process of transference, may be described in the following manner: at the center flows the lustful mass of the sensible world with its purposeless bubbling. Above this mass the remains of the world of magic hover, which still seek to organize the mass. Underneath the mass, the rigid crystals of the mathematical symbols of the exact sciences scintillate, and try to precipitate, upon themselves, the lustful phenomena. Behind the sensible world, chunks of the magic fog condense into pure mathematical crystals, transformed, as if touched by the cold breath of science, into crystalized ice. However, lately, this crystallization process is beginning to invert itself. Science is generating a suspicious heat, and its crystals are beginning

to evaporate into magical fogs. Thus the circle of these three worlds comes to a close.

4.2.5. If it were recounted, the history of scientific law would tell the tale of the tender embryo of the Greeks, the beautiful adolescent of the Humanists, the muscular adult of the Positivists, and the statistically trembling old man of our sad days. However, it is today's stage that we want to present to the reader. Law is an imprecise term. Effectively, the term points to bridges built differently, built with mathematical symbols destined to carry the transport of phenomena in both directions above the chaos of disorder, but especially toward the future. Some of these bridges, for example that of physics, are built so strongly, that until recently it was unimaginable for even a single phenomenon that runs on it to be derailed. Unfortunately, cracks have recently been found within its infrastructure. The mending process is still in progress and its success is dubious. Other bridges, for example that of the social sciences, are similar to indigenous Peruvian rope bridges. They tremble and vibrate statistically. It just so happens that entire trains of phenomena that pass over these bridges fall into the abyss of chaos. The passage over these bridges requires courage and optimism. This difference in the bridges' construction is responsible for the division between the "exact," and to speak euphemistically, "less exact" sciences.

4.2.6. All the bridges have the following in common: they are built of symbols and anchored in chaos. Their elements are taken from the world of magic, and their foundations are the illusory world of the senses. It is obvious that the Devil seeks to mask this aspect of the bridges. He bases bridges upon other bridges, builds bridge after bridge, fundamentals a bridge with another, supports a bridge with another, and builds an edifice of bridges that are made up of bridges, so that the web of bridges almost completely covers the chaos. Not satisfied with that, the Devil reduces and dehydrates the phenomena of the sensible world in order to transform them into symbols of the first, second, third, and nth degree, so that thus transformed and

almost weightless, he conducts these phenomena over their bridges. As symbolic bridges, they would not be able to bear the weight of a sensible phenomenon. The weight of the sensible phenomenon is its irreversibility and its indefinable existential plenitude; in other words, its lust, which is unbearable for scientific bridges.

4.2.7. The only ontologically valid bridge would be that which could unite phenomenon and symbol, experience and word. However, this is the bridge, which science confesses to be unable to even consider, and even less to build. Whoever penetrates the realm of science needs, therefore, to reach it with a leap. But this leap transports the mind onto the ice palace of rigorous organization. Once there, the mind no longer has to leap. In the palace, the mind becomes the lord of time and space, it knows the past and the future, and it commands the dehydrated phenomena. The miracle of this story is, however, the following: the dehydrated and scientifically domesticated phenomena may be thrown from the palace by the mind, to return transformed, to the sensible world. Let us consider the following recipe: take some sensible phenomena, such as stones and plants, dehydrate these phenomena into mathematical symbols, pass these symbols through icy bridges, then throw the entire mixture back into the phenomenal world, and, an automobile emerges (an unimaginable miracle). This diabolic product behaves thus, as if it were a phenomenon exactly like the others. It moves, makes noises, smells bad, or in one word: it is part of the world of lust. The mind is overtaken by vertigo as it contemplates this phenomenon. The mind cannot comprehend, or even expect to comprehend it, but the mind is the creator of this miracle. This vertigo is precisely the sensation of freedom. This vertigo is the *raison d'être* for wrath and the sciences. The phenomenal world has become an instrument of the mind. During several millennia the magi attempted to use this instrument, with poor results. Science managed this miracle in just over four hundred years. It is true that some regions of the sensible world still resist the mind. But we can

at least imagine the methods required to conquer them. The sensible world as a whole will soon serve as our instrument. The principles of magic shall definitely be eliminated from it. And together with magic, ethics shall be eliminated from the world. And together with ethics, sin shall be eliminated (an already archaic concept). And together with sin, God shall be eliminated (an already useless hypothesis). Thus the Devil will have won – through a rigorous manner – against this preconception called “Divinity.” The human mind shall be free and reasonable. It shall no longer have the need for wrath. Wrath shall overcome itself. This shall be paradise.

4.2.8. We can imagine that some minds are not satisfied in this paradise. They may ask, for example, how did this first leap from phenomenon to symbol occur, or how was the symbol thrown into the sensible world? This is a slow mind. It does not think scientifically. What this mind is doing is “metaphysics,” and its arguments are pragmatically devalued. Let us disregard them. They cannot harm the harmony of the ode in praise of progress.

4.3. Chance

The idyll that I have just described is unfortunately a thing of the past, although a recent past. In describing the law, I saw myself forced to mention some recent events which are, quite frankly, dissonant. Something has been introduced to the glorious edifice of science, from either below or behind (or from above?), and it eats away, silently but perceptibly, at the foundations. The edifice of science still stands in all its beauty, and new floors are added to it with increasing speed. However, sensitive seismographers register a slight tremor throughout the edifice, a sinister tremor. The scientists do not trust their own competence to fight this type of danger. The danger comes from outside. Therefore, the scientists ask for help, and it is the philosophers they call. But philosophers are scientifically irresponsible people. Just as every other reasonable mind today,

theirs are obviously possessed by the spirit of science. However, philosophers have the dangerous tendency to analyze concepts. The *something* that surreptitiously started to penetrate the edifice of science, is nonetheless, a philosophical problem and not a properly scientific one, therefore philosophers become indispensable. Unless scientists start to do philosophy in order to save themselves. And that is what they try. The result may be a sign of authenticity, but it is generally, weak philosophy.

4.3.1. The intruder in the edifice of science has several names. For example: “the necessity to fundamentally reformulate the observation,” or “the necessity to reformulate the principle of causality,” or “the necessity to reformulate the mathematical method in the application of scientific problems,” or “the uncertainty principle.” However, I believe that all of these somewhat complex terms may be substituted, at least for now, by the simple term “chance.” The situation seems to be the following: right at the foundations of science, where it touches the phenomenal world, within the deep well of scientific research, hides a dragon, and this dragon has been awakened by the advances of this research. The dragon is called “chance” and it has two grotesque heads. One of them swings, and with this negating movement, it transforms every law into an opinion. The other head conspiratorially winks, and with this movement it transforms every law into pure subjectivity. The first aspect of chance is that laws are laws because they are not sufficiently exact. Once they become more exactly formulated, they shall no longer be laws, they shall simply be transcriptions of disordered happenings. The second aspect of chance is that laws are laws because they pretend to reflect an objective reality. When formally analyzed, they reveal themselves to simply be meaningless noises, or reducible to zero. Although the dragon belongs to the field of philosophy, it was provoked by purely scientific problems such as the difficulty to distinguish between observer and observed; or effects that antecede causes; or objects that change place outside of time. However, now that the dragon has been awoken, it can no longer be ignored.

4.3.2. Nevertheless, in practice, the laws continue to work. How is this possible? The answer that offers itself as the easiest way out is this: the laws function by chance. The whole of science is a single gigantic chance happening. However, we do not intend, at this point in the argument, to approach the miracle of the fact that science functions despite its dubious foundation. This is a problem to be dealt with later. Existentially speaking, science is not in any danger just because of epistemological considerations such as these. The scientists are the only ones who are affected by this type of problem, and not the large human mass. It is the ethical aspect of the scientific dubiousness that instigates such generalized mistrust. This ethical aspect may also be referred to as "chance." Science has been accepted and deified in the course of recent history because it seemed to be the path to freedom. Science has, for the most part, effectively delivered this promise. However, recently it has become obvious that science is ethically neutral, and that its ethical, therefore liberating effect, depends on extra scientific factors. The human masses are already losing trust in science as a substitute for magic. It is evident that this is a misunderstanding. Science has always intended to free the mind precisely because it is ethically neutral. The ethical argument against science is therefore innocuous, and intellectually false, but experientially valid, and if allied to the epistemological argument (intellectually valid, but existentially false), it endangers science as a whole.

4.3.3. That which I called "chance" is obviously a synonym of "miracle." The epistemological argument demonstrates the miraculous origin of the relations organized between the phenomena of the sensible world. Thanks to this argument, scientists have become aware of their discipline's magical element. They have started to see themselves as invokers and evokers of the Devil. This self-awareness has an aspect that shall be a problem in the future. We know from history that magic stops working once the magi become conscious of the methods that they apply. The same phenomenon is a threat to modern

science. Knowing itself to be a purely formal discipline, that is, linguistic, or one that invokes, means that science may stop to function, and the miracle will have ended. The Devil will have to find another method to discipline wrath.

4.3.4. The considerations of the last chapters provoke the following chain of thoughts: the world of lust is the world of the absurd and of chance. The world of magic emerged from it, and this is the world of laws without freedom. Then the world of science – that of “objective” laws, therefore of freedom – emerged from the world of magic. The world of science, when sufficiently advanced, again becomes the world of chance. Thus, we have apparently built a vicious circle. Within this circle, the law seems to be a transitory stage between chance and freedom. Freedom seems to be a stage between the law and chance, and chance seems to be the source of the law and the aim of freedom. However, a closer consideration of present times invalidates this argument. It is obvious that we are not returning to the chance of the lustful world. Our alienation from the world of lust is definitive. A return to a primitive chance, to an authentic miracle, would be a return to our integration into the sensible world. And this is not what is happening. Let us consider our times from this perspective.

4.3.5. I experience chance when I trip or stumble, or when I casually meet an acquaintance on the street. This type of chance occurrence is the substance that constitutes the sensible world. However, intellectually, I know that I am mistaken when I refer to this happening as chance. My tripping is the last effect of an entire series of complex chains of causes and effects. And the same can be said of my meeting an acquaintance. They are apparent chances made transparent by the scientific method, at least theoretically. They are “explainable” chances. They have lost the aroma of miracle. I still directly experience the world of lust, but it is no longer miraculous. But at the end of these complex chains that “explain” my tripping, hides an entirely new type of chance, which is, for example, a happening such as the casual passage of a *quantum* of light through one

of two slots. Yes, in this case, this is an intellectual miracle. But I cannot experience it directly. Thus I live in a transparent world, within a glass environment. I live in a world that lacks reality, because it lacks the sensation of the miracle. The world of lust has been transformed, thanks to wrath, into a world of transparent objects, and infinite causal chains extend behind these objects – physical, biological, psychological and sociological chains, and at the end of all these chains, at an experientially unreachable point, chance reemerges. I continue to trip over, and in this sense I continue to live. However, I have lost faith in tripping over, I have lost my sense of reality. I can no longer distinguish between forms of reality. Everything has become transparent. My tripping over is just as real or even less real than the chains of cause and effect that caused it. The fundamental chance, from which these chains spring, is as real or unreal as the rest. Effectively, this is not a question of degrees of reality, but of layers of reality. Thus I may shift from layer to layer as it pleases me. I can, with a certain dose of irony, accept the sensible world, or the world of physics, or the world of psychology, or even that distant world of the pure chaos of absurdity, as “real.” Maybe it is possible to leave this scene of transparent backdrops and leap into a compact reality. Maybe it is possible to leave this multiple schizophrenia. That is the possibility of reconquering faith in the transcendent. But this possibility would be contrary to wrath; it would be a humble submission. At the moment, this is the most remote possibility.

4.4. Wrath Revisited

The Devil promised the liberation of our minds through wrath. He diabolically fulfilled this promise. We were lustful minds, before we became wrathful ones. We nurtured sexual desires, we loved libidiously, we were part of a people, or of a football club, we read and wrote, we worked and rested, and we did it without ever really doubting the “reality” of all that. Perhaps during fleeting moments we had the vague intuition that all of

this was nothing but futilities, and that "reality" was elsewhere, but as an existential climate, reality still reigned uncontested. And this reality oppressed us. We did not feel free. And there was the supreme problem of death, which at the same time represented a supreme enslavement and the demonstration of the absurdity of all of this. Then came the Devil with his wrath.

We became free. Destiny was annihilated. Death was relegated to the second plane, "forgotten." A paradise appeared before our vision, an almost reachable paradise of freedom. A world inspired by the flame of human freedom, in which the planets follow in their paths, the dignified and beautiful laws of the human spirit; in which electrons and nuclei form and unform atoms according to our command; in which chemical elements combine and separate in order to serve as our instruments. A world in which the domesticated forces of nature and the domesticated animals, become reasonable according to human reason. And that will not be all. Our own thoughts and our own desires shall be subjected to our reasonable Will, and human society shall be transformed into a reasonable organization, into a fabric of dignified freedoms. The mind shall be free from the oppression of brutal nature and of ferocious animals, free from the oppression of obscurantist human factors. The mind shall be free from cruel and blind destiny, and freed from the avenging arm of Divinity. Divinity is superfluous, and shall be revealed as a product of an underdeveloped mentality. Our minds shall be the judges and directors of the world. *Aurea prima sata est aetas quae vindice nullo.*

This world was a beautiful dream, but we are awakening. We know, or we are coming to know, that this is a dream. The awakening is terrible. It is the loss of reality. Reality. We recognize the world of wrath as unreal, but we cannot regain the reality of the lustful world. We absurdly miss this inferno of lust, which suddenly seems like paradise to us, if compared with the emptiness of wrath's paradise. Freedom, which is a consequence of this vacuity suddenly seems to us to be the apex of suffering, because it seems to be madness.

4.4.1. At this stage of our development we present a problem to the Devil. There is the danger that in our existential and epistemological despair, we attempt to leap into having faith in the transcendent. This must be avoided. It is necessary that we reconquer a sense of reality, of an obviously equally fictitious reality, but a reality that should cover our vision of that which transcends it. That is what the Devil will attempt to do, in transforming wrath into gluttony. This shall be the theme to be dealt with in the following pages.

5. GLUTTONY

In order to regain contact with reality, after getting lost in the gelid spheres of science, it is necessary for us to attempt to submerge ourselves once more in the warm current of life. Scientific wrath has freed us from lust, and we are hovering as free spirits above life, renouncing every chain of desires. We have abandoned all of our instincts, and we exist in the world of pure symbols. However, "to exist" is too positive a term in order to describe the situation in which we find ourselves. We have lost our sense of reality; we are alienated. As a measure of mental sanity, we are resolved, in our minds, to a return, to be close to the reality of life again. But in order to be grasped, comprehended, and experienced by us (these minds that we are), reality needs to be transformed into mental substance, it needs to be elevated to the level where we are. Only in this way shall reality be "real for us," that is, only in this way shall the world of life be realized. The substance of life needs to be "comprehended" by us, so that it may become real for us, because "to comprehend," means to incorporate that which comprehends. Life is only real if we incorporate it. It is necessary to devour, swallow, and digest life so that this mere virtuality of our minds can become reality. The phenomenal world is nothing but a potentiality of our minds, it is nothing but a mere "becoming" of the mental reality that we are.

The climate of gluttony, which these few considerations present to the readers, is referred to by the philosophical tradition as "idealism." Gluttony is an idealistic sin. Effectively, this climate characterizes the whole of Western thought

from the Modern Age, that is, from the beginning of wrath's disciplined methods. Science has been recognized, at least since Descartes, as masked schizophrenia. Idealism is the attempt to overcome this madness. It denies reality to the phenomenal world, but affirms the reality of the thinking thing. This also applies to the so-called "materialistic" philosophies, such as Marxist thought for example. This type of thought apparently accepts the phenomenal world as a basis for reality, and the world of thoughts as a mere epiphenomenon of life. However, materialist epistemology proves that this appearance deceives. The so-called "materialists" also define knowledge as the transformation of matter into mind. Or, as the Marxists say, as "the progressive humanization of nature." This type of thought is therefore gluttonous, and in this sense it is idealistic.

Knowledge is from now on conceived and experienced as a process akin to metabolism. The phenomenal world is devoured by the mind (the learning stage). After that it is swallowed (the incorporating learning stage). The next step is digestion (the comprehending stage), and the detritus are then expelled (the transforming action stage). Nature becomes food; raw material for the mind. And as the mind's enormous banquet is processed, nature diminishes and instruments, the excrements of the mind, increase all around us. Such instruments are effectively the mind turned sensible. The aim of gluttony is to devour the whole of nature, to transform it into instruments. And for having a mental origin, instruments are far more real than natural objects. The objects of nature are the "becoming" of the gluttonous mind, they stand before the mind's hand ("*vorhanden*"). Instruments are witnesses of the mind's devouring and transforming action; they are at the mind's disposal ("*zuhanden*"). Nature transformed into instruments shall be an almost real environment at the mind's disposal. In this environment the mind shall be free, but not alienated. Therefore gluttony has two movements: hunger (knowledge) and digestion (technology). The aspect of hunger does not need any greater commentary, since it is similar to the

theme dealt with in the chapter on wrath. It is effectively the continuation of wrath's methods, but without the naive faith in the "objectivity" of knowledge. The theme of this chapter shall be gluttony's second movement, technology.

Hunger and digestion are phenomena of life. They are an aspect of the Devil incarnate. However, gluttony, for being mental, is a different phenomenon. This is an important distinction. Let us therefore cast a quick glance upon hunger and digestion in nature, so that we may later define gluttony.

5.1. The Mechanism

We have considered life as a lustful torrent; it is equally possible to consider it as a hungry torrent. Poets and religious moralists have undervalued this aspect of life, but it dominates the minds of economists and layman moralists. Life advances through the stomach as much as it does through sex. The history of life could be described as the evolution of hunger. Life, seen from this perspective, is a gigantic viscous river that spills over the Earth, fills the tides, and covers continents with the single aim of sucking up terrestrial matter through billions of roots, mouths, and trunks in order to transform it into protoplasm. This is nothing but an incarnation of hunger. For countless millennia bacteria devour the earth's minerals in order to make them edible for devouring plant-roots. These plants devour, day and night, in order to transform the Earth's elements into plastic, soft life. And mouths and snouts are devouring this vegetable life, ceaselessly, in order to transform it into animal life, into a type of new protoplasm. Meanwhile, bacteria wait in order to attack and knock down the plants and animals, and to intermix their bodies once again with the earth. And this earth serves as humus for new animals and plants. Thus the majestic wheel of life spins from mouth to mouth and as it absorbs increasingly larger amounts of terrestrial, inorganic elements, it becomes ever bigger and hungrier. From the Earth's perspective, life is nothing but an elephantine trunk that sucks

its entrails. From life's perspective, the Earth is nothing but future life. This process that began with the formation of a single drop, has already devoured a large part of the Earth's crust, and a large part of the waters of the seas. The end of this evolution will probably be the transformation of all the Earth's crust and waters of the seas into protoplasm. Oceans and hills that are alive shall form the surface of the Earth. This will be the moment to seriously consider the colonization of other celestial bodies.

5.1.1. The wheel of life could be seen as formed by a hose. Inside this hose, the tide of increasing food turns. The hose's walls are made up of small wheels that interlock perfectly. They are called "the living beings." Their function is to propagate the food. Seen in this way, life is a hunger mechanism. The so-called "living beings" are nothing but highly specialized digestive organs of life's gigantic body. And it is only when seen from this perspective that life reveals a perfect hierarchy, within which the beings that compose it are organized. The protoplasm is a perfect and incredibly complex organization of hunger. It is a collection of organs that wonderfully complete each other. Every plant is completed by a set of teeth specially formed to crunch it. Every animal scale is completed by a claw specially formed to rip it. Every shell is completed by pincers specially formed to break it. This perfect harmony that reigns among the organs of distinct "individuals" problematizes the concept of "individual," because it demonstrates the artificiality of the concept. Ecology, a recent discipline of biology, is almost ready to abandon this concept. Why say that the tree is an individual and the woodpecker another, if both interlock so intricately that they cannot be functionally separated?

5.1.2. The wall of life's hose is made up of niches that are structured like a honeycomb. Every niche is inhabited by one species of living being. This being devours the inhabitant of the niche directly below, and is devoured by the inhabitant of the niche directly above, and competes with the inhabitant of the niche next door. Every niche is occupied, and not even one may

be empty for an indeterminate period of time. If this were to happen, the inferior niches would overflow with life, since no one would eat them. And the superior niches would empty out since their inhabitants would not have any food. So fragile is this hierarchy that a single empty niche would make the wheel of life stop. However, the mechanism of life has at its disposal very efficient methods for quickly filling every emptied niche. If the evolution of life demands the extinction of a specific species (for reasons that we discussed in the chapter on lust), its niche becomes momentarily vacant. The mechanism of life quickly fills this void with any other species, which is not required to have any genetic affiliation with the extinct species. For example, in Australia, the marsupials inhabit the niche occupied by the wolf in Europe. In New Zealand, a galliformes bird, the moa, inhabited the niche occupied by the giraffe in Africa. Recently, the human mind has sought to interfere within this mechanism. It has sought to empty out the niche occupied by bacteria with antibiotics and sterility. The mechanism of life reacts and seeks to evolve species of antibiotic resistant bacteria. Could the human mind make the wheel of life stop?

5.1.3. The complexity and perfection of this organization of hunger has enthused the mind of the human observer. Unable to comprehend it in all its details, the human mind starts to admire it. However, this attitude of admiration before nature is always suspicious. It is one of the ways through which the mind surrenders to the Devil. The complexity of the organization of hunger conceals its hellishness. The human mind admires nature, because every bird has its worm, every kitten has its mouse, and the mind calls this Divine providence. It forgets the perspective of the worm and the mouse. Nature is brutal and every being sings and chirps, snarls and growls, buzzes and croaks, not in praise of the Lord, but in praise of hunger.

5.1.4. This whole mechanism is undoubtedly diabolic, but it has nothing to do with gluttony. It has nothing to do with that "idealistic" climate of which we spoke. The hummingbird (the pleasure of our gardens), is not an idealist, it does not

hum. It devours five times the weight of its own body everyday. This is not gluttony. Gluttony is the pleasure to devour, purely devouring for the sake of devouring; devouring as an activity that creates reality. Life, in its lustful brutality does not dispose of an organ for gluttony. This organ is mental, it is the mind in opposition to nature, and as a subject that realizes nature. Every tiger's throat, every scorpion's pincers, every polyp's arm is an innocent and inoffensive instrument, if compared with the mind in its opposition to nature and in its gluttonous anxiety to transform nature into "a reality, for the mind." Let us observe how this mind acts.

5.2. The Program

The description of what is called "knowledge" was attempted in the chapter of this book that deals with wrath. It looked at how the mind fishes out phenomena from the sensible world, how it reduces them to symbols, how it subjects these symbols to formal and linguistic rules, and how the result of this procedure can be externalized as transformed phenomena. This process seemed miraculous in the chapter on wrath, because there was no bridge that could allow the passage from phenomenon to symbol, and from symbol to transformed phenomenon. In the field of gluttony, the miracle disappears. The phenomenon fished out by the mind is not "reality," it is only an unborn symbol. The sensible world is a fiction of the mind. And the transformed phenomenon is equally fictitious, but is part of "reality" for having been informed by the mind. The transformation of nature into civilization, which is gluttony's program, is the transformation of a fictitious world into a world that bears witness to the mind's path. That is how science functions, and the miracle of how it functions has disappeared, despite its epistemological difficulties. Science does not seek "objective" knowledge, or "absolute knowledge." What it seeks, is to transform the fictitious world of nature.

Science is the first stage of technology. On gluttony's territory, the Devil no longer promises supreme knowledge to the mind.

But he explains, patiently, that after all, knowledge is not existentially interesting. What matters is power and freedom. And the Devil can promise this as the result of technology. The theoretical problems of chance and freedom are overcome. We are now in the realm of praxis.

5.2.1. Gluttony's program is therefore this: (1) to devour the sensible world, (2) to transform it into a system of symbols, that is, into language, and (3) to spew out machines and instruments. These machines and instruments shall form a Great Wall of China around the mind, and shall prevent chance, necessity, and other theoretically chaotic influences from making the mind restless. Thus, instruments and machines shall form the horizon of reality, as a borderline situation of the mind. Within the wall there shall be a new sense of "being sheltered," therefore, of reality. The mind that is surrounded by machines and instruments is sheltered, therefore safe, and wrath's madness is overcome. The territory of sanity increases as gluttony devours nature. Gluttony is therefore a creative activity; it is an "*Imitatio Dei*."

5.3. Raw Material

In order to be able to devour nature, it is necessary to cut it up into slices. Not even gluttony can devour the whole of nature in one gulp. The knife that cuts up nature into slices is called "specialization" and its duty is to cut the multiple connections that link up nature, and to transform these cut up and amputated connections into "objects." Nature thus cut up and prepared to be consumed, has lost, through this operation, its chaotic and multicolored aspect, and has become gray and ordered. The slices, which specialization cuts nature into, are not served simultaneously. Gluttony as a creative discipline is a recent thing, and the feast that it prepares is still in its first stages. It started just over one hundred and fifty years ago. And nature is not yet cut up into all of its slices. Even so, given the hunger of the impatient mind, the first dish is already being

served. It is a cold and richly varied "*hors d'oeuvre*," which has been cut from the slice of nature called "applied physics." Let us quickly consider this appealing "smorgasbord":

5.3.1. A variety of hunger producing machines is served as aperitif. The more machines there are, the more that are needed. These machines are gluttony's propelling force. These machines create hunger in a geometric progression and in an ordered manner. They always open new fields for hunger. They elevate the standard of life. They spew out torrents of products that did not exist yesterday, but which shall be entirely indispensable tomorrow. The hunger created by machines, is projected in such a manner that it becomes automatically insatiable. Recently, machines have gained automatic self-reproduction, which will definitely accelerate the progress of insatiable hunger. Today, machines dominate the scene. In our experience, they have already managed to substitute nature. The rhythm of the machines is the rhythm of our lives.

5.3.2. A dish, with vehicles of the most diverse types, accompanies this aperitif. These vehicles serve to devour time, but they do it in such a diabolic manner that they completely turn us into slaves of time. Thanks to them, we can be everywhere on Earth almost simultaneously. The effect is double: a large part of this gluttonous humanity is travelling. And a large part of this gluttonous humanity does not know what to do with its time. These travels are an escape from boredom, which is the existential climate created by the time that technology devoured. "Free time" is the same as boredom, from which one did not escape in time. Having devoured time, these vehicles opened up a new time, and it is filled by boredom. These vehicles are machines of tedious times. They produce boredom with the same rhythm that the other machines produce hunger. Hence this is the principle of how gluttony works: open, yawning mouths, are quickly filled with products.

5.3.3. The varied "*hors d'oeuvre*" of applied physics consists of multiple dishes, such as scientific instruments, weapons of war, and machines to conquer space. But the two roughly

described dishes already characterize its effect, which can be existentially characterized as a pendulum that swings between boredom and nausea. The situation of the mind in wrath was that of an activity against the world, which was its opposite. In gluttony, this activity has assumed the aspect of consumption. The further gluttony progresses, the more accentuated the act of consumption shall be over the action of production. Gluttony is a sin that is productive in an automated manner. The problem of gluttony is consumption. The products produced by the automatic methods spill over humanity and threaten to inundate and suffocate it. They have to be devoured. The current of products is the cause of human boredom. The products, although witnesses of the human spirit, lack existential interest because they were produced automatically. They are products that do not cause any wonder, reveal any secret, or conceal any mystery; they are tedious. As they are products of the human spirit, they are completely transparent. In their progressive substitution of natural objects, they spread boredom all around and eliminate any form of adventure from our environment. They render life unbearably tedious. And the enormous mass that washes over us causes nausea. The uninterrupted devouring is accompanied by the need to regurgitate what was devoured. Nausea is the antithesis of gluttony. Maybe nausea is one of the limits of gluttony. This shall be considered in another context.

5.3.4. A warm soup, served by economics, follows the cold and varied dishes of applied physics. Today it is being served in the more “advanced” societies. It is necessary to be careful not to sip it too quickly, as it may burn the tongue. This soup consists of price controls, five-year plans, planned credit, flexible taxes, and similar apparatus. The soup is aimed at making the climate, created by the applied physics dish, bearable. The cold sweat and nausea provoked by this dish needs to be overcome through the heat that animates the soup. The result is disappointing. It cannot be otherwise, since it was also prepared in gluttony’s kitchen. There are two types of soup: the American *chicken broth* and the

Soviet *borscht*, but both have the same taste: they taste of cans. The happiness they promise is one of boredom and nausea. Effectively, both types of soup do nothing more than organize the boredom and nausea created by applied physics, and they do it in a tedious and nauseating manner. Entire libraries have been published about the soups' recipes, but the ingredients are always the same: how to reach happiness through gluttony.

5.3.5. The biologists are in the kitchen preparing the next dish: applied biology. A torrent of harvests shall be rolling out of the kitchen soon, gigantic quantities of sea plankton transformed into lard, or corn harvests automatically planted on fields stacked twenty levels high. And that's not all. There shall emerge eggs that weigh tons, cows that consist only of udders, and turkeys that hatch already stuffed. In order to counterbalance this weight, there shall emerge concentrated pills, and delicious flavors without any nutritional value. There will be a disciplining of the human body, which will allow for diets of gigantic consumption, alternating with diets of subnutrition; diets that shall consume gigantic quantities of medicines and stimulants. The dish that follows will be served by applied psychology, which shall attack boredom and nausea head on. Advanced techniques of hypnosis, propaganda, and subliminal messages, allied to equally advanced techniques of biochemistry such as soporifics, happy pills, tranquilizers, and psychedelics, shall transform humanity into a collection of happy, although numbed, minds. At this stage, torpor will probably substitute gluttony's nausea.

5.3.6. Our imagination has already gone too far into the kitchen. It was not even necessary to do so. The observation of today's scene is sufficient for an analysis of gluttony. I believe that the method of gluttony has become obvious within the argument: it is the transformation of nature into instrument. Ontologically, this means the transformation of the reality of the senses into the reality of the mind. Existentially, this means the transformation of anxiety and desire into boredom and nausea. Ethically, this means the transformation of lust into gluttony.

5.4. The Product

The mind, as a unique reality, devours illusion, digests illusion, and excretes illusion, which it informs. The mind arranges these excrements around itself in order to hide among them. This is therefore the nauseating situation of the present stage of gluttony: the mind sucks in nature, which then becomes ever more impoverished and distant from the mind. The lustful chaos of chance reigns within what remains of nature. But this does not represent a problem. Soon the whole of nature shall be absorbed. The mind inhabits the world of instruments. In this world, order reigns. Within it, the mind is sheltered. For the mind, this is reality. Within it, the mind is free. Although a little nauseating and tedious, this reality is the appropriate habitat of the mind. And in this sense, it is gluttony's paradise.

5.4.1. Unfortunately, the situation that I have just described does not correspond to that which we directly experience. If we observe these instruments, these machines, and these apparatus that are our world, and within which we are sheltered, we are overtaken by a cold dread. In looking at them, these products of our mind start to transform into living beings, into authentic monsters. It is as if we had created a realm of life. But a realm that behaves exactly like the one, which we thought, we had devoured. They constitute a continuation of nature and cannot be ontologically distinguished from it. With all of our technology, we have not done any more than all other living beings do: to devour, that is, to transform inorganic or dead matter into living matter. However, it is true that the beings that start to emerge from our devouring activity, these machines, computers, vehicles, and institutions, are not made up of protoplasm, they are chemically different. But their degree of reality is exactly the same. Through technology, we thought we could transform nature into something ontologically different. Thus we believed we were beyond nature, or at least that we formed the last link in nature's chain. On the contrary, the behavior of our products, and our experience of them, prove

that we have not done anything beyond filling the niche that the mechanism of life reserved for us.

5.4.2. The existential analysis carried out by philosophers over the last decades, formulated two classes of reality for the objects that surround us: "things," that is, nature, and "instruments," that is, the products of technology. However, the evolution of instruments contradicts the validity of this attempt. These instruments are as independent from us as scorpions and camels. They are subjected to the same order of evolution, as are beings of protoplasm. But the rhythm of the evolution of instruments is diabolically accelerated. For being a more recent biological evolution, instruments are more possessed beings. In instruments, history gallops. Reptiles, for example, took tens of millions of years in order to evolve, reach colossal dimensions, become partly extinct, and survive in more modest species. Automobiles followed the same path, but in a few decades. This diabolic rhythm that governs the world of instruments is the only palpable result of gluttony. Thanks to gluttony, the progress of the world accelerated. However, we, as the protoplasmic beings that we are, in these bodies of ours, belong to a slower rhythm. We are incapable of following the rhythm of the instruments that we have generated. They shall overtake us. Instruments shall occupy the niches above ours in the mechanism of life. We shall be devoured by our instruments.

5.4.3. From the perspective of the mechanism of life, our gluttony, our technology, is nothing more than a mutation of hunger, however, it is a radical mutation that opens up new fields. Man is nothing but an organ in life's body, whose aim is to devour the nature that is before it, transform it into instruments, and be devoured by them. And once man has completed his duty, he shall become extinct. The Devil will no longer need the assistance of man. The H-bomb is an indication of what I have in mind. But first the automatic lines of self-reproducing machines, directed and controlled by automatic electronic brains will have to be installed. Once these lines are installed,

man will become superfluous and according to the rule of “the survival of the fittest” man shall disappear.

5.4.4. It is possible to delay this event. Man’s adaptation to instruments is possible. Man could learn to become useful to instruments, just like in past times when the horse learned to be useful to man, thus avoiding its extinction as an overcome species. In nature, there is a principle of retribution. Biologists call it “symbiosis.” The horse pulls the cart, and we feed it. Machines feed us. It is “fair” that we should be useful for them. However, together with this consideration, the concept of “justice” was reintroduced into the world of instruments. Science and technology emerged in order to free man. It has become obvious, in our experience with instruments, that the Devil did not keep that promise. We are slaves of the machines, just as we were slaves of the world of lust. Gluttony did not manage to free us.

5.4.5. There were no ontological modifications of nature, therefore, through our technology. But there has been a radical modification of our position within it. We have been overcome. We are late, antiquated, and decadent beings. The effect on our minds of this modification is disastrous. It undermines the last foundations of our sense of reality. If these instruments, which are products of our minds, do not shelter, if, on the contrary, they are frightening (*unheimlich*: that do not shelter), then where is our shelter, where is our reality? The solitude of the human condition oppresses us among the instruments. We are alone and abandoned before death. We have lost contact with nature, which was a contact that made us forget death. We produced instruments in order to forget death. However, they betray us. We are thrown amid them toward death. But this vision of death among instruments may have unexpected effects for the Devil.

5.5. The Instrument

Gluttony inaugurated a new view of the human situation: man as the link of a chain. This is an important change in our view of the human situation. Up until now we have considered man as the crowning of evolution, as the aim of the world's chain. This aim, which was reached by lust, managed, through wrath and gluttony, to break away from the chain and to turn against it. The whole of nature, with its stars and planets, crystals and minerals, plants and animals, had the human mind as an aim in a double sense: it was its duty to produce this mind, and it was its duty to serve as raw material for that mind. The Bible itself confirms the diabolic view of nature and of the human mind. Human knowledge, and human transformative praxis were, from our perspective, the greatest triumph of evolution, the Devil's strongest weapon in his advance against the shield of the transcendent. By perfecting knowledge, and intensifying praxis, the Devil could overcome, through the human mind, the barriers imposed upon him to thus create a "human reality." This is the basis of Hegelian philosophy, which is a glorification of the Devil. This is also the basis of Marxist philosophy, which is equally Manichean. And this is, essentially, the humanism which has inspired us since we disciplined wrath.

5.5.1. With Nietzsche came a new view of the human situation: the view which gluttony's triumph provides. Man as a link in a chain. The Nietzschean "*Übermensch*" was a mutation of man, but was only the product of the imagination of a thinker who was ahead of his time. Today we can directly experience the *Übermensch*. It is the instrument. Let us therefore frame man as a link within the overall scene of the world.

5.5.2. Photosynthesis allows plants to transform inorganic substances into protoplasm. The mind allows man to transform the phenomenal world into symbols, into language. Man's linguistic capability is, from the Devil's perspective, a mutation of photosynthesis in more than one sense. The same ontological leap, which exists between the inorganic and organic world,

exists, in a more radical form, between the phenomenal world and the symbolic world of language. However, the parallel that I am trying to force between photosynthesis and language is another. The existence of plants made life's animal kingdom viable. The existence of man made instruments viable. From the plant's perspective, the animal is a product of the plant, and is useful for the plant, for example as fertilizer. But the animal crushes and devours the plant. From the human perspective, instruments are the products of man, and they are useful for him. But they crush and will devour man. From the meadow's perspective, the cow is an institution evolved from the pasture, and its utility resides in the provision of fertilizer. An atrocious destiny made the cow eat the pasture that created it. There is an unbridgeable existential abyss between them. The instruments of technology are the cows of the mind's meadows. However, the mind has the ironic capability to transcend itself. It can do what the pasture cannot: hover above the situation in which it participates. Within this reflexive distance we have an entirely new view of the human situation: man seems to be an instrument of the instrument, just as the instrument seems to be an instrument of man. And if we elevate this reflection a little further, everything seems like an instrument at the service of a technology that is not ours. Our technology is nothing more than a subaltern phase of this general technology, of which we are instruments.

5.5.3. This general technology, of which we are instruments, was identified, in this book as the evolution of the Devil. We are only subaltern instruments of the Devil. We are only a phase of that process that seeks to turn transitoriness real. However, as instruments of this diabolic struggle, we are in direct contact with its barriers. Something of these barriers must manifest itself in our structure. Our experience of being mere instruments, which the evolution of technology propitiates, has as an effect, the loss of a sense of reality within the transitory world of instruments. This in turn has, as an effect, the loss of our sense of reality, including that which we call our "Self,"

as a subaltern instrument. And this loss opens, absurdly, the view to that influence, which is “totally different” within our culture. The instruments of technology, which are transparent for us because they are products of our mind, definitely open, absurdly, a view toward that which is totally different from us.

5.5.4. Gluttony makes the futility of that process called “evolution” graspable because it accelerates the process. It makes experientially graspable, therefore, the futility and illusory character of the Devil. Furious progress problematizes progress. The quick achievements of the mind problematize the mind. The Devil’s own success problematizes the Devil. This is an absurd result of gluttony, which the Devil certainly did not expect. The Devil’s intention was to prepare the human mind for pride with the instruments of technology. Man as the creator of reality. However, technology humiliates man. Man as a slave of his own products. Humility (and human solitude, which is a symptom of humility) is a dangerous climate for the Devil. The mind, as the creator of reality can transform itself, within this climate, into a mind that is the instrument of a totally different reality. Gluttony, despite being a great victory for the Devil within the field of the phenomenal world, may become dangerous for him within the field of the human mind.

5.5.5. The struggle that the Devil engages in for our minds is not an easy one. He did not manage to conquer them through lust, because death opened a window toward the outside of the diabolic world, through which these minds could escape. So he changed tactics and created wrath. He did not triumph through wrath, because the diabolic world lost its reality. The mind could escape it through the schizophrenic opening between the phenomenal and the mental world. He then perfected wrath by turning it into gluttony, and even then the conquest of the mind was not a guarantee. The very perfection of gluttony creates a climate of solitude and humility through which the mind may escape. The creative power of the mind absurdly reveals the powerlessness of the

mind. In this profound awareness of the powerlessness of the mind resides, I believe, a germ of hope for humanity.

5.6. The Feast

The awareness of the powerlessness of our minds is, today, buried under thick layers that affirm the glory of the mind that creates technology. Therefore, this does not represent an immediate danger for the Devil. Whoever observes the surface of today's scene does not discover its traces. "Developed" societies are entirely dedicated to gluttony, and our century could come to be called, by this superficial observer, "the century of gluttony." But these are not the only societies that glorify gluttony. Humanity as a whole participates in this precipitated and covetous hunt for products. An insatiable hunger for things (and for thoughts and "sensations") has taken over our minds, and we are completely aware that we cannot and do not even wish to satiate it. Our ideal is not a stable "standard of living," therefore satiety. The ideal is an ever increasing "standard of living," therefore, increasing hunger. If we wish to stop this race, and say "enough," as some developed societies and individuals in underdeveloped societies do, we shall verify, surprisingly, that we cannot do it. We may be tired and beaten down by progress, we may wish, out of exhaustion, to abandon the hunt: we cannot do it. Gluttony's moving steamroller either drags us along with it, or rolls over and compresses us. The wish to stop and rest is "reactionary," is "obscurantism," and progress eliminates it mercilessly. We can either advance, together with the whole of humanity, toward gluttony's paradise, or be annihilated. It is our duty, as evolved men, to devour and swallow increasingly larger bites. It is our "civic" duty to be consumers. It is required of us to open our mouths as far possible, to bite, to eat, to digest, and to surround ourselves with our excrements in the form of instruments, or bank accounts, or benevolent institutions.

5.6.1. Medieval paintings represent gluttony as a person with a grotesquely enlarged belly. This is pious innocence. Compare these paintings with our modern elephantiasis: our cities, our buildings, our factories, and our institutions have assumed supra-human dimensions. Our capital and our productive capabilities can only be measured with algorithms that refer to astronomy. Our commercial firms, our public services, our churches, and our schools – all of these sinister “legal persons” grow like titans and we are building altars so that we may sacrifice them as if to God. Today, humanity bears the image of megalomania. The air is filled with the clicking of tongues and lips, and with the crunching and gritting of technology’s teeth. And this technology wants to eat more and more, in order to devour everything, and not leave even a little piece of nature behind. But instead of breaking (or at least trying to break) the advancing of machines, man lashes them with a whip in order to encourage their ungoverned race toward the abyss. Many already know that the aim of this race is not paradise, but the abyss. Many already feel this abyss in their own bones. But they continue to hunt. It is not, properly speaking, gluttony which propels them, but gluttony transformed into envy and greed. We shall deal with these sins in the following chapter.

6. ENVY AND GREED

The successes that the Devil has had so far in his attempts to turn the phenomenal world real have been dubious. The struggle between Heaven and Hell continues ungoverned in the realm of life. Lust continues in its efforts against inhibition, with the aim of realizing life. In the field of pure reason, wrath continues its struggle against chance and seeks to comprehend, and therefore realize, the world to be symbolized in language. In the field of nature, gluttony continues to devour both living and dead things with the aim to transform them, and it tries to prevent these devoured things from returning to being nature, therefore to unreality. Given this dubious situation, the Devil opens a new front. He thus declares that society is the source of reality; that the human mind is a product of society. All of its thoughts, desires, and values spring from society, are informed by it, and are useful for that society. Man is real only as part of a society. Out of society, man is merely a mental construction, a specter with which "individualist" philosophers and theologians operate for their apologetic aims. Without society, man hangs in midair, like a mere image: maybe as the theologians say, an image of God, but definitely nothing more than an image. Within society, man acquires a context, acquires an aim, and his life acquires meaning. Man becomes a reality only as the participant of a family, worker's union, political party, or bridge club. Society realizes man. It is true that man, in his turn, realizes society, and therefore that there is an ontological problem that hides within this definition of society as reality. But the Devil decided, at this stage in his progress, to ignore this difficulty.

Man, when perfectly integrated into society ("well integrated" to use an expression from American sociologists), does not suffer from an ontological problems, he knows his reality, and does not need another faith in order to project his life. When this social integration suffers disturbances, when man becomes alienated from society, the problem of a "transcendent" faith emerges, which is a pathological symptom of man's alienation. In this situation, man has abandoned the protecting shelter of society and finds himself alone and unprotected, facing the warm desert wind of Divinity. This man becomes self-absorbed [*ensimesmado*], and may become the prey of forces that are dangerous for the Devil. If the warm breath of solitude drags the mind and distances it from the bosom of collectivity, there is an imminent danger that the Devil may lose this mind. Within the social collective, the mind is sheltered from this dangerous solitude, and the forces of Divinity cannot reach it. It is the infernal force's duty to fortify and cement the structure of society, and to turn it into a reality; man's only reality. Man, as a *zoon politikon*, is an easy prey for the Devil; is almost practically in Hell; has already lost his authenticity. The fortification of society is achieved by the Devil thanks to envy and greed.

Greed is the diabolic method through which the Devil places the mind within the structure of society. Greed is the method through which this placement is fixed and maintained, in order to conserve the structure. Envy is society's evolutionary principle. Thanks to it society forms and reforms. Greed is society's conservative principle. Thanks to it society acquires stability. Every given stage of a society is the product of a dialectic tension between envy and greed. Every progressive revolutionary tendency at this stage represents the action of envy. Every conservative tendency represents the action of greed. The continuous struggle, concealed by the structure of society (which superficially seems like an organism in ordered evolution), is a struggle between these two sins. Within society, the Devil seems to struggle against himself. But it is obvious that it is a fake struggle. Greed strengthens envy, and envy strengthens

greed, and both have the same aim: to make society real. Due to this reciprocal action, we have resolved to include both sins in the same chapter, and we seek to outline how they work.

6.1. Society

The leap to abandon gluttony and land on society's territory brings with it a change of climate. The Devil has abandoned the attempt to insist upon a single layer of reality. From now on the Devil is content with pluralism. Society shall thus be the first order of reality. Secondary realities emerge around this primary reality, having been created by it, whose degree of reality depends on their proximity to society. Of these realities, the most important one is called "civilization" or "culture," and it is an immediate product of society. That which we call, in a rather imprecise manner, "the history of society" or "the history of humanity," strictly speaking, is nothing more than the history of civilization and culture. Every product of society, or, every second-degree reality, is a historical product and evolves within time. The very structure of society evolves in this manner. However, this society "in itself," which has now become a kind of Kantian "thing in itself," this basis for reality, is not historical, it is given. This society is what antiquated philosophers would call "the metaphysical foundation" of reality. The whole of history is a product of society; it is the active and effective aspect of society. The whole of history and all of the realities that it produces are "for society." It is evident that a concept of society such as the one I have just described, identifies "society" with "Devil," according to how this concept has been defined in the course of this book. Envy and greed reveal society as a new aspect of the Devil. Let us go a little deeper into this order of thinking.

6.1.1. Society is the primordial mud of reality. It is the foundation from which our minds spring. Western psychology is discovering this base and it observes how it bubbles. Psychology calls this fundamental layer of the mind the "id." The processes

that evolve within this layer are called “humanity’s myths,” and are not yet fully understood. They are the primary structures of behavior. Myths are the structures, through which society projects our existence so they can realize reality by realizing themselves in the process. Myths are, therefore, the primary and immediate products of society. It is impossible to grasp “society in itself” through our evolved minds, because it is the very foundation of the mind. The closest that we can get to it is represented by myths. Myths are the immediate revelation of society, therefore of reality. These myths project us as human existence. Let us try to describe how this is done, from the perspective of this book.

6.1.2. The primordial mud seeks to articulate itself, because it has a dialectic tension, a tension that we have identified as “envy and greed.” That is what the Ancients called “envy of the gods” and “man’s greed.” Envy forces a path out of the mud, it breaks through the surface, produces a historical phenomenon, articulates itself, and that is what is called “myth.” Greed immediately seeks to consolidate, contract, and avoid that which the produced phenomenon evaporates. This is called “ritual.” We must imagine the mass of reality as an inert mass, but a boiling mass; we must imagine myths as bubbles that have been blown to the surface by envy, and we must imagine rituals as these bubbles consolidated into balls by greed, which roll into history. Myth and ritual, as the primary manifestations of society, constitute the starting point of “history” in the strict sense of the term. The history of civilization is the evolution of myths and rituals. This process is an uninterrupted course. Envy constantly produces myths, and greed constantly ritualizes them. Thanks to envy, society evolves in its manifestations and always creates new realities of a subaltern degree. Thanks to greed, these new realities are always consolidated. Any given stage of a society is the synthetic product of myths and rituals.

6.1.3. This description does not agree with the view of society that 19th century philosophy offers. The disagreement is explainable. Our view was reached thanks to the disciplined

introspection offered by modern psychology. 19th century thinkers, especially Hegel and Marx, consider society as an external phenomenon. Even though they professed faith in society as the foundation of reality, their spirits were still naive in relation to the experiential impact of this faith; they were still wrathful minds. They even sought to comprehend society from the outside, and in this sense they were alienated minds. But if we analyze their thoughts thoroughly, from our perspective, we shall discover that the divergence is not so grave. For Hegel, there is a foundation for reality, the “idea,” and for Marx, “matter,” and both are tied to each other through the dialectic process that produces history *sensu stricto*. If we substitute the metaphysical terms “idea” and “matter” for the ethical terms “envy” and “greed,” we shall verify that the divergence becomes less grave. Effectively, although modernized, we are being Hegelian and Marxist if we take into consideration the two sins we are dealing with. However, it is precisely because we are modernizing these two thinkers that we are being a lot more radical in our ontology. We are even radicalizing the implicit ontology in Dilthey, which is, in our view, the first thinker to articulate envy and greed in a consistent form.

6.1.4. Myth and ritual are, therefore, within the ontology that we are defending, the first results of this social reality in its attempt to articulate itself. Civilizations, together with all of their material and spiritual products, are realities produced by myths and rituals. These phenomena are real because they are linked through myths and rituals to society’s primordial reality. The world of our minds is another layer of reality, because it is linked through the “id” to the fundamental layer of reality. The most complex problem that this ontology offers is posed by nature. How is nature linked to society? Is it entirely fictitious, as it was for gluttony, or is it opposed to society, as it was for wrath? Neither: a patient analysis reveals that nature is a product of society; a distanced product, therefore of an inferior degree of reality to that of civilization, but still a product. Let us try to illustrate this statement that

stands contrary to common sense, but which is still a logical consequence of the argument.

6.1.5. Let us consider, as a single example of our thesis, the heavenly bodies. They are objects that represent nature. How did the stars emerge, and how have they evolved? Primordial myths established a “world,” let us say, the world of Western civilization. This civilization realized the project contained in these myths, and part of this realization were male or female gods, who walked, always representing a virile force, over the Earth, which represents femininity. This masculine principle was what today we call the “stars.” New irruptions of envy created new myths, which modified this world. The starry sky of the Pythagoreans and Ptolemies emerged as the ritualization of these myths, in which today’s stars were something like petrified symbols of perfection. During the Renaissance and the Baroque new myths emerged. The stars were stones. During the 18th and 19th centuries, they were transformed into a collection of little balls, the molecules, which became connected to each other through elastics called “gravity,” whose behavior was mathematically ritualized. Today the stars are carvings in the curved gravitational and electromagnetic field. What are the stars “in themselves?” is a false question. The stars are not “in themselves,” but are “for society.” And that is so for the whole of nature. It is nothing but a product of society, a historical product that modifies itself according to the dialectic tension that informs society. Nature is the product of envy and greed. It is reality in a subaltern degree. Let us turn our attention to a more immediate reality, that is, to civilization, which is the most tangible field of envy and greed.

6.2. Retribution

Civilization is the phenomenal manifestation of society. It could be introspectively and extrospectively described. Extrospectively, civilization presents itself as a particular number of human beings surrounded by instruments and institutions,

and introspectively, it presents itself as my conscious Self. There is an intimate link between these two aspects, one is the copy of the other. Both these aspects emerged from society's primordial mud. Let us consider the external aspect.

6.2.1. Civilization consists of human beings who seek to realize existential projects imposed upon them by society, within which they are thrown. These existential projects form a multitude of arrows in flight that crisscross chaotically. The more developed the civilization is, the greater the number of projects that it offers to the human beings that participate in it. The number of projects offered by civilization is directly related to that which we call "political, economic, and social freedom," because it offers a choice between projects. Human beings take part in more than one project. Every project of which a human being takes part is a mask and a character that he plays on society's stage. At the source of each one of these projects hides a myth, and human life within society is an attempt (generally unconscious) to realize the myths it has chosen.

6.2.2. Projects crisscross. For example: a single human being may have as an existential project to be a father, a master carpenter, and a member of a football club, church, or political party, and so on *ad infinitum*. Taking part in so many projects represents an existential problem, because changing from one project to another requires a change of pose. Existential projects are not equivalent to each other, and may be organized within a pyramid of hierarchies that crisscross, just as the projects crisscross. From the family we may continue on to the clan, then to the people, and then to the family of peoples. From master carpenter we may continue on to the union, the class, and the proletariat. But the higher we climb the pyramid, the emptier the concept becomes, existentially. The existential falseness of the term "people" has already been discussed.

6.2.3. The realization of a project is a process, and this is human life within society. This process advances with time, but is ambivalent. Any project inserts itself within the hierarchical pyramid of the process, that is: any project within this process

is fluid. The human being transformed into a person due to his participation in different projects, seeks to elevate himself within his pyramid; seeks to overtake other people with whom he competes. This tendency is what we call "envy." Simultaneously, this person seeks to avoid others who might overtake him. This tendency is what we call "greed." The envious tendency seeks to turn the pyramid into a fluid and malleable structure, it is always ready to destroy pyramids, and sees itself as frustrating their advance. The greedy tendency seeks to solidify the pyramid; is always ready to defend pyramids, and sees itself near their summit. It is obvious that these tendencies always reside together within every mind that is engaged in society. They are, effectively, two sides of the same coin. They are both a symptom of engagement.

6.2.4. Envy is the progressive and revolutionary aspect of the mind, and greed is its conservative side, and the aspect that prevails is always the one that corresponds to a particular stage in the realization of a project. Young people are generally progressive, because they are not as realized. People who are biologically or mentally aged are generally conservative, because they fear for their realizations already achieved. Envy is frustrated greed, and greed is frustrated envy. The revolutionary is a frustrated reactionary, and the conservative is a frustrated progressive. The realized revolutionary is a ferocious reactionary, and the realized conservative is a progressive. The revolutionary in action is a reactionary *in fieri*, and the conservative is the victorious revolutionary.

6.2.5. All of this is obvious, and would not need to be exposed, had the small talk of everyday, with newspapers and discourses at its disposal, not blurred the outlines of the scene. However, a different consideration sheds a different light on the scene. The consideration that relates to the automatic nature of how the dialectic envy-greed works and which propels society. This dialectic does not require a judge or an arbiter, it advances according to its own impetus, and the individual effort of the people involved is only a subjective

aspect of the objective automation of this process. And this observation is fundamental for the climate of the two sins that we are taking into consideration. The climate within which we are moving in this chapter is the climate of ethics, the climate of morality. From the perspective of envy, greed is evil, and from the perspective of greed, it is envy that is evil. Trojans are evil from the Greek perspective, and Greeks are evil from the Trojan perspective. Capitalists are evil from the “enlightened” proletarian perspective, and the Bolsheviks are evil from the “democratic” capitalist perspective. The automatic nature of the process that we have just sketched out destroys (if made conscious) all values. Therein lies the beauty of the scene from the Devil’s perspective.

6.2.6. From this perspective, man within society has only two alternatives: *engagement* or *disengagement*, to have a partisan or nonpartisan approach. If he takes a partisan approach, be it in favor of envy or greed (it does not matter which), he becomes victim of the illusion of an ethics that society itself contradicts. He is an easy prey for the Devil. If he focuses on the relativity of both ethics, and if he refuses to choose a party, he loses all sense of value and becomes an opportunist. In this case he is an equally easy prey for the Devil. Society is therefore a true masterpiece of a diabolic malice, and arrests the mind no matter which decision it makes. Let us exemplify.

6.2.7. Let us assume that someone has become engaged in envy. For him, society is fundamentally poorly structured. Fortunately, he knows how to restructure it. He knows how to reformulate its foundations. His project is that of he who fights for Good, that is, for progress. However, we know what the result of the project will be once it has been realized: a new social structure, in which envy shall occupy greed’s place. Ethically, nothing will be altered. But he who fights for Good is the one who will be altered. He will have done nothing more than prepare the Devil’s path, and shall go to Hell. Let us assume now that this same someone has become engaged in greed. Now society is fundamentally well built. Unfortunately, there

are destructive tendencies within it that seek to undermine the established order. It is true that these tendencies are inevitable, and that they do not disprove the excellence of the social structure, nevertheless they still need to be fought against. This man becomes he who defends Good, and who protects the social orthodoxy. We know, however, how this defense ends. There are countless historical examples to prove it. Evil wins automatically, and the structure of society is reformulated. But in doing so, Evil automatically becomes Good, and shall then defend the new structure. Ethically, nothing has been altered. However, he who defends Good is the one who will be altered. For having defended an illusory Good, he shall go directly to Hell. Now let us assume that this someone knows all of this. That he knows of the automatic nature of the social dialectic. That he knows that it is theoretical and that it is practically impossible to stop this automaticity. Then every attempt to stop it would be nothing more than a reaction, and would be automatically framed within this automaticity. The very passivity before this process forms a link in its chain. This man is now fundamentally convinced of the ethical neutrality of every action, and of the relativity of all values. Good and Evil are fluid aspects of a given situation, ready, at every instant, to be inverted. Against this conviction, he can react in two ways. He may fall back, alienated, into society's undefined gray mass. Or he may elaborate an opportunistic ethics, having as a reference point, his own immediate interest. In both cases, his path leads directly to Hell.

Let us brutally simplify the sketched situation. The Devil opens two alternatives to the human mind within society, that is, within the field of automatic retribution: the mind may opt for the hypocritical delusion of itself, or to engage in envy or greed (both elevated to ideals, to be well understood). Or it may advance, by overcoming hypocrisy, up to an enlightened opportunism, or up to the grayish despair of relativized ethics.

6.3. Justice

The automaticity of social processes dispenses with an arbiter. Society is in an automatic moral equilibrium, and progresses automatically. Ethics is the miracle of this equilibrium, and the Devil is the equilibrist. God has finally been eliminated. He now belongs to the field of antiquated notions, such as divine right, natural right, and absolute right. The Devil's victory seems to be definitive. Man's freedom is guaranteed. It resides in the plurality of values that are a part of the equilibrist's act. Thus the following question emerges: where does the existential despair of he who focused upon the reality of values come from?

6.3.1. In order to be able to take this question into consideration, it is necessary for us to go a little deeper into the shift in climate from gluttony to the two sins that we are dealing with. We find ourselves, in having accepted society as the foundation of reality, within a new cosmos. Up until now, the world consisted of phenomena for delectation, comprehension, or transformation. Now the world has a new dimension. Its phenomena want to be valorized. It is no longer enough to comprehend them, or to transform them, now it is necessary to order them according to a scale of values. It is no longer possible to delight in them, without knowing their place in such scale. The problem of envy and greed is not exclusively a problem of ontological reality, but also of the normativity of things. This new element that has penetrated our world is a curious one. Up until now we have had to deal with two elements of the world: phenomenon and mind. Now a third element, value, has infiltrated itself between them like a wedge. We have immediate knowledge of the mind's reality, but we doubt the reality of phenomena. However, we can neither have knowledge of, nor doubt, values. Our experience of values is intellectually impenetrable. The manifestations of values may be analyzed, yes. The several scales of values that society provides us may be compared. This comparison results in relativity. But the experience of values, this impenetrable experience, has been left untouched.

6.3.2. The relativity of values is a consequence of the comparison of scales. These scales are provided by society. In identifying society as reality, we effectively place every scale within society, and since society provides a diversity of scales, every value is relative. And essentially, this is why the Devil created envy and greed, in order to relativize values. The mind that feels desperate before such relativity starts to reason in the following manner: all values are relative. There are no absolute values. Therefore there are no values. But what is this type of reasoning? Is it not a normative judgment? Is this mind not giving value to this judgment? Yes, it is effectively affirming that the absolute value (which does not exist) is better than the relative value. But with which scale is this mind measuring the relative scales of society?

6.3.3. At this point in the argument (that is, if we can call argument that which goes on within this desperate mind), a total confusion emerges, which disorganizes it. The view of society as the foundation of reality starts to unravel. The mind starts to feel that the very ground under its feet is slipping away, and that an inarticulable abyss opens-up in its place. The gray indifference that this mind felt before society starts to transform itself into a violent experience, whose best articulation is the one given by the Church: the love for our neighbor as a form of love for God. The mind, which believed itself to be beyond Good and Evil, is suddenly exposed to the explosion of the absolute Good. And its enlightened opportunism transforms, in a flash, into a demolishing contrition.

6.3.4. Intellectual honesty requires the following amendment: the author of this book has never had the experience that he is describing. He has advanced, desperately, from envy and greed directly to pride. He has, coldly and intellectually, deduced the situation of the observations he has put forward. This being the experience of others, he prefers to stay silent in relation to it. However, he does not believe that this glorious and crushing experience of the absolute Good is necessary so that an argument in its favor may be elaborated.

After all, we all have something which we call “an awareness of Good and Evil” and which we take to be absolute. To relativize this awareness was precisely the Devil’s aim in transferring our faith toward society. The Devil convinced us intellectually. We are intellectually certain that to kill is a relative evil, because the structure of a society elaborated this value as a negative one. But we may perfectly imagine scales of values in which to kill is a positive value. However, our intellectual conviction cannot shake our intimate and irrational experience that to kill is an absolute evil. This irrational experience, may, in its turn, be rationalized. But there is always an inarticulable base, which insists, against all reason, on the absolute value. The Devil has still not managed to completely eliminate this foundation.

6.4. Conversation

This manifestation of society, which civilization is, could equally be described introspectively. Under this prism it presents itself as the conscious Self. Why do we refer to this Self as being conscious? For being the articulation of the foundation of the reality that society is. Introspectively speaking, this reality is identical to the “unconscious” layers of the Self. The conscious Self is society articulated. The conscious Self is a linguistic being, it is a knot within the weave that we call “conversation,” it is an organization of words. Civilization, if seen introspectively, is an organization of words.

6.4.1. Our existential project is to take part in the conversation, within which we are thrown. We realize our project through conversing. For our consciousness, conversation is the field of reality. And this conversation is society articulated. The words and structures, according to which the words are organized into phrases, are manifestations of the unarticulated foundation, expelled from this foundation by the dialectic action of envy and greed. Let us observe a little how this process works.

6.4.2. Conversation is a weave that consists of threads made up of words, and points. Where the threads cross each other, is called "intellects." The word is the bridge that connects the intellects, and which, in a final analysis, points through its meaning to the unarticulated foundation. Every word is a product, it is the work of the creative effort of this foundation, it is a diabolic work of art, informed and modeled by envy and greed. Every word is the work of the conjugated effort carried out by countless generations of intellects that precede ours. In the course of the history of thought, every word has been ceaselessly modulated and kneaded by the countless intellects that made use of words in order to realize themselves. Every word is a living witness of the entire history of thought. Every word has buried within it, the dialectic secret of the history of thought. In this sense, every word is integral to thought. Every word, even the most humble, is the triumphant cry of the entire current of life, all the way from the protoplasm; a cry of life transformed into thought. Every word is, through its meaning, a name for the Devil, and this meaning is the fundamental reality of the dialectic process, and should not, strictly speaking, be taken in vain and without a sensation of sacredness. The word is the most glorious attempt to create reality in breaking the handcuffs of the body by overcoming lust, and liberating the illusion of the body by overcoming wrath; it is a continuous creation and transformation through the overcoming of gluttony. The word is a military expedition undertaken by the whole of humanity, by every intellect today and in the past, which seeks to knock down and annihilate the Divine. Language, the totality of words, is the army that marches against the regions of faith, which are totally alien, but which this army gradually occupies in order to incorporate these regions into the field of language. Language is the visceral enemy of faith, and everything it touches becomes immune to Divine intervention. Every word is a burning sword in the Devil's hand, and language as a whole is a single protest against the limits of the intellect, a cry of articulation

against the ineffable, a war cry against Divinity, an expression of the human intellect's envy directed against God.

6.4.3. The army of words forms and closes rank according to specific rules. The ranks are called "phrases" and the rules "grammar," and it is thanks to this organization that the army of words advances. The ritual through which the words organize themselves into phrases is responsible for the consistency of the intellect's reality. This ritual is the formal aspect of that which psychologists call "the unity and flux of consistency," it is, in a final analysis, the structure of the conscious Self. It is thanks to the linguistic ritual that we are intellects. The ritual, or grammar, is the manifestation of greed in its action against envy, that which manifests itself through words. We are individuals; we are individual intellects, because we consist of words (expressions of the diabolic envy against God) consolidated by grammar (the expression of the diabolic greed that tries to preserve the reality created by the Devil). The human mind, such a supreme illusion of reality, is the Devil's most perfect opus, and it is in this sense that our greedy insistence in maintaining our individuality is the Devil's highest triumph. Our engagement in favor of language (which is an engagement in favor of our intellect), and our engagement in favor of increasing the enrichment of language (which is an engagement in favor of the immortality of our intellect), is a culminating point in the Devil's glorious career. The overcoming of language, which would be the abandonment of the intellect, implies the loss of our individuality, and from a perspective opposed to the Devil; it would be the salvation of our soul.

6.4.4. Our individual intellect, formed by envy (words), and maintained by greed (grammatical rules), is in conservation, that is, it is intimately linked to other intellects. These connections work in two ways: they point outwardly and inwardly from the intellect. The existential climate within which these connections work, has already been discussed when we analyzed the activity of reading and writing, although that was done under its lustful aspect. At this level in the argument, we may reformulate the

problem a little. The connections that lead my intellect toward others (the connections that correspond to “writing”) are the expression of my envy. With these I intend to reformulate and restructure reality, to expand its scope. They are the phrases that create the conversation of which I participate. The connections from other intellects (the ones that correspond to “reading”) are expressions of my greed. With these I intend to increase and consolidate the substance of my intellect. Both types of connections represent my effort in favor of my immortality as intellect. The aim of conversation is my immortality. It is through envy and greed manifested through conversation that I intend to overcome death. Death is essentially, therefore, the exclusive subject in the course of conversation. “Particular” conversations are nothing but variations of this theme. If the theme of death and the attempt to overcome it are efficiently included within every phrase that I grasp and articulate; if I receive phrases with the intention to immortalize myself, and if I express myself in phrases to immortalize myself, then I am engaged in authentic conversation, I realize the existential project within which I am projected. But if the phrases that I receive and articulate are aimed at either avoiding or turning innocuous the theme of death, then I betray and fall from my existential project; I am then engaged in small talk. My effort to realize myself is synonymous with my effort to immortalize myself. This effort is a symptom of my authenticity. I am an authentic intellect, I am myself only if I am constantly conscious of death, and if I apply myself to overcome it through the conversation within which I articulate myself. If I do not do that, I am not an authentic intellect, I am no longer myself, but a mere “agent,” and I fall back into small talk. This profound existential aspect of conversation has not always been recognized by the existential philosophy that seeks to analyze authenticity. Authentic conversation and small talk, are the two climates within which the intellect functions.

6.4.5. Authentic conversation, within which my existence is projected, is a structure of multiple layers. These layers are

the products of different myths, and are ritualized in different ways. The multiplicity of conversational layers allow for variety and choice between projects. Let us take as a single example of these layers, the scientific conversation, which today represents a powerful form of realization. This layer of conversation is a product of the envy that took shape in the myth of the subject. In this layer, the distant and transcendent subject has the world as an object. This conversation's ritual is a product of the greed that took shape in the form of a rigorous discourse idealized through pure mathematics. The scientific conversation consists of words that articulate the subject toward the object, and that do so within a discourse that has pure mathematics as an ideal. The scientific conversation is objective, because it predicates the subject in the direction of an object, and it is progressive because it follows the ritual of the rigorous discourse. The structural functioning of this conversation has been discussed in the chapter on wrath. Intellects that engage in this type of conversation seek to immortalize themselves in two ways: they absorb scientific phrases and incorporate them into their substance, thus consolidating and increasing the scope of their individuality, which is, in this specific case, their "knowledge." And they articulate scientific phrases in order to throw them into the conversation, thus propagating the conversation, enriched by their own individuality, toward an ideal aim, which in this specific case is "objective knowledge." The immortality of the intellect that is engaged within the scientific conversation, is "absolute" knowledge. The scientific intellect is authentic, because it seeks to overcome death through knowledge. It is obvious that this is an absurd aim. Every diabolic aim is absurd. However, this aim is sought through a rigorously rational and consistent method. At this stage, the diabolic methods are rigorous. The scientific conversation is a stage in the Devil's development that characterizes the present era.

The scientific layer of the conversation was only one example. There are innumerable layers and all function in a similar form. The layers tend to subdivide and the farther they

advance, the more they subdivide. This is the tendency toward specialization, which is an experiential demonstration of the absurdity of the search for immortality. However, this tendency toward specialization is equally, a symptom of the intellect's increasing freedom. The intellect has a variety of planes of realization of its project to choose from. This is freedom as that plurality of planes, which we mentioned, as we discussed the external aspect of society. But this freedom of choice is limited by the following consideration: the intellect finds itself thrown within layers that have preformulated myths as a base. These myths, as multiple as they may be, are imposed upon the intellect. The realization of the intellect is nothing more than the reformulation and transformation of myths. Conversation is nothing more than a progressive profanation of the sacred content of the myth. The immortality that the mind tries to reach in conversation is nothing more than a progression that has the death of the myth as an aim. The death of the myth is the intellect's immortality. Ritual is the death of myth. The intellect's immortality is the ritual. The intellect immortalizes itself as it transforms myth into ritual, as it transforms envy into greed. Envy is the impulse of the tendency toward immortality, and pure greed is the immortality of the intellect achieved. But there are layers of the conversation within which the intellect advances toward the source of the myth. It advances along the very edge of the fabric of conversation, and becomes the opening through which new myths advance and are projected into the conversation. Within this extreme situation, the intellect overcomes envy and greed. From a knot, engaged in conversation, it transforms itself into source and origin. This intellect abandons society. This is the situation of pride. The following chapter will deal with pride.

6.4.6. Small talk, within which my existence decays, consists of detritus from authentic conversation, and forms a kind of rubbish depository. In the climate of small talk everything is false. Words, which are concepts in authentic conversation, are transformed, within small talk, into prejudices. The

structure of phrases, which is ritual in authentic conversation, is transformed, within small talk, into pose. The intellect, which is the receiver and producer of phrases in authentic conversation, is transformed, within small talk, into a mere tube through which phrases pass. Authentic conversation is the articulation of society. Small talk is the pseudo-articulation of society, de-structured and decayed into the masses. It consists of words that have been worn out by conversation, stuck to each other in order to form clichés, and which wander within the amorphous medium formed by the mass of “people.” Small talk can be defined as an aimless conversation. The dialectic tension between envy and greed no longer works in small talk. The suppression of envy and greed is a signal of inauthenticity. The mind that confesses itself exempt of envy and greed, confesses its decadence into inauthenticity. Small talk is therefore the Devil’s aim. The Devil created conversation in order to reach small talk, and conversation may be defined, from the diabolic perspective, as small talk *in statu nascendi*. Once words, as the articulation of myths, have been entirely spent, that is, exhausted of their sacred content, they shall enter small talk. Once structures, as the manifestations of ritual, have been entirely realized, that is, stagnated into total stillness, they shall enter small talk. Once intellects, as the crossing of words and phrases, have been entirely realized, that is, “immortalized,” they shall enter small talk. Small talk is a conversation without subject. The immortalized intellect is that which has no subject: small talk is the intellectual paradise toward which every authentic conversation tends. The awareness of this fact starts to awaken the conversation of pure mathematics within that philosophical conversation called “Neopositivism.”

We all take part – with a large part of our intellect, and at given moments, with our whole intellect – in small talk. We have, therefore, an intimate experience of the paradise of the intellect. Within it, we are freed from the plague of having to make any effort. There we become completely passive, and reach peace of mind. In the warm bath of meaningless phrases,

in the loud and empty murmuring of clichés, our intellects rest. The internal tension that was responsible for maintaining the structure of our Self relaxes. We lose our individuality; we become “We.” The mud’s loving embrace shelters the detritus of that which once was our Selves. Who does not know this *nostalgie de la boue*, this yearning to return to society’s amorphous bosom?

6.4.7. Within this climate the problem of death is overcome. Collectively, “we” do not die. Collectively, “we” do not think, and death is within thought. Collectively, we do not worry. We pretend that our quasi-automatic quotidian movements are eternity. And the quotidian is reality as a whole, because the quotidian is society’s amorphous mass. This is therefore the paradise that the Devil creates in small talk. It is the paradise of infinite boredom. It is the paradise of the eternal return of the always identical, of repetition, of *idem per idem*. The traditional Churches, in which the Devil acts powerfully, promise small talk to their faithful as the overcoming of death. The Christian and Jewish Heavens are pure small talk. The pose of the angels that play the harp (probably repetitive variations of a tired and spent theme), the aimless and Sisyphean wandering of souls, the insipid happiness of souls without engagement, effort, or subject, this is the Heaven that traditional religions promise us in their propaganda. Effectively, Hell is what they promise, and the attraction that this Hell exerts upon our minds is proof of the Devil’s strength within us, and of the triumphs that small talk achieved within the environment that surrounds us.

6.4.8. However, when we dive into small talk, we know that we are in Hell. We know, intimately, that we are betraying something. That we are being, to use a Sartrean term, “*salauds*” (swinish), or, to use a more religious expression, that we have a “bad conscience” in small talk. This bad conscience represents an undestroyed residue of our authenticity. Small talk is ethically and aesthetically offensive for this residue. This is the cause of our nausea. It is as if the bad conscience within small talk were a reminder of the gluttony that metamorphosed into

envy and greed. It is as if something is trying to remind us that social reality (which is essentially small talk) is nothing but an escape from gluttony. Society as a whole, and all of its manifestations, that is, a conversation that tends toward small talk, is revealed in its entirety, through this residue of authenticity, as an escape. We could say that it is an escape from death. But fundamentally, this is the same as saying that it is an escape from the transcendent. The bad conscience of which we suffer within small talk, and the nausea that it causes us, is the internal aspect of that which I attempted to formulate in paragraph 6.3.4., when I dealt with the external aspect of society.

6.4.9. Existential philosophy seeks to rationally grasp this resistance that something within us offers to decadence, but the result of this effort is unsatisfactory. This resistance can be rationalized. To say that this resistance is the experience of the absurd is to say nothing. I have already sought to show the ambivalence of the term “absurd.” It depends on the context. The experience of bad conscience (which is the opposite of the Sartrean *mauvaise foi*) is the experience of the absurd within the absurdity of small talk. It is absurd because of small talk. Every attempt to rationalize this resistance ends in a regression *ad infinitum*. Our refusal to follow the Devil into small talk is the manifestation of something completely different. It is non-discursable. Language does not extend toward it. Given this resistance, the Devil still has not reached his aim.

6.4.10. Envy and greed are the Devil's methods to create a social paradise. Seen externally, this paradise is the perfect society, a society in which these two sins are in perfect equilibrium, therefore a satisfied society. This is the society that has overcome history; hence, from now on nothing happens. This is the paradise that Marx and Hegel have in mind, and which is the perfect realization of all the virtualities contained in the dialectic tension between the two sins. Seen internally, this paradise is small talk, that is, the perfect conversation. In this paradise, every subject of conversation shall be exhausted.

This is the ideal that the logical analysts have in mind. But something within us continues to resist this paradise. Something in us continues to negate the reality of that society made up of "populace." The Devil has not won the battle in this new front.

6.4.11. The abandonment of society, the transformation of the mind into an *outsider*, and the distancing of the intellect from conversation have all become inevitable for the mind that has accompanied the Devil to this point. This "alienated" mind (in the sense which small talk ascribes to this term) may take two different directions: one could lead to the pure and simple loss of the protective cover that society offers, and the other could lead to the dragging of the mind by that which is completely different from it. In this case the mind would be lost for the Devil. Fortunately, there is another path for the Devil to follow in his struggle. It is the path of the overcoming of society. On this path the mind elevates itself above the herd of the "populace," it becomes the "super-man." For pervading the relativity of all values, this glorious mind does not precipitate itself into the burning abyss of the "absolute Good," but hovers, like Zarathustra, above Good and Evil, in order to impose its own values upon reality, a reality that will certainly no longer be the society. This sovereign situation is a superb spectacle of the mind. And pride is the theme of the next chapter.

7. PRIDE

7.0.1. The struggle between the Devil and the forces opposed to him has transformed our minds into a field of rubble. The splendid edifices that once adorned it are now in ruin and form a chaotic heap of wreckage. The wheel of life, once the propelling center of our mind, and whose gyration integrated us into the community of beings, is cracked, dilacerated by lust and inhibition, and its movement is only a slight tremor of remembrance and longing. The palace of the sciences, once the pride of our constructive capability, had its wall cracked by the shaking foundations, and wrath wanders within it, desperate and pursued by the specter of chance. Gluttony's feast covered the scene with the poorly digested refuse of its menu, with machines, instruments, and institutions in different stages of putrefaction, ready to become an amorphous humus, to become nature. The pyramids of society have lost their marble cladding and their structures have been laid bare: envy and greed. Pieces of words and phrases, blown by the wind of death, fly over and above this desert landscape of our mind. The climate is gelid; and if it were not for the low whisper of the cold wind of death, the silence would be absolute. The Devil seems to have abandoned this destroyed battlefield, and seems to have removed himself from it. Alone and pathetic, the only survivor wanders the streets of this bombed city: the human Will to realize itself, despite everything and as a challenge to everything.

7.0.2. This chapter shall be an ode, a hymn in praise of the human Will. It shall sing the miraculous legend of its

deeds. This is the most beautiful legend, the most emotionally moving, the most touching of all. The storytellers sing the ode in the bazaars, the bards and the musicians make the strings of their lyres and the hearts of their listeners vibrate, the priests sing chants on the steps of altars in the temples, and the legend of the human Will inspires marshals and emperors, sages and prophets. The human Will: despite everything and in spite of everything. Its sure step knocks down barriers, and valleys and mountains are flattened in its wake. It raises its strong arms; and its dreams are realized. It spreads its resplendent mantle; and worlds emerge. Human Will, your name is beauty. You make castles with a thousand towers that emerge from thin air, where a flag flies from each tower. You transform deaf and mute stones into white and clean statues, carved in your image. You make the wind sing, and you transform a hurricane into a chord. Praise be to you, human Will, you, creator of art, you, inventor of the world, you, producer and annihilator of God and the Devil.

7.0.3. This terrible phrase that we have just formulated, or which formulated itself despite us, emerged unexpectedly and spontaneously, as an expression of the enthusiasm contained until now. Let this phrase come, and let it be sheltered with hospitality. It was about time that we laid bare our false humility. It was about time that we confessed the inebriation and vertigo that the peaks of our creative Will cause. It was about time that we let the nauseating mantle of hypocrisy fall. Let us no longer be ashamed to speak the whole truth. We already knew, ever since we came into being; we already felt, already intuited, that all of this about God and the Devil, of sin and salvation, of real world and illusory world, is nothing but small talk. All of this is nothing but the work of our Will, nothing but representation destined to entertain us. The world is here, in front of us, because we ordered it to emerge from the abyss of nothingness. We only have to turn our backs to it, we only have to lose our interest in it, and it shall disappear into the same abyss. And after all, what is this world that we have created in order to

entertain our Selves? It is the projection screen of our Will. We created a world in order to project ourselves onto it. And this image of ours that we project onto the world is God. It just so happens that, sometimes, the illusion that we create is so perfect that it manages to fool us. At these moments we adore our own image. But we only need to turn our backs on it, we only need a slight gesture of contempt for it, and the image disappears, and God says goodbye to us. "*Ich weiss, dass ohne mich Gott nicht ein Nu kann leben*" (I know that without me God cannot live for even one instant. A. Silesius) And this image of ourselves that we project onto the world's screen, which we created, and which we call "God," can be projected from two different angles. In order to distinguish between angles, we refer to one projection "God" and the other "Devil." It depends on whether it pleases us to desire a divine or diabolic world; it depends on our point of view. And it equally depends on our Will to switch the projection off and submerge the world into the gray darkness of neutrality, into platitude and the boredom of a world without God or the Devil. It is precisely to avoid this boredom and platitude, to turn the representation interesting, that we project our own image onto the world's screen. It is for aesthetic reasons, and to satisfy our sense of equilibrium and drama, that we project God and the Devil upon the world. They are apparently two actors that appear on the screen to entertain us, but they are, essentially, two masks of our Will.

7.0.4. Everything there is, and everything that has been, and everything that can be, is our Will. To be, to become, and to be able to be, are all forms of our Will. Everything comes from our Will, and everything returns to it. Everything that happens, and everything that comes to pass, happens and passes within our Will in virtue of our Will. The Will creates the world through an eccentric movement, and it comes to know the world through a concentric movement. In this process of knowledge, the Will discovers itself at the bottom of the world. Knowledge of the world is self-knowledge. Through another eccentric movement, the Will creates the mind, and through a

concentric movement the Will studies the mind. In this study, the Will discovers itself at the bottom of the mind. The study of the mind, meditation, is self-knowledge. World and mind are the two faces of the Will. Science and meditation are the jaws, the pincers, which lock onto the nut of illusion created by the Will, in order to crack its shell and expose the kernel. These are the two methods of self-knowledge.

7.0.5. The natural sciences and Yoga are the sharpest and most penetrating teeth of the two jaws that advance into the illusion. Once they meet, at the end of the atom and the *Ātman*, the shell of the illusion will crack and the Will shall recognize itself. At this ultimate unveiling, the masks of God and the Devil will be torn-off. It is in this *dénouement* that the representation of the Will shall end. At this climax the purely formal rules of nature shall be exposed, and the veil of *Māyā* shall be torn. There will be nothing left, except pure and free Will. But why should the Will free itself from itself? Because the illusion that the Will created is so perfect that it fools its creator. The Will has fallen into the very trap it set. Through the eccentric movements it distanced itself so much from its own center that it forgot that center. The concentric movements are a remembrance of its center. The natural sciences and Yoga are methods to rediscover the origin. They are the Will's detectives in the forest of misleading appearances. They discover and seek to prove that nature and the mind are the works of the Will, deliberate works, even though they may have aspects of autonomy. Nature and the mind are works of art. They are works of an unknown, but knowable author. The natural sciences and Yoga prove that the author is the Will. How were these works created? Let us forget, for just one moment, the natural sciences and Yoga, and let us attempt to evoke within us the creative activity of the Will.

7.1. Language

The Will tends. It pressures. Wants to explode. Is thirsty. It wants to spread itself. It is in tension. It seeks to come out of itself. It wants to project itself. It seeks power. It wants to realize itself. It expresses itself. It articulates itself. The Will becomes language. The Will turned into language creates the world of the mind.

7.1.1. Poetry

The Will is the spider that secretes the web of language from itself. Unceasing and untiring, it expels the translucent and shiny threads of phrases; it weaves and knots these threads, rendering the web dense, to then run around inside the web in order to consolidate it. The Will creates illusions of intellects where the threads cross each other, through the “individuation principle,” and through the principle of the discourse, it creates the illusion of the anatomy of the web. The web grows and expands in all dimensions, fed by the Will’s secretion. New threads of phrases unceasingly emerge, new intellects are formed, and new connections between intellects emerge. The threads consolidate and become rigid. Upon these rigid threads, chains that consist of concepts and relations between concepts, are formed. These chains arrest the intellect. The chains of threads ramify. Some of the branches come together to form new chains, new discourses. Other branches float with their ends in the vacuum; unfinished arguments. The Will’s power that propels the web in all directions informs every thread. This power is the meaning of every phrase and the aim of every discourse. The web vibrates. Undulates. The threads run. The position of the intellects within the web is fluid and variable. Sometimes they are linked through threads of solid discourse, sometimes they distance themselves to the extremes of the web and almost become isolated, stuck to the web only through recent, tenuous, and weak threads. In some intellects

the Will petrifies. These are the rigorous and clear intellects. In other intellects, the Will pulsates and seeks to expand further, to extend the scope of the web. The Will is propelling these intellects to the edge of the web. From them the Will extends threads and branches into the void and beyond. The Will puts these intellects at risk.

7.1.1.1. In this extreme and risky situation, where these propelled intellects find themselves, the web of language floats in nothingness. These intellects are in touch with nothingness. They are the advanced posts of the Will. The illusion, and the deliberate character of the web, is existentially grasped by these intellects. It is toward these extreme points that the Will's spider goes to consolidate the web. It runs to the edge of the web, takes the place of the intellect at an extreme situation, and transforms this intellect into the center of its activity. It is from this extreme point that the Will secretes its threads and forms new discourses. At such an extreme, the intellect has become the center of the Will's creative activity; it has become the source of language. This intellect has become a poet. And it is in this situation, in this extreme tension of the Will, that we can experientially grasp the creative activity of the Will.

7.1.1.2. The first stage of this activity is the phase of withdrawal. The intellect withdraws the web of threads that surrounds it and concentrates the web upon itself. Its discourse becomes internalized. In this internal discourse the phrases crisscross and intertwine to form fabrics of unbearable complexity. The intellect becomes a Gordian knot, and becomes unbearable to itself. The Will's tension within it threatens to explode the intellect. The experience of this stage is one of despair. Suddenly, and in a fulminating instant, a sword falls and cuts the Gordian knot. The struck intellect falls, internally wounded, into the abyss of nothingness. But the threads that it had withdrawn continue to attach it to the web of language. They prevent it from drowning. The Will that possessed this intellect starts to project new threads, to guarantee the web's continuity. These new threads that project from the struck

intellect falling toward the web, vibrate and oscillate with the shock that the intellect suffered as it fell. They are witnesses of the shock with nothingness. These threads are new verses. The Will has just created a new work, within this intellect that it possessed. The experience for the intellect is one of exaltation, of a sense of power, of pride.

7.1.1.3. The new verses that are propelled from the poet's intellect toward the web of language are the immediate manifestation of the Will. They are concrete Will. They are caught in their concretion by the intellects near the poet. Let us call these intellects, which inhabit the poet's vicinities, "critics." The warm and vibrating threads are consolidated and integrated to the web through these intellects. They are conversed. The concrete manifestation of the Will is submitted, by the critics' intellects, to the process of conversation, which progressively turns this manifestation more abstract. Conversation is the process of abstraction, in the sense of being a progressive distancing from the concreteness of the Will. Concreteness and abstraction are measures of the distance of a phrase from the creative Will. As a phrase distances itself from the creative Will, as it advances into the web and into language, it loses concreteness and gains abstraction; it loses intimacy with the Will and gains autonomy. Phrases that are advanced in the abstraction process acquire the appearance of automaticity and independence from the creative Will. They acquire the appearance of "data."

7.1.1.4. The phrases that have concretely originated within the creative Will, and which flow, through the abstraction process, into language, discourse in countless streams. It is as if the intellect, possessed by the creative Will, was located at the peak of a mountain, and as if the verses that spring from it, spill over the mountainsides. But in the plain, at the farthest point from poetry, all of these currents, all of these threads of discourse, are dammed into two lakes: nature and mind. Nature and mind are the dams that hold verses that have been turned abstract. Nature and mind are the reservoirs of the

Will once it has been entirely abstracted; entirely “objectified.” These lakes are so distant from the peaks of creation that they do not seem to be connected to the peaks. However, they hide, in their muddy waters, the secret of their origin in the Will. The natural sciences fish on the Western side of the mountain, and they start to discover the structure of the Will at the bottom of the lake. They start to discover the primordial poet that created nature: the Will. Yoga stirs and scours the whole lake on the Eastern side of the mountain. It has always been suspicious of the origin of the lake. Furthermore, the two lakes communicate subterraneously. Fishing expeditions and studies in the natural sciences have discovered the subterranean channel that connects the lakes. They shall reinforce, almost as if from below, the efforts of the yogis. They shall reveal, in a conjugated effort, the secret of the lakes: nature and mind are the Will turned abstract, therefore objectified. The prophet of this discovery, Schopenhauer, this intellect that personifies pride, and the glorifier and singer of this discovery, Nietzsche, this intellect that personifies the absurdity of pride, are the guides of these efforts. Today’s philosophy, especially that which dedicates itself to the analysis of experience, and that which dedicates itself to the analysis of language, are their followers.

7.1.2. Music and Concrete Poetry

Every verse that projects itself from the poet’s intellect is a concrete manifestation of the Will. But at the very instant of articulation, the verse starts to abstract itself. The speed of the verse’s decadence into abstraction is related to the slope that connects the course of the discourse that began in the lakes of the mind and of nature. There are verses that precipitate, in a sparkling fall, directly into the lake of nature. Others direct themselves, subtly and softly, through the slightly sloping plains of poetry. Layers of language prefigure the course of the discourse of verses. We shall call the course that leads directly to the lake of nature, “pictorial language,” the one that leads

to the lake of the mind, “semantic language,” and that which detains itself on the plains of poetry, “the language of music,” however, this nomenclature is provisory, and will be removed by future arguments.

7.1.2.1. The course of the language of music has a barely perceptible slope. It is almost meaningless. We have defined “meaning” as the direction of the discourse. The discourse with a gentle slope, the discourse almost exempt of meaning, is the discourse of the language of music, and this language retains the concreteness of the Will. The verses that become the language of music propitiate the most inventive experience of the creative Will. The creative Will manifests itself, through the musical verses, as pure beauty. The experience that music affords us is concrete; because we are in immediate contact with the creative Will, that is, with the *aistheton*, the aesthetic impact of the Will. Music is an almost entirely pure discourse; undistorted by the scum of ethics and logic, which adheres to the pictorial and semantic discourse in order to pervert it. Ethics and logic are aspects of phrases that emerge as a consequence of abstraction, as a consequence of the distancing of thought from the Will. Ethics and logic are symptoms of abstract thoughts. The Will, as the source of reality, is beyond ethics and logic, beyond Good and Evil, and beyond the truth. The immediate manifestation of the Will is beauty. The mind possessed by the creative Will is a proud mind. It finds itself beyond Good and Evil, and knows that art is better than truth. Music is the purest articulation of this mental climate.

7.1.2.2. Music is pure beauty. Music is the articulation of reality. The essence of reality (which is the creative Will) is beauty. The rules of aesthetics are the structure of reality; they are the harmony. When listening to music we are being confronted with the structures of reality. This is the reason for the profound emotion that music causes in us, and the sense of exaltation and freedom that it provokes. Lie and sin, truth and goodness, all explode before music. Music is the ultimate argument. After music, nothing more can be said. And what

cannot be said must remain silent. Music dissolves God and the Devil; it annihilates both. Every argumentation and dialectic is overcome and made meaningless by music; music puts an end to them. When we hear music, we feel that music is our origin and our aim. Language, turned into beauty, which is music, represents our most direct route toward self-recognition. Music wins over illusion, because it represents reality directly – our creative Will. Music is pure language, and pure language is God's, and the Devil's, sepulcher.

7.1.2.3. Music is the manifestation of the most immediate Will. All other discourses are distorted Will, abstracted Will; they are illusion; they are *Māyā*. If it were possible to purify all other discourses from the scum of logic and ethics, and if it were possible to concretize all other discourses, illusion would have been overcome and reality reestablished. This is, effectively, the attempt to translate every discourse, every language, to the language of music; to concretize them. And these attempts at translation (that are attempts at self-recognition) are currently underway. Let us briefly consider these attempts.

7.1.2.4. Let us take, as a first example, the attempt to concretize semantic language, being undertaken by the poets of concrete poetry. They seek to grasp the discourse at the moment of its eruption from the creative Will, and to dam it in the plain of poetry. They seek to prevent this discourse from discoursing, thus quickly turning toward conversation, and from there, toward the mind. They even seek to avoid crystalizing the discourse into verse. They insist therefore, on the *aistheton*, on the immediate experience of the word. They accept the word as it springs from the Will, as an immediate articulation of the Will. They submit themselves to the word, and absorb it. They accept the word in its plenitude, as a visual and auditory structure. They do not suppress the meaning of the word, that is, they do not seek to drag the word into the river of language, whose discourse gives a direction to every word. However, the simple fact that the word is dammed within this attempt already alters its direction; already modifies

its meaning. Concrete poetry demands, therefore, a violent effort from the intellect. Effectively, it demands Will power. It demands the intellect's refusal to be dragged by the discourse, and its effort to stay on the plain of poetry. Every web of language pulls the intellect down through the mountainside of poetry. Concrete poetry seeks to offer the intellect a support so that it can hold on to the summit. Concrete poetry is, therefore, a weapon of the Will against illusion, which seeks to prevent abstraction and to keep concreteness. This is a new weapon, and its efficacy has not yet been put to the test. It is, however, a potentially dangerous weapon. The emergence of this attempt in Brazil is proof that this civilization is ready to overcome gluttony and envy through pride.

7.1.3. Painting

The situation in which the attempts to concretize pictorial language occur, is more complex and demands more detailed consideration. The poets who choose this language to articulate the creative Will are, at least in the West, deeply immersed in the illusion of nature. They accept nature, this collection of pictorial phrases, extremely distanced from the creative Will; they accept this nature as "given." They are being misled. They do not see that nature is an abstract set, and that, in order to concretize it, it is necessary to discover the creative Will in it. They do not recognize themselves in nature. They do not know, or they have forgotten, that it was the Will, or in other words, that it was they, who created nature. From this misunderstanding emerges that hybrid phenomenon that is Western painting and sculpture.

7.1.3.1. The painter and the sculptor, who are "poets" in the sense we employed here, are intellects possessed by the creative Will. The Will tends, in these intellects, to articulate itself through the process that we have described. It expels and projects its articulation, which is beauty. It is an articulation in accordance to aesthetic rules, and exempt, in its first impulse,

of all meaning. But the painter and the sculptor, prisoners of the illusion of nature, cast this articulation over nature in order to capture it. Let us use an image to describe this process. In becoming possessed by the creative Will, the painter is on the summit of poetry. The creative Will projects the pure articulation of beauty from it, which is a net of rules that organize colors and forms. These colors and forms are already an illusion; they are already the first abstraction of the creative Will. The rules, these are pure Will, yes. But the abstraction, which the colors and forms are, is an inevitable consequence of the articulation, since articulation is already alienation from reality. The net of rules that organize colors and forms is cast, by the painter (sitting on the summit of poetry), into the lake of nature to fish out data. The painter bows deeply before nature in the act of casting his net. Through great Will power, he pulls back this immense net of nature and tries to drag it back to the summit of poetry. But the net has changed within this process and has become heavy. Weeds, shells, and fish have become attached to it and have made the structure of the net almost unrecognizable. From now on, the net "represents" nature. This net, hidden by illusory impurities, is what we call "representational" painting or sculpture. The history of Western visual arts is the enumeration of works of this type, in which the creative Will is hidden. These products are works of art, because the net of the Will shines through them, and the more it shines through, the more exciting the work is. However, they are incomparably less concrete than the verses of music and concrete poetry.

7.1.3.2. These works are the result of the strength of illusion upon the intellects that created them. However, ultimately, we start to awaken from this illusory dream, and we start to recognize the creative Will within us as the foundation of reality. Our self-recognition acts like a beam of light that penetrates the fabric of illusion like an X-ray, in order to discover the structure. It is against this light that we start to examine these works. We find the net of the Will at the bottom of these paintings and

sculptures, which is a pure structure that organizes color and form. This rediscovery of the Will in the visual arts profoundly modifies our attitude and propitiates a new experience of reality. Reality can be articulated, both immediately and concretely, through the aesthetic rules that structure colors and forms. The consequence of this is the emergence of “abstract” and concrete paintings and sculptures.

7.1.3.3. The term “abstract,” that painters use, is proof that only the illusion was overcome. These works are “abstract” because they refuse to represent nature. But nature is still tacitly accepted as reality. The works that emerge through this effort are close to the Will and distant from nature, and that is why they are called “abstract.” Effectively, they are concrete works. “Abstract” painting is the first manifestation of a concrete pictorial language in the West. It is experiential proof of the enormous progress of Western mentality in its attempt to free itself from illusion and rediscover the Will. This is the fully conscious articulation of the Will through colors and forms. The Will speaks almost immediately in these paintings and sculptures. These new works free our mind, just as musical compositions and concrete poems do, and they demonstrate the pride of our Will experientially.

7.1.3.4. Painters of concrete art are of a fundamental importance for an interpretation of current times. In my opinion, there is no other event more important than this. These painters are prophets of future developments; they are the pioneers of pride. They are, effectively, the advanced posts of the natural sciences. Our scientists are still at the stage of representational painting. They do not even know they are poets. As the victims of the illusion, and almost entirely unaware of their creative efforts, they believe that nature is a reality. They try to cast their purely aesthetic net of creative Will, which projects itself from their intellects in the form of mathematical rules, into the lake of nature in order to represent it. And then these poets, disguised as scientists, are surprised that nature structures itself according to these rules. They are starting,

effectively, in a somewhat confused manner, to discover their own Will at the base of nature. The process of the concretization of nature has begun. The process of the self-awareness of the natural sciences has begun. Nature is a work of art. Scientists are its poets. But nature is representational art; it is figurative. It represents the creative Will in its abstract stage. Nature is an illusion. The natural sciences, following in the footsteps of painting, start to apply the X-rays of self-recognition against nature. Modern physics is the most advanced of the sciences. It is quickly approaching the stage of concrete painting. The structures of modern physics are no longer representational and figurative. They no longer contain “true” or “false” phrases. The criterion to be applied to the judgments of modern physics is the criterion of aesthetics, and physics as a whole no longer seeks to “signify,” it seeks to be consistent: the natural sciences are becoming musicalized.

7.1.4. Science

We sought to illustrate the method, through which, the creative Will weaves the veil of illusion, by applying three languages. That which we call “world,” and whose most abstract extremes are nature and mind, is the fabric created by the Will, it is *Māyā*. Mind and nature form the floating, multicolored surface of the veil: if we intend to contemplate it reflexively, that is, in the opposite direction of the Will. This surface is what philosophy calls “the phenomenal world” because it is through this surface that the reality of the Will appears to the reflexive mind. Reflection is the disciplined penetration of the surface, with the aim of reaching the reality of the Will. Reflection is the inverse movement of poetry. Reflection is therefore, the attempt to destroy the illusion; it is an attempt at self-recognition. Let us cast a gaze upon the surface of the veil, upon the phenomenal world, before we attempt to follow reflection in its advance.

7.1.4.1. The phenomenal world presents itself to us, at the current stage of our development, as a set ruled by the

rules of beauty. Wrath ended its logical aspect, and envy and greed ended its ethical aspect, so that the phenomenal world is ethically neutral and logically meaningless. Ethics and logic are aspects of the creative Will's abstract judgments; they are illusory and no longer manage to mislead us. "God" and "Devil" are terms already overcome. They are prejudices from which we have been freed. Our reflection about the phenomenal world advances without the burden of these prejudices. This layer, the most illusory layer of the world, has already been abolished. "God" and "Devil" are the extremes of illusion; they are the most distant phenomena from the Will. We may dismiss them. They are nothing but extreme projections of the Will upon the screen of the phenomenal world; they are illusory even from the perspective of the illusion of the world. The image that we seek to create is the following: the creative Will is at the center. The threads of phrases extend around it, created by this Will. These threads form, on the horizon, the two illusory realities of nature and mind. And the cover that envelops everything in order to give it meaning, is the projection of God and the Devil. If reflection manages to eliminate nature and mind, if it manages to dilute this illusion and reach the Will, the protective cover shall automatically collapse. During this collapse of God and the Devil, we shall verify that both are nothing more than our own engorged Will. This shall be the Will's definitive victory.

7.1.4.2. The phenomenal world, if seen from its surface, seems to be constituted of phenomena that are interconnected in two ways: through causal chains, or heaped together by chance. We know that this is nothing but an illusion, because all phenomena are linked not only among themselves but also to our Will through the chains established by this Will. To accept the causal chains as independent from our Will, and to seek to reduce the causal heaps and chains (as the antiquated sciences do), is proof of the strength of illusion upon our reflexive minds. As long as science nurtures this illusion, as long as it accepts these causal connections as "given," it shall not manage to penetrate all the way to the Will. Science is

not yet aware of the fact that we are the authors of the laws of nature; this level of self-recognition is still missing. However, once this self-awareness becomes effective, every ontological and epistemological difficulty, which oppresses science today, shall be overcome. The problem of causal law and of chance, which brought about the failure of wrath, shall be seen in a new light, and lose its problematic. The situation will be the following:

7.1.4.3. The phenomenal world is a collection of fields of activity of the Will, even though they are very abstract fields. There are fields in nature that seem to us to be governed by causal laws because in these fields the creative Will fixed itself into a rigid and particular structure. These are the fields in which the creative Will articulated organized verses, through the intellects of the poets called "scientists." There are other fields in nature, in which chance seems to rule. These are the fields in which the Will is seeking to realize itself in verses. The function of science is precisely to articulate the creative Will in these fields. If phenomena behave in a causal manner, they prove, through this behavior, the strength of our Will. The movements of the stars, for example, or the Newtonian free fall, are works of art that prove the function of the creative Will. If phenomena behave in a causal manner, they prove, through this behavior, that the Will still has fields that are open to its creative activity. The behavior of particles inside an atom, for example, is raw material for future poets. To be understood: all of these fields that form nature as a whole, are illusory fields, and have been created by the Will. However, they were created precisely so that the Will could articulate itself within them. Nature is an abstract articulation of the creative Will, which concretizes itself thanks to science made aware of itself. The laws of nature are not proof of God, but they prove the divine strength of the Will. Chance, in nature, is not proof of Divine incursions, but proves the freedom of the creative Will. Nature as a whole is the representation of the Will. It is a collection of articulations of the Will through an entirely abstract pictorial language.

7.1.4.4. The phenomenal world has, like a rug, two sides and two faces. Nature is one of these faces. The mind is the other. Everything that has been said about nature is equally applicable to the mind. The method to penetrate the mind differs from the method to penetrate nature and has been perfected in the East. However, the results are exactly the same. The phenomena of the natural world have replicas in the mental world, and vice versa. The Will is at the base of nature as well as the mind. I leave, however, the considerations of this face of the illusory world of phenomena for a future paragraph. I shall only say that nature is a collection of phrases, articulated through a pictorial language, and the mind through a semantic language, and that there is a correspondence between these two languages.

7.1.4.5. Therefore, we have the following worldview created by pride: the creative Will emits language. The illusory and extreme meaning of language is “God” and “Devil.” In the intermediary regions, the nebulous fabric of the phenomenal world extends its misleading richness. This nebulous fabric has two faces: nature and mind. This work of art of our Will is so beautiful and complex that it seems to be completely autonomous, by hiding its origin to reflexive contemplation. We no longer recognize ourselves in the phenomenal world and we have forgotten that we are its authors.

This error of ours is the source of all our suffering. We believe that the phenomenal world conditions and oppresses us. It is necessary to tear this illusion; it is necessary to tear the veil of *Māyā*. It is necessary to refresh our memory so that we may find ourselves as the authors and creators of the world again. We are the authors of this cosmos that we fear. We are the creators of the destiny that we have attributed, so naively, to the illusion of “God” and the “Devil.” Therefore, let us tear the veil of illusion; let us become gods. Let us reach the last conclusions from thinkers such as Schopenhauer and Nietzsche; let us make use of the techniques of Yoga.

7.2. Pincers of the Will

At the beginning of this chapter we spoke about “the pincers of the Will,” which break the nutshell of illusion in order to expose the kernel. Let us modify this image, and let us say that this is a pair of scissors cutting the veil of *Māyā*. The scissors consists of two blades, the European and the Indian. The European blade advances into nature, and seeks to eliminate this illusory veil, its ethical and logical aspects, in order to discover the purely linguistic structure; the purely aesthetic structure of its foundation. The Indian blade seeks to reconstitute the mind, by vertically cutting and laying bare the Will’s path as it creates the mind. The methods of science and Yoga are opposed methods. Science seeks to find the Will by walking in its direction. Yoga seeks to find the Will by running after it. They are, both, detectives of the Will. Science goes from the crime scene and seeks, by retracing the criminal’s steps, to find him. The yogi does not look for the criminal. He knows who perpetrated the crime. He follows the criminal’s steps in order to catch him *in flagrante delicto*. The scientist and the yogi are therefore placed in two different climates of study. The scientist’s method is systematic doubt, since he does not know the criminal and therefore suspects everyone. The yogi’s method is systematic perseverance, since he knows the criminal but needs to prove his knowledge. It is true that science has a strong suspicion as to who the criminal is: it is the Will. But the scientific pose demands that the scientist keeps the appearance of doubt and continue to pretend that he is searching. The yogi refuses to concede a word for us, and speaks with an exasperating conviction for a Western listener, but his persistence proves, existentially, that there must be a remainder of doubt in his attitude.

7.2.1. Science as Yoga

Be this as it may, these opposite methods, and different climates are beginning to find each other today. Science still pretends to dismiss Yoga, but some scientific disciplines seem to confirm not only the results, but also the presuppositions of Yoga. And Yoga continues to observe our science with a benevolent grin of superiority, but the concepts that it formulates are ever more similar to the scientific terms it dismisses. Science has penetrated so deep into the fabric of nature that this fabric has almost become transparent. At the base of this thin veil, woven from mathematical equations that are reducible to zero, science already sees the Yogi in his lotus position, attempting to tear the veil. There is only one final step missing and then science and Yoga shall unite. This encounter does not require too much imagination. The history of the white race shall come to a close the moment this encounter occurs, in the circle of pride. The two blades of the pair of scissors called “white race civilization,” which separated some five thousand years ago, will have come together again. This will be the end of a cycle. Maybe our days are numbered, and maybe our pride is a symptom of our twilight; or, of our omnipotence, as science and Yoga might say. Let us observe this encounter.

7.2.1.1. The phenomenal world consists of attributes; of properties of something. It is a collection of the colors, noises, and smells of something. These attributes, and properties, hover and are volatile. The Ancient Greeks already knew that attributes are misleading, and that they do not provide “knowledge” (*sophia*). Their search was for that something, of which attributes are properties. The history of Western thought could be approached as the history of the search for that something. For example, they tried to hierarchize the attributes, and to speak of primary and secondary attributes, as if extension and hardness were the “immediate” attributes of something, and as if all the others were even more illusory than these. They tried to deny movement in the phenomenal

world (Parmenides), or, like Heraclitus, they tried to identify the movement with something. Plato went so far as to deny any reality to the phenomenal world, but elevated the mind to the level of the foundation of reality.

7.2.1.2. However, all of it was nothing but deliberate speculation. It did not convince the “senses,” that is, it did not convince lust, which insisted upon the reality of the world of attributes because of its delightability. Philosophers can say whatever they like, but the table continues to be a table because I “sense” its reality. However, the scientific method strengthened the arguments of philosophical speculation in such a convincing manner that even lust could not ignore them. Together with its instruments, that is, together with something experientially graspable, science proves that the table is not black, or hard, or any other thing, because it is not a thing. It is not even a copy of a Platonic original, or of any other type of mental phenomenon: it simply does not exist. What exists is an electromagnetic field and a gravitational one, therefore, what exists are structures of virtualities. The field is an imaginary structure where something can come to be. And the field is the substance of the phenomenal world, of the table, for example. We should speak of the world of appearances, therefore, in terms of its potentiality, and not its reality, as we are doing. The sciences are essentially preparing a grammatical revolution. They have discovered a grammatical error in the way we speak, and they are correcting the error. Every phrase that contains terms such as “table” must be formulated, from now on, according to potentiality. The reality of the “material” world has evaporated.

7.2.1.3. This leaves the philosophers of materialism in an embarrassing position. This philosophy, daughter of the sciences of the 18th and 19th centuries existed thanks to its connection to the sciences, and it kept the same connection with them, as Scholastic philosophy kept with theology. Now the materialists must become accustomed to their position as heretics in relation to modern science. However, idealism should not

nurture the hope of becoming the heir of materialism. Science has not become idealist; it has simply become self-aware and no longer needs philosophy. It is almost ready to prove, in an empirical and rational way, that the phenomenal world does not exist. What exists is a set of rules. And these rules are the material that science has to deal with, in order to organize them. As one can see, the non-existence of the phenomenal world is not the end for science, but the beginning of its activities. Science is beginning to comprehend itself; this is its purpose, and not to comprehend "nature." Nature is a consequence of the self-comprehension of the natural sciences. Science shall become creative. It shall comprehend that it is the creative Will. It shall comprehend that the laws that it formulates are not something "discovered" in nature, but are the Will itself as it creates nature. During the stage of magic these laws had an ethical character, and in the stage of representational and abstract science they had a logical character, but at the stage of future developments, in the concrete stage of science, they shall have a purely aesthetic character, which by the way, they already have in modern physics. They shall be beautiful laws. Natural phenomena shall no longer follow the laws of nature because they must (magic), or because they need to (current science), but because they have been thus composed by creative science (future science). The world of future science is a work of art aware of itself. Whatever the Will should want, ask for, or dream, science will be ready to produce in the form of nature. Nature will be the Will's dream produced by science in order to entertain it. It shall be art for art's sake. And when the Will becomes tired of this representation, nature will disappear like froth. Nature shall be a deliberate composition, and we shall have the same sensation that music provides in it. The contemplation of nature shall be a liberating experience, just as music is, because it shall be a concrete and immediate manifestation of our Will. We shall admire nature and its composer, which is our own Will. We shall be absolute.

7.2.2. Yoga as Science

The phenomenal world presents itself, if we invert our contemplation, as the mental world. The West has not reached great successes in this inversion, and we will follow the method of Yoga in order to describe this scene. The mental world presents itself as a collection of thoughts, imaginations, desires, and impulses. The yogis of antiquity had already discovered that these phenomena are illusory and misleading. Already during the time of the *Veda*, Hindu thinkers sought to penetrate the illusory layer of the mind, which these phenomena form. They discovered a structure that informs these phenomena; a structure that is very similar to our natural laws. They called it "*Karma*." However, the parallels should not be exaggerated. Our laws had an ethical aspect only during the stage of magic. Science has relegated this aspect of the law to the field of theology, and we have, in the West, two distinct disciplines: science and theology. In India, this division never occurred. "*Karma*" is a structure of laws at once ethical and logical, and Yoga is therefore parallel to our science and theology. However, this does not make it a "primitive" discipline. It is a method as rigorous as ours. Our scientific method prepares itself to transform logical laws into aesthetic ones, and ends up therefore, in mysticism. Yoga reaches the same result without having previously eliminated the ethical aspect of its discipline. This is the reason for the apparent primitivism of Yoga, but also of its apparent progressiveness. The judgments that the yogis formulate, present themselves to us simultaneously as a barbarous stammering and prophetic mumbling, and it will be necessary to translate them to our civilized language in order to comprehend them.

7.2.2.1. If the self-aware Will turns itself against the mind in order to elucidate that mind, it penetrates successive layers of illusion. It comprehends the Will, in the first place, as the illusion of the relation between mind and "body." The "body" is nothing but a superior, and entirely fictitious, layer of the mind,

and the mind changes bodies according to rules of *Karma*, just as the body changes its clothes. The second illusion that is overcome is that which relates to the individuality of the mind. The Will discovers that the mind is nothing but a superficial organ of the great mental wheel that is the foundation of all minds. The individual mind is only a passing manifestation of this fundamental wheel; it emerged from this wheel in order to be dissolved in it. This mind is only a phenomenon caused by the turning of this wheel, and the laws of *Karma* rule this rotation. The “principle of individuation,” which is an aspect of *Karma*, brings the illusion of individual minds to the surface of the mental wheel, and the illusion of the continuous reincarnation of these minds; of the continuous changing of bodies. But the wheel itself, or *Samsara*, is nothing but an illusion, and this is the Will’s third discovery. The entire gigantic wheel, which unites all of the apparently individual minds of plants, animals, men, and gods, is nothing but an illusory whirlpool that emerged from the creative Will. It is nothing but a “poetic” manifestation of the creative Will, of the *Ātman*. In this sense Yoga comes very close to today’s Western thought. As the fourth illusion, the differentiation between mind and nature is overcome. These are the two aspects of the “*Ātman*.” Natural phenomena, to which the “body” belongs, are only superficial layers of the mind, and are being continuously produced and reabsorbed by the mind according to the rules of *Karma*. The expression “the reincarnation of the mind” is therefore equivalent to “the re-psychologization of the body” in order to describe the rotation of the wheel. By the way, the distinction between mind and nature is not rigorous, and intermediary stages could be discovered, such as astral bodies, specters, and gods. This not only proves the illusion of the distinction, but also the illusion of all mental and natural phenomena. The last illusion penetrated by the Will in its elucidative effort is the illusion of God and the Devil; of the “*Brahman*.” The *Brahman*, this apparent foundation of the *Ātman*, is nothing but a projection of the *Ātman*, and is equal to it. Everything is

the creative Will. It is true that this last conclusion is generally unacceptable for yogis. In their majority, they continue to pay homage to the *Brahman*. But the very structure of the discipline of Yoga proves that it is completely dedicated to the struggle against the *Brahman*, and that its aim is the overcoming of the *Brahman*.

7.2.2.2. The chain of *Karma* is broken at the very moment when the elucidative Will, the Will turned against itself, recognizes itself at the bottom of all appearances, but only if it recognizes itself in the *Ātman*. The veil of illusion, *Māyā*, to which nature and mind belong, is torn, and there is nothing left but *Ātman*. The whole world, nature and mind, are nothing but creations of *Ātman*, of dreams of *Ātman*, and the handcuffs of destiny, *Karma*, have been imposed on this world by the *Ātman*. *Karma* is nothing but an aesthetic web spun by the creative Will in order to realize its dream. "We are such stuff as dreams are made on." (Shakespeare). The result of Yoga is identical to that which the sciences of the West are arriving at.

7.2.2.3. This is therefore the situation that presents itself to the self-aware Will: nature and mind are the creative Will's works of art. They are a chant in praise of the Will, a musical monologue of the *Ātman*. That which maintains the world, which gives it structure, is the harmonic order of *Karma*, which in its turn is a musical and grammatical order, the order of language. The world is a monologue and chant, a meaningless monologue and chant. The world is a wordless song. The Will created the world as purposeless, pure beauty. The mathematical and musical beauty of the world's structure is existential proof of the creative Will. The self-aware Will enjoys the world as beauty. A mind stuck in the illusion, and which does not recognize itself in the world, suffers the world, because the ethical and logical aspects of the world oppress it. This suffering is overcome through self-recognition, and everything becomes transformed into the pure absorption of pure beauty. The phenomena that are ruled by causal laws become comprehensible as the fields of activity of our Will. It

is as if the phenomenal world were a canvas on which someone was painting. The phenomena that are ruled by causal laws are the walls of the canvas that is already covered with the oil of our creative activity. Chance happenings are the parts onto which we are applying the paintbrush of our creative activity. The painting's project is within us, and we are projecting it onto the canvas. Chance in the phenomenal world is the point within which our Will realizes itself. This is the tip of our paintbrush, which we apply upon the world. It has already been said that "chance" and "miracle" are synonyms, and that they seek to articulate the moment that created the world. Chance is the miracle through which our Will realizes itself. It is the bridge through which the project of our Will transfers itself into the world. Thus law and chance became the two aspects of our Will, which is our freedom. Law is our Will realized, chance is our Will in action, they are the two aspects of our freedom. The chains of *Karma*, the chains of destiny, the chains of illusion, are finally broken. We are sovereign.

7.2.2.4. For us the structure of the world does not seem meaningless, even if we still persist upon the illusion of this world. We recognize, or we believe that we recognize, values in this illusion. And we recognize, or we believe that we recognize, types of knowledge. Nothing has value in the world, and nothing can be known, except our Will. The criterion to be applied to the world is purely formal; it is the aesthetic criterion of internal consistency. The Kantian insistence on *a priori* synthetic judgments is overcome in our act of self-recognition. The world is a product of our judgments, which are organized by the rules of our Will. They are meaningless judgments. All of them are synthetic, and *a priori*. All of them are, effectively and equivalently, mathematical or musical judgments. The laws are articulations of themselves. These laws are purely formal, and they do not have either ethical or epistemological aspects, they do not valorize or seek knowledge.

7.2.2.5. However, at the extreme edge of illusion, these laws acquire contexts of ethics and knowledge. At this extreme

edge the illusion of Good and Truth emerge. The creative Will made these illusions emerge, in order to give meaning to the world that it created. It made the illusion of Good and Evil, and the illusion of Truth and Lies emerge, in order to make the illusory world it created consistent. It thus created the illusion of a purpose for the world. It is perfectly deceitful. The Will created nature and the mind in six days, and on the sixth day, in order to crown its creation, it created the illusion of Good and Evil, of Truth and Lies. The creative Will created God and the Devil on the sixth day, and it did this so it could rest on the seventh day, because then, the world was perfect. God and the Devil endowed it with the appearance of objectivity. God and the Devil work to maintain an apparent independence of the world from the Will. They are the two subtitles of this creation, the two auxiliary elements of the Will. Had the Will not created God and the Devil, the world would demonstrate, in an obvious manner, its meaninglessness. It would be an obviously absurd world, a world obviously dependent upon the Will. Having projected God and the Devil upon the world, the Will perfectly masked the obscurity and subjectivity of the world. Thanks to God and the Devil, the world manages to mislead the mind, and to therefore divert the creative Will. Without God and the Devil, the world would be a tedious representation. It would obviously be an *idem per idem*. Thanks to God and the Devil, the Will can entertain itself in the world. God and the Devil are the main clowns created by the Will in order to endow the representation that is the world with attraction. God and the Devil are the projections of the Will, the Will created them in its own image.

7.2.2.6. The self-aware Will knows that God and the Devil are its creations. But it knows that they are useful creations. The Nietzschean phrase (whose thought we are following in this chapter, however in a somewhat independent manner), “God is dead” must be comprehended within this context. God died because we killed Him when we acquired self-awareness, but He could be resuscitated at the snap of a finger. And in

resuscitating God, we would have automatically resuscitated the Devil. The Devil is God's counterpart, a necessary counterpart for the maintenance of the aesthetic equilibrium of the representation that we are building. Hence, these two masterpieces of our Will shall continue to function to our full content. They shall entertain the Will without causing it any embarrassment. God and the Devil could be abolished at the slightest sign of disturbance, in order to be reinstated whenever the representation of the world requires them.

7.2.2.7. The self-aware Will is all-powerful. Everything around the Will is its creation, and is subject to its commandments. Everything around the Will is pure music, pure mathematics, and pure beauty. The veils of illusion have been penetrated and have become transparent. They may henceforth be consciously used to create a new experience of beauty. The Will's project resides there: to create and usufruct beauty. The self-aware Will exists within beauty's paradise. It is the paradise of the eternal weaves of beauty. The Will to Power is the eternal return of the same, as Nietzsche would say. Could this be a paradise, what we have just sketched, and could this be a liberation of the Will's freedom that we have just outlined, or could this be something entirely different?

7.3. Contrition

This entire chapter hardly mentioned the term "pride." It was not necessary to insist on this key. Every phrase and every thought was saturated in it. Let us confess that in the course of this chapter we did not have sufficient self-control to choose terms. It spilled out in uncontrollable streams. The violent contortions of science, art, philosophy, and the juggling acts of Yoga violated our mind and took away its entire disposition for a deliberate scheme. We followed, in fascination, its grotesque exercises, and allowed ourselves to be carried away by its acrobatics. So here we are now, in paradise. We may now rest for an instant, and cast a glance at the victorious Will. There it

is, in all its purity, with its legs crossed behind its neck. The Will, the creator of beauty, does not offer a dazzling spectacle (let us be honest). On the contrary, it is downright disgusting. The desiccated and contorted limbs of this enlightened yogi, these limbs that entwine in a way that it is impossible to distinguish between legs and arms, are not the image of a liberated mind. The Will, in its posture of profound meditation upon itself, does not emanate the aura of sovereignty. It is necessary to confess that the representation the Will offers us is of a mold that gives us the chills. There is an air of a magic-spell that is sinister and lugubrious in the entire process of self-recognition, in the entire procedure to overcome the illusion and become free from the veil of *Māyā*. There is something deeply malign, *blasé*, and refined; something deliberate in the Will's victory. It is necessary to confess it, it is necessary to proclaim it as a challenge to Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and the sages of the East: all of this self-knowledge, all of this conscious creation of beauty, all of this articulation of nature by the human Will, all of this enlightenment of the mind by the human Will, and all of this disciplined and methodical forcing of salvation, is the work of the Devil. It is the capital sin of pride. All of this systematic revaluation of all values; all of this twisting around of the highest for the lowest, and the lowest for the highest; all of this swapping around of the intimate for the external, and the external for the intimate; all of this is the very essence of Hell. The enlightenment, or *Samadhi*, which accompanies the exercises of Yoga, of science, of philosophy, and, unfortunately, the creative activity of art, is an enlightenment produced by the flames of Hell. The mind that is free of all illusion, the emancipated mind, is the mind that contorts in the caldrons of Hell. This mind's only support, the only substance that supports it, is the Devil's trident. The paradise of disciplined enlightenment is the rotating skewer, upon which the mind spins.

7.3.1. But how can this be the work of the Devil, that is, a situation in which the mind is aware of the absurd illusion that

is the Devil? How could the Devil create a situation in which he is annihilated? In order to comprehend this diabolically confusing situation, it is necessary for us to return to the situation in which this development occurred. This was a situation of the darkest despair. Everything within us had been destroyed by the struggle for our soul between God and the Devil. We lost our naive faith in life, our faith in pure reason, in practical reason, and in society. We lost the pleasure in immediate experience, and in pure knowledge; the pleasure that accompanies the transformation of nature into instruments, and the enthusiasm that accompanies the engagement in favor of an ideal society. Our vital fiber, our intellectual moral, our productive *élan*, and our ethos in society had all been annihilated. All of this had happened within the Divine's terrible fire. The very forms of our mind broke, cracked, and snapped in the Divine's blazing breath. Only detritus remained. When the society was dismembered into envy and greed, we had lost the last connection with reality. We were facing nothingness. In such an extreme situation there were only three choices left for us: the grace of a merciful madness, the sweet grace of death, and the vertical fall toward the abyss of faith in God.

7.3.2. The second and third options would have been catastrophic for the Devil. He chose the first. Our suicide at this stage would have been a Divine victory. The fall toward faith in God had to be avoided at all cost. The Devil chose madness. And he chose a madness that was appropriate for him. He seduced our mind into the madness of beauty. Pure art, pure science, and pure meditation, this is the madness that the Devil chose and we fell into the trap. The Devil abandoned, pressed by our development, any intention of creating a serious reality in order to imprison us. He gave up every pose and every lie. He showed himself, naked to our dilacerated mind. He took a risk. Effectively, he cried: look at how I am, and look at the Divine abyss, now make your choice. And in full consciousness, we chose. We chose the madness of solid pride, which the Devil offered us, so as not to fall into the Divine crucible. Now we

are imprisoned. Even the Devil has abandoned our solitary cell, where we are “creating beauty.” Impenetrably thick walls surround us, and our cry: “we are the architects of these walls!” returns to us with a resounding echo. And our odes in praise of ourselves resonate in our ears like a sinister laughter. Thus, the Devil ingeniously transformed a situation in which he was in danger, into a triumph for Hell’s cause.

7.3.3. But still – and I say this in a whispering and shaking voice, so that no one may betray this secret – even in such deep Hell, a slight glimmer of hope shines. In such Hell I am all-powerful. My Will is God. I am God. As I cry such a cry of the highest pride, the echo resonates: I am God. And this echo, which is nothing but a faithful repetition of my pride, has a demolishing effect upon my mind. Listen attentively to what is happening: I am God and God is me. The sciences and philosophies teach that I am God. The arts prove experientially that I am God. Yoga demonstrates experientially that I am God. Therefore, I know that I am God. And that is why I am in this solitary cell that I created for myself. However, if I were to believe, for even just one instant, in what the echo affirms, in other words: that God is me, then at that very instant all of my proud knowledge of my Divinity would be annihilated. I fear for this knowledge of mine and I intend to defend it. My disciplined Will is my shield against this unexpected incursion. But this is ridiculous. “I am God” and “God is me” are equivalent judgments. Therefore, why should I fear the second formulation of my triumph?

7.3.4. Because in this second formulation, which turns against me in order to flood me with its merciless resonance, I am being called. My pride alienated me entirely from that God who is a work of mine. He is merely a pale projection of my Will. And suddenly this pale projection is calling me. My contortions and my juggling acts have completely turned my mind around, and suddenly, I am face to face with that which is totally different from me, and it says to me: I am you. At this instant my mind becomes aware of itself, turns toward the

floor, and hides its face in its hands, because it cannot bare the rays that penetrated its dark cell. The darkness of the cell, in which my mind pretends to feel guilty of its own Will, makes those rays unbearable. The acrobat of the creative Will, blinded by the luminosity, contorts on the floor of his cell. In a single jolt his limbs un-tense in a spasm, his pose is undone, and the proud mind becomes prostrated, contrite, and desperate, in the dust at the foot of that which it is, but which transcends it.

7.3.5. The happening that we have just described, with such inappropriate words, is the sudden passage from pride to humility. For pride, such a happening is always imminent, and it knows, intimately, of this danger. This sudden ruin can happen at any moment through science and philosophy, art and Yoga. For pride, it is necessary to avoid this happening at all costs. It is necessary to prevent that which is all-different to become manifest, if we wish to maintain the pose of pride. And it is possible to do it. The safest method to avoid humility is humble pride. It is necessary to create a humble science, a humble philosophy, and a humble art. That would be the essence of pride, because it would be entirely unimpeachable.

7.3.6. What are these diabolic disciplines, these humble sciences and arts? They are perfect poses. The creative Will represents within them the pose of self-sacrifice in order to entertain itself. The creative Will pretends to sacrifice its works to God, to that God, which the creative Will had created in its own image. The Will humbly approaches God's temple (which the Will built), and says humbly: God, look at the beautiful work that you have created through me, and to your highest glory. And then this creative artist, with a slightly perceptible smile, places the work upon Divinity's altar and retires, humbly, into anonymity. The humble pride, the pride that creates anonymity, is the highest pride. Its representation is perfect. It deceives everyone, including this God, who after all is its own work. Religious art is a good example of this creative Will that keeps itself in anonymity in order to glorify the Eternal One. Or the yogi's faith, reached thanks to a methodical and

deliberate discipline. Or the faith of scientists in a transcendent God, reached as the last link of their theories. Humble pride is a safe defense against the authenticity of humility.

7.3.7. However, let us refrain a little from our burning praise of pride. The windows of Gothic cathedrals are extremely proud, and still, even then, there is a tremor of humility in them. The oratories of classical composers are essentially deliberate, and even so, there is a burning faith in them. The borderline region between pride and humility is slippery. We do not want to deny that there can be deliberation and humility in art. But we believe that faith and humility, thus articulated, are already innocuous for the Devil. Deliberation is the opposite of faith, and deliberate faith is a faith without any danger for the Devil. Art is pride, and humble art is humility at the service of pride. Science as a path toward faith is an escape into humility. Philosophy as the handmaid of religion is a refusal to fall into the abyss of the all-different. All of these are the paths of pride trying to avoid humility. And the more humble they become, the more suspect they are. The complex and systematic building of Gothic cathedrals, or the equally complex and systematic Scholastic and Vedic systems, are pride's attempt to represent humility. But what type of humility is this that manifests itself through monsters, on cathedral columns, in the rigorous proofs of God's existence, in the arguments of doctors of the Church, and in the exact and well-tempered preludes and fugues? It is a very well behaved humility; a humility that is too beautiful and well organized to be humility. This is not the type of humility that puts the proud mind in any danger.

7.3.8. The immediate intuition of the insignificance of the enormity of the all-different is not of a mold to make the mind compose hymns in praise of God; nor to make it build cathedrals or proofs of God's existence. On the contrary, it silences the mind. The authentically humble mind is silent. This silence of the mind is the end of pride. Pride is to speak, to articulate, and to create. Pride is language. Humility is silent. This silence is the end of the Devil. In this silence, which is the

silence of contrition, the mind dilutes the all-different. It is the sacred silence.

7.3.9. At least that is what the testaments of the great mystics seem to want to tell us when they still spoke, before they dissolved into the silence of the sacred. The author of this book does not have the experience of this silence, and the fact that this book carries on despite his argument proves it. Even though the author has felt the imminence of humility several times, he has resisted it gallantly. But the danger of humility does exist. It is necessary for the Devil to avoid it. The false humility, which is humble pride, is a powerful method in order to avoid actual humility. But there is another. It is the Devil's most powerful weapon. It is the false silence. It is a very similar silence to the sacred silence. It is the silence of sadness. This silence emerges when the mind seeks to simultaneously articulate two opposing judgments. This simultaneous articulation of "yes" and "no," which is an intense articulation, has all the appearances of the sacred silence. In this intense articulation, nothing is articulated, because both judgments call each other out. A zero emerges in this articulation; nothingness emerges. However, this is a dialectically tense zero: a nothingness that is contradictory and full.

The Devil appeals to this contradictory and plentiful nothingness, in his attempt to avoid the sacred silence. He appeals to the nothingness that swallows and annihilates everything. He appeals to the deepest Hell. The next chapter shall deal with this tense silence, where sloth and the sadness of the heart exist.

8. SLOTH AND THE SADNESS OF THE HEART

So here we are, for better or for worse, tired and exhausted, in the last chapter of this book, having reached the Devil's aim. From this horrendous sin, this last and most profound sin, with which we will now deal, we see no salvation, and we cannot even imagine it. Sloth and sadness are the last imaginable stage in the development of the mind. The dark despair of pride leaves a narrow crack open through which it is possible to nebulously glimpse the steep and tortuous path that leads toward the summits of faith, the path of humility. That crack closes this instant. From the warm and calm, cultured and moderate, subtly smiling regions of sloth, where everything and nothing is known, there are no exits. The gentle knowledge of the vanity of everything, the noble sadness of resignation, and the sweet sacrifice of all desires, reestablishes a definitive calm. The violent struggle that takes place in the mind and for the mind, and which this book attempted to sketch, is finished. The weapons are down. Now with a sweet and sad, longing remembrance, smiling through the tears, we may reminisce of the struggle we have endured. Everything was in vain, the fruit of an ill-applied enthusiasm. Both contenders, God and the Devil, were naive fictions, and the object of their quarrel, our mind, was the headquarters of naivety. The struggle had the distinction between Good and Evil as its theme, between illusion and reality. So much naivety. This naivety is now evaporated. The circle is closed. The Devil was created so that he could create the world, and now that the world has dissolved, the Devil and his creator have dissolved. Or, to formulate

the process of evolution in a tautological manner, the only adequate formulation: nothingness begot nothingness, and it was annihilated. We should not have expected another result. The Devil is a negative principle. When we offered to follow in his path, we should have already foreseen his aim: *Nirvana*. Right from the beginning of this book, this enlightened aim already adorned, like a series of halos, the figure of the world's Prince. At the point when we identified him with time, and furthermore, when we identified him with language, we could have foreseen the aim of time and language: the *nunc stans*, the silence of nothingness. The end of the Devil's path points to its beginning. Let us evoke this beginning, before we attempt to describe sloth and sadness. Let us evoke our naive sources, before we allow the current of our sophisticated mind to turn into the calm of an enlightened ocean.

8.0.1. What was it that motivated us, or that seduced us, to recognize the Devil as the creator of the world? How could we abandon, in such a fundamental way, all of the official traditions of the West, and ally ourselves to the subterranean currents of Manichaeism and Buddhism? Why did we do it? Because, as we started to write this book, sadness and sloth were already taking possession of our mind, although we did not suspect it. We have consciously sought to demonstrate, experientially, how the world of appearances is nothing but a diabolic work destined to distance our mind from its origin, which is in the transcendent. We have provoked the Devil, from chapter to chapter, always on new grounds, in order to prove the Devil's inexistence. We have kept a confessed or unconfessed hope, from chapter to chapter, that the disappearance of the Devil, and of the territories of illusion that he created, would reveal the face of reality. Through the systematic destruction of our knowledge of the world, we sought, step by step, to conquer faith in this reality, to which we felt we belonged. The path was torturous. Sometimes we followed the Devil, sometimes we went too far, we ran from him. But our conscious aim was always the same: to use the Devil's path in order to reach the

Divine. When we reached pride, the Devil seemed to dissolve, but he reappeared, victorious, as our own creative Will. However, that was his last refuge. Once our Will was defeated, once pride and naive pride were defeated, the Devil no longer had anywhere to lean upon. We can calmly state: the Devil does not exist. We have reached the aim of this book.

8.0.2. Unfortunately we have reached more than the aim of this book. We have gone beyond its aim. And maybe, subconsciously, we already knew at the beginning that it was possible to overcome the aim. Hence, our unconfessed Manichaeism, hence, our unconfessed connection with Buddhism. The Devil's disappearance has revealed what hides behind him: nothing. We can clearly see the scene behind the Devil: nothingness. The Devil, such illusion, and the illusory representations that he creates, is all there is. The Devil and his tricks; that is what the whole of reality is. The supposed creator of reality does not exist. The Devil is everything and everything is absurd. Everything I do, and everything I think, is absurd. And this book that I write and think about with so much suffering, is an absurd effort. Effectively, it is doubly absurd. It is absurd just like everything in this world is absurd. And it is absurd because it deals with the absurdity of the world. It is absurd to want to speak, it is absurd to want to write, it is absurd to want to act, it is absurd to want to save oneself, and it is doubly absurd to want to speak, it is absurd to want to write; it is absurd. Alas: it is absurd to want, unless perhaps it is to want to die.

8.0.3. Now that we have reached this definitive wisdom, we should learn, finally, to be silent, except perhaps for the articulation of a last wish: come, sweet death. We should be able to throw this manuscript into the fire, and release a sigh of relief. "This, as everything else, is overcome," we ought to be able to say. In the wisdom of the absurdity of everything, in the groundlessness ("*Bodenlosigkeit*") of everything, peace and calm should reside. This peace and calm is what our

wise ones promise, and it is what the Buddha brings us, the Enlightened One.

8.0.4. Why does the opposite happen? Why can we not be silent? Why do we continue to write? Why do we refuse the absurdity of everything with clenched teeth? Why do we have this internal restlessness that seeks to articulate the inarticulable: sloth and sadness? What is this active sloth? What is this rebellious sadness? Our desperate activity is not a sign of hope. It is an absurd activity. It is the Camusian "*quand-même*," to which we are desperately dedicated. All of the questions that we have formulated go unanswered. We continue, absurdly, to formulate them. We speak, so that we are not silent. We still have not fallen into silence. May the reader judge, from the symptoms now confessed, the climate of this last chapter. Or the reader may judge, who knows, that the last sin has not yet completely taken possession of our minds. Let us move on for now.

8.0.5. The term "sadness of the heart" (*tristitia cordis*) resonates with a subtle melody. Even the Church, as it formulated it, felt its subtlety. Even the Church, as it named this last sin, did not manage to find a term that could be more pejorative. When we hear this term, and when we seek to evoke in our mind the existential climate that surrounds it, the question emerges: "is sadness a sin?" In all other sins we could feel, more or less clearly, why the Church considers them to be sins. But sadness? We can imagine the hatred that the pious soul feels for all the sins; but hatred for sadness? Even the Church seems to feel the nature of the problem. It does not seem to be very comfortable at such an extreme region; on these gelid summits of the heart ("*auf den Gipfeln des Herzen*" - Rilke). The Church's anti-diabolic struggle does not work at such rarefied heights. For example, the struggle against a palpable devil, such as the one that is manifested through lust and wrath, is easy. It is easy to create a caricature of this Devil, and then to fulminate him with anathema. When the Devil contorts lustfully, when he drools wrathfully, when he fills his

belly with gluttony, when he becomes green with envy and greed, and even when he dedicates himself to the gymnastics of pride, he is an easy target for pious propaganda. But what are we to do, however, with a subtle and smiling Devil; a devil with his hands together and semi-closed eyelids? This Devil sat upon the lotus throne, in the calm and pacific hell of sadness? How can we caricaturize him? How can we fulminate him? From the perspective of the ecclesiastic propaganda, it is better to speak as little as possible of this hell. The Church is dedicated to the struggle against the Devil. It does the best it can. It calls the Devil “sad and lazy,” instead of calling him “elevated and enlightened.” That is the best that can be done, and it is not very good because it still dangerously reduces the imagination of the faithful. The Church, therefore, spends its energies in the description of the hell of all the other sins. It does not spare on violent colors in order to describe their flames and caldrons, and it appeals to the most varied noises to describe their grunts and the clenching of teeth. But as for this last hell of the last sin, the best is to not speak about it. Because, frankly, this hell is indistinguishable from Heaven. For the same reason it is advisable to speak as little as possible of Heaven. The angels, the lyres, and the psalms are dangerously similar to sadness. The faithful probably cannot even conceive of the idea of wanting to compare Heaven and Hell: they could make the wrong choice. But for us, the ones who have advanced further upon the infernal paths, this comparison is necessary. We are forced to dive into this deep hell, into this realm of the immutable Mothers, into the Devil’s own foundation. We are forced to do this by our honesty. So let us dive.

8.1. The Voice’s Aura

The Devil’s foundation – let us repeat it one last time – is language. However, up until now we have only considered superficial aspects of language. We have not penetrated all the way to the key of its secret. We observed, in the chapter on

pride, how the web of language is projected, with crisscrossing threads, and how, at the crossings, the phenomena of the world emerge. Or, how language creates the world in praise of the creative Will. However, this is only one aspect of the process of language. There is an opposite process. The web of language can expand in several ways. It can become ever more diaphanous and can, in this dilution, extend itself to infinity. There would be no more phenomena in this process of expansion; only the web of language would remain. This language as a pure, meaningless linguistic structure, this “universal” language, this *flatus vocis*, is the climate of sadness.

Pythagoras, that mystical and profound thinker, suspected, in a nebulous way, of that which modern analysis articulates in dry terms: mathematics and music are two aspects of religion; they are *how* religion manifests itself. Perhaps this intuition is even older than Pythagoras, and, going past Orpheus, points to the primordial moments of thought. The mystagogues of Orphism seem to have intuited the common base of religion, music, and mathematics, which is, the structure of language. This common foundation is the *logos*. For us, such late and decadent beings, these intuitions are not experientially graspable. We no longer live close to the word. We can no longer experience, in a syncretic manner, the musical, mathematical, and sacred aspect of the word. The primordial language has already become too “specialized,” and for us the living word now has a different existential value from the mathematical symbol, and from the musical note that is written and heard. On the contrary, we feel a tension between the musical symbol and the mathematical one, as if these were the two extremes of language. For us, music seems to be the most concrete form of articulation, the immediate manifestation of language. This is what we discussed in the chapter on pride. And the mathematical symbol seems to be the most universal and abstract manifestation of language. Both manifestations are certainly informed by the same rules that inform language, but they work on different ontological planes. Music is the articulation of immediate experience, and

mathematics is the articulation of “theory.” However, recently a surprising re-approximation between music and mathematics appears to be underway; a re-approximation between logical analysts and dodecaphonic composers, which evokes Orphism. The aim of this paragraph, which is the attempt to sketch the climate of sadness as a phenomenon of the development of language, is also an attempt to explain these new Pythagoreans, these “unknowingly Western Buddhists.”

8.1.1. Structure

Mathematics, as a collection of symbols structured by rules, is a rigorous and refined linguistic layer, which emerged as a result of the effort to render the discourse “objective.” The bulk and fullest layer of language consists of proper names, that is, of terms that articulate immediate experience. Its phrases are the predication of substantives such as “this tree,” that is, of particular terms. The linguistic process, which we discussed at one point, broadens these terms. It transforms proper names into classes. “This tree” becomes “tree” and “this,” and finally a pure symbol, broad and “meaningless.” The linguistic process that results in music runs in the opposite direction. It condenses the proper name in order to make it concrete. Music is a linguistic set that wants to be experienced and not discussed. Mathematics, on the contrary, is a linguistic set that can only be discussed, since it cannot be experienced. Effectively, this set is so elegant and pure, that the only compatible discourse is the hermetic mode of speech called “rigorous analysis.” Every experiential, “subjective,” quality has been removed from this type of discourse. Mathematical language is obvious and evident, and does not encompass doubts of an existential and normative order. Its enunciations are crystalline, and if they are not, then they are “false.” They enunciate relations and forms. It is the language of the realm of the immutable Mothers. However, the enunciations of mathematics need to be interpreted in order to be experienced. It is necessary to retranslate them into a rough

and tense language. In this retranslation, every existential and normative doubt reappears. This attempt at reinterpretation seems to be, from the perspective of mathematics, a betrayal of its purity. This discrepancy between mathematics and rough language has the following explanation:

8.1.1.1. The web of mathematical language is infinite and rigorous, but it consists of vacuities. These vacuities emerged at those places where the proper names were placed in their plenitude. As these names stretched, the vacuities were created. Mathematics seeks to fill these gaps. It creates a series of symbols whose aim is to solidify the web. Thus the real, surreal, irrational, and integer numbers emerged, together with other tricks to fill the vacuities. The web expands in this way, but does not solidify. The series of arithmetic symbols consists of intervals, and the series of geometric symbols consists of fluid transitions. Between two arithmetic symbols that are close, such as 1.0 and 1.1, there is an interval through which the entire phenomenal world escapes. And between two geometric symbols, such as two points, a transition, such as a line, immediately emerges. Therefore, due to its structure, the web of the mathematical language is not adequate to fish out phenomena from immediate experience. To speak in a purely formal manner: the use of mathematical language by the natural sciences is a type of abuse. This is "applied mathematics." From the perspective of "pure mathematics," this is an attempt to translate universal purity onto the rougher layers of language. This is a depreciation of language; a decadence from the heights achieved by the progress of language. The pure and dignified attitude before mathematics is that which Plato assumed at the entrance of the cave. From the Platonic perspective, every layer of language "below" mathematics is a barbaric mumbling appropriate only to those beings chained in the cave. "Applied mathematics," such as the natural sciences apply it is, in the best of cases, the language of the philosopher that returns to the cave. This language still conserves vestiges of the clarity of the sun, which the philosopher gazed at upon leaving the cave.

But it already denounces the shadows in the cave, to which the philosopher is returning.

8.1.1.2. It is a widespread error to believe that mathematics is an instrument of science, in the sense of it being a medium to serve the communications that the sciences articulate. On the contrary, the sciences are nothing but a preparatory and rudimentary stage of language in passage up to the level of pure mathematics. Mathematics is not just one among the methods of language; it is not just one among the structures of human thought. Mathematics is the structure of ideal thought; it is the aim of every mental process called "thought"; it is the aim of every language. Mathematics is the prototype of the meta-language. The dilation of the proper names is not a method to create symbols to "explicate," or perhaps "govern" the phenomena that the proper names "mean." This is the error of a science that is antiquated. The dilation and dilution of proper names into pure symbols is, in itself, the very aim of thought. It is a fact, that in the process of dilation, the phenomena aimed at by proper names become docile, and the natural sciences prove it. But this fact is only a subaltern aspect of this process; it is not the aim of the mathematization of language. The aim resides precisely in the de-subjectification and de-phenomenalization of every term. Every term is transformed into a pure symbol. Every phrase is transformed into a pure structure. Every judgment is transformed into an equation that is reducible to zero. Solved equations are the aim of thought. Human mental activity as a whole has as an aim to be translated to mathematical thought, in order to be solved, that is, reduced to zero. If a phrase or a thought refuses to be thus reduced, they automatically and obviously prove to be "false" or "meaningless" thoughts and phrases. The criterion for the "validity" of a phrase or thought resides in its reducibility to zero. Logical analysis casts a penetrating light upon all of our thoughts and discovers "errors." These errors are flaws in the construction of the phrase or thought. They are grammatically incorrect. Once the error is eliminated, the purity of the structure reestablished,

and the “noise” annihilated, phrase and thought once again become reducible to zero. Mathematical logic is like corrosive acid. It corrodes all the grammatical errors, and reduces every human thought to its fundamental value, which is zero. And effectively, this is the function of human thought. Thought has two alternatives: to articulate structures of incorrect grammar and produce noise, or to articulate structures of correct grammar and produce zero. The elimination of errors eliminates all noise. Thus, perfect language emerges. And as it is reducible to zero, the perfect language is also the perfect silence, exempt of noise. At the moment when thought articulates itself in such a current manner, it no longer articulates itself. Language is – to appeal to a Wittgensteinian image – a ladder to reach the aim of silence, and this ladder needs to be knocked over, once the aim is reached. Having knocked over the ladder of language, thought annihilated itself. It reduced itself, as the last proper name (personal pronoun, first person), to zero. Total silence emerges. *Nirvana* rises.

8.1.2. Reencounter

This logical *Nirvana*, which semantic analysis promises us, is the definitive result of that mystical “*logos*,” which spills from Orphism into Christianity, and which produced so many metaphysical speculations in the course of its development. But it is obvious that logical analysis does not grasp the totality of the “*logos*.” The musical aspect of the word escapes it. That is why pure logic is not entirely Buddhist. The last radical element is missing. Logic manages to annihilate thought, and it does so in a definitive and unappealable manner. In this sense it is Buddhist. But it does not manage to annihilate life. It annihilates pure logic, the Self in the logical and epistemological sense of the term. However, pure logic does not manage to annihilate it in the psychological sense of the term. We may be logicians, and if we are, we stop thinking, but we do not automatically

stop living as a result. Pure logic is not complete. In order to complete its work, it must musicalize itself.

8.1.2.1. The reencounter between mathematics and music, which we have already mentioned, is an event not yet realized. However, advances and attempts are being undertaken today by both disciplines. Essentially, these are not surprising tendencies. Mathematics has always sought to reach a harmony in its enunciations, which are reminiscent of musicality. The musical composer has always operated with notes that evoke the pure operations of mathematics with symbols. Today, however, this similarity between these two disciplines acquires a different coloring. The epistemological importance of mathematics is a recognized fact at least since Leibniz. The purely formal composition is a fact in music, at least since Bach and Handel. What is new today resides in the circumstance of a progressive recognition that mathematics, since the beginning of the 20th century, is equivalent to pure musical composition, and that musical composition is progressively being recognized, since Schopenhauer, as equivalent, if not superior, to mathematics as a method for achieving knowledge. In other words: both disciplines are being recognized as formally and epistemologically equivalent. And the distinction between the formal and epistemological aspects dissipates. The aim of mathematics is the counterpunctual solution of the tensions within the equation in order to reduce it to zero. The aim of music is exactly the same. Mathematicians and composers are almost conscious of this fact.

8.1.2.2. This consciousness has not yet penetrated the broad layers of the West. For the majority of Westerners, the two disciplines are still developing within entirely diverse climates. If we study mathematics, we have an entirely different experience from that which a concert propitiates. However, we are starting to become aware, although vaguely, of what the Ancient Greeks intended in affirming that music and mathematics form a single unit. At specific moments of concentration, when we manage to solve an intricate mathematical problem, or when

a musical experience overwhelms us, we have a vague notion of the mystical power of both disciplines. They are both, as we have begun to perceive, methods for the dissolution of the Self. We have started to perceive the syncretic mystical unity that links pure mathematical symbols to musical symbols, and we have started to recapture the liberating experience of the *logos*. And this type of liberation, which the rigorous structure of both disciplines affords us, starts to delineate itself before our mind's eye. This is the dissolution of the Self. Mathematics and music provide a type of salvation and enlightenment that are contrary to salvation in the Christian sense of the term. This is a salvation that is completely strange to faith. Contrary to faith, this is salvation thanks to a complete loss of faith; a salvation thanks to the destruction of our most intimate Self. We know that as we reach this type of ecstasy, what we have is a pagan experience; we know that we are a lot closer to the Greeks than to the Fathers of the Church when we create mathematics or music in the aforementioned sense. We recognize Pan's flute in harmonious mathematical equations, and Bacchus' orgiastic fugue in rigorous mathematical compositions. The *logos* that we recognize in this experience of the musical and mathematical symbol, this *logos* that saves us by annihilating our Self, has no affiliation with the Savior from Christianity. This *logos* has no Jewish aspect, like the *Soter*; the *logos* is a savior that springs from a completely different ground. It does not save us from sin, but saves us by annihilating our Self. It does not bring eternal life, but eternal death. Through music and mathematics, when these two come together and join forces to make the word reappear in its plenitude, we recognize what we are, which is: nothing. We know that we are a knot created by the spasm of language, a grammatical error, a mere noise that envelops the harmony of language. We are a dissonance that emerged because the logical and musical aspects of the word were dissociated. We are a Self, because we are a point in the fabric of language, on which the logical and aesthetic aspects of language crash into each other. We are a Self because we interrupt the flux of language in its

search for zero. We are a disturbance upon the pure structure, and that is why we are a Self. That is why we think, and that is why we live. To think is a sign of a logical error upon the fabric of language. To live is a sign of an aesthetic error in the fabric of language. To think is to suffer. We suffer, and that is why we are a Self. On our thread, language is thirsty for peace and calm. Language seeks to reestablish the equilibrium between mathematics and music within us; between thought and life. We are a Self because language's thirst for peace and calm is manifested within us. Our Self is the manifestation of thirst. Our Self is a deficiency; our Self is a disease. To think is a disease, and to live is a disease. Anxious because of this thirst, because of this deficiency, because of this disease that is the Self, we suffer. It is due to this suffering that we believe we are able to think and live, and that is why we want to think and live. To want is synonymous with suffering, and Will is synonymous with Self.

However, when the two aspects of language re-unite, when the "*logos*" is reestablished in its plenitude, the suffering ends. We are saved. Our Self disappears. We no longer want anything. We no longer think of anything. We no longer live; we are annihilated. Where our Self once was, everything is calmly reduced to zero. The experience of the plenitude of language, the musical experience of mathematics, and the logical experience of music, provide the calm annihilation of *Nirvana*.

8.1.2.3. Everything that I have just described is a fact not yet realized by the development of the West, and may, therefore, shock us as something strange to a reader who has not yet felt its effect. No one in the West has reached *Nirvana* through uniting mathematics and music yet. These are only tendencies that point to this glorious ecstasy, and which can be observed in figures such as Wittgenstein or Schönberg. For now, the Western scene still conserves, at least in appearance, its traditional character of the affirmation of life and of the individuality of the mind. At least on the surface, the West continues to be Positivist. A very

attentive observer could, however, discover the tendency toward dissolution and salvation through the annihilation of the mind, therefore, toward mysticism, within several manifestations of this tired civilization. If I drew attention to this tendency in the fields of mathematics and music, it is because I consider both these fields to be fundamental for the mind because they are fundamental for language.

8.1.2.4. The formal and experiential aspects of language, when synoptically re-united in the union between logical analysis and musical creation, are the Western equivalent of *Nirvana*. The first step in the path of the Western Lord Buddha, is the mathematical equation and musical harmony, because both lead to Being-Knowing-Happiness (*Sat-chit-ānanda*). The mathematicians who play the violin and the composers who calculate the vibrations of their electronically produced sounds are our *Boddhisatvas*. The religiosity that these activities provoke, which is a faithless religiosity, is the religiosity of Buddhism. And the silence that shall follow this religiosity, this silence that shall cover our civilization like a mortuary shroud, shall be the Buddha's silence. In this sense, Western civilization is on the cusp of definitively realizing its project. This project is contained within the languages that inform the Western mentality. The two most perfect products of these languages, the most perfect realizations of the Western project, are mathematics and music, and, once re-united, they shall form perfection and the end of the West. After this, there can only come sloth and sadness.

8.1.2.5. This book is being written in Brazil, a peripheral territory of the West. The rebelliousness against the inexorability of the end that is close, in the form of a Western type of Buddhism, is, perhaps, the fruit of this borderline situation of Brazilian society. We, in Brazil, feel, perhaps with greater clarity, the catastrophe of this impending *Nirvana*. When I spoke of nationalism, I already pointed to certain tendencies that seem to indicate an independent development in this peripheral society. I said that nationalism (which is here

a product of hunger) shall soon be substituted by a stage of gluttony. However, I said that this gluttony already seems to want to overcome itself in a different direction than the path followed by this book. Sadness and sloth are fundamental traits of the Brazilian society. Every effort of Brazilian thought is directed toward the overcoming of these traits. A new mentality is forming. And this new mentality is what guarantees that this book continues to be written, even though the author profoundly feels the futility of it all.

8.1.2.6. Since we are in Brazil, bathed by the Camusian atmosphere of the “*quand-même*,” by the atmosphere of the rebelliousness against the inexorable realization of our project, articulated by Vicente Ferreira da Silva, we continue to speak and write, as if to conjure up and thus avoid the *Nirvana*. If we could burn our tongue like Moses, maybe we could be silent, just as Europe shall fall silent. In its “development,” Europe has almost entirely run the course of progress toward Hell. It has already understood that to speak leads to falling silent; that the truth is the geometric place of all lies; that the net of thought must be withdrawn; that enough is enough; that the moment of rest has come; the moment of sloth, so well illustrated by a despondent youth that was born tired; the moment of sadness so well illustrated by the dances and gestures of this youth. The moment of annihilation has come. In Brazil we are “underdeveloped.” We still think and live a little. May God have mercy upon our souls.

8.2. The Ivory Tower

The murder of God and the Devil, which we perpetrated in our pride, has revealed itself as the suicide of our Will. In place of the golden throne, from which our creative Will was going to govern the illusory world, an ivory tower rises, chiseled and decorated with grotesque figures, from which the specter of the decapitated mind spies, nebulously and vaguely, the nebulous and vague specter of the decapitated world. The progress of

the evolution of the mind has resulted in a macabre dance. It started from the lustful desire to delight in reality. The mind did not achieve the delight in reality and annihilated itself in the attempt. This is the end of the mind and the end of the diabolic path that we are describing. However, as with everything that has to do with the Devil, this end has two faces and is ambivalent. The deepest hell is also the highest. Sloth and sadness are also wise and sophisticated. Therefore, let us abandon the naivety of this empty world; let us shake off the dust of the valley of tears from our feet, and let us climb the tower of wisdom, resignation, and calm.

8.2.0.1. Let us dedicate ourselves to the peace of the kingdom of shadows. Let us enter the edifice of the noble philosophical systems with a decapitated spirit, that is, without any faith in them. The words of our great thinkers, of the wise ones of our tradition, must not be accepted with faith, but with disengaged calm. It is only in this atmosphere that the ivory tower of the history of philosophy condenses out of the fog of words. This is the true spirit of philosophy. This is the true attitude of wisdom. We must not philosophize with thirst for knowledge, or with thirst for enlightenment, or with thirst for happiness. We must not philosophize with thirst. We must do it in resignation. If we disturb philosophy with impetuous questions, as wrath does, or if we ask her to free us from illusion, as pride does, we shall be buried under an avalanche of contradictory answers, or the cold and chilling air of its disinterested silence shall freeze us. We must not consider philosophy as our master. We must not ask her for any teachings. Nor should we consider her as our mother. We must not ask her for any nourishment. We must surrender ourselves to her and ask for nothing. We must deliver ourselves to her so that she can annihilate us. Then, she shall smile at us, very sadly. For the wrathful and proud minds, philosophy is an instrument of knowledge, or an instrument of power, therefore, a mere servant. Wrath and pride degrade philosophy. This is why philosophy hides its face and refuses to yield its miraculous gifts. For the sad and slothful mind,

philosophy is the ultimate port. It is in philosophy that the mind dies. This is why sacred philosophy opens its arms to this mind, in order to annihilate it in her warm and merciful embrace. The mind that is thirsty for knowledge, or a mind that is thirsty for power, the mind that refuses to die, is a mind that cannot comprehend the essence of philosophy. This mind does not comprehend the greatness of the philosophers of yesterday and today. That which those wise thinkers taught (thus this mind will think), has either already been disproved, or is lacking meaning. This mind does not comprehend that it is not about what the philosophers say, but how they say it; that the essence of philosophy does not reside in its enunciations, but in its climate. We sought to capture a slight aroma of this mysterious philosophical climate, when we discussed the union between music and mathematics as a method for annihilation. The climate of philosophy is at the same time high and dry. It is a sad and slothful climate (if seen from wrath and pride, and also, perhaps, if seen from faith and naivety), but if seen from within, if seen by the authentically philosophical mind, it is then a climate of calm and of the smile. At the top of the ivory tower reigns peace and disengagement, but it is a somewhat sinister peace, which reigns at these heights. This is the result of the total unreality of all philosophical problems. And the smile that illuminates the face of philosophy is the smile of irony, which is the result of the fundamental conviction that no philosophical problem can be solved. It is all a game. The philosophical activity is sadly ludic. Philosophy's modesty and resignation are poses that are part of a sad game. Philosophy's open mind is the sign of a dead mind. The lack of any preconception is a sign of a lack of concepts.

8.2.0.2. The philosophical climate is the essence of philosophy. Philosophy exists in order to create this climate. This climate is what unites and defines philosophy as a whole. Philosophy apparently consists of enunciations that are not only contradictory, but also mutually irrelevant. The unity is in the climate. However, there is a series of processes within the

philosophical phenomenon; there is a "history of philosophy." These are stages of authenticity of the mind that dies. Enunciations such as "I think, therefore I am," or "I am, but do I not think," or "I think, but I am not" occur in the first, but still inauthentic stage, in the sense that it is almost alive. However, these enunciations should not be taken literally. They are the first moves in the game of philosophy. They create entirely unreal and unsolvable problems, so that the game of philosophy may alternatively confirm or refute them. Enunciations keep the wheel of philosophy spinning. The second stage of philosophy is characterized by questions such as "do I exist?" These questions are inauthentic in the sense that they do not wait for an answer. But they are authentic in the sense that they articulate a deep conviction of the inexistence of any answer. They are the ritual articulation of philosophy's feast. At this stage, philosophy is the dead mind's feast; it is the mind's funereal dance; it is the *missa solemnis* and requiem for the mind's death. Philosophy is the feast of annihilation. The mind moves, in this macabre dance, as the specter that it is, as if it were alive. It repeats the movements that had characterized it in life, but it repeats them ritualistically. It formulates the same type of questions that the mind formulated in life, and seeks the same questions that the live mind sought. The mistake of wrath and pride was precisely this: they did not comprehend that these were ritual gestures, and that the philosophical mind is a specter and a skeleton of the mind that dances. The philosophical mind is no longer of this world, and it dances atop the tower. Its festive gestures, its raised finger, its head oscillating in doubt, its wise smile, and its piously joined hands, are rituals and shadows. Only philosophy's rigor is authentic. It is the rigor of death. Whoever observes philosophy from the outside, may believe that something real is happening atop the ivory tower, and may expect this happening to result in something. The observer is mistaken. There is nothing happening, and the game with shadows shall result in nothing. But he who is in the tower, and who participates in the dance (the sad and slothful mind), shall

feel the sweet and inebriating aroma of decomposition, which hovers over the whole edifice. This aroma adheres to every philosophical work, and is the symptom of its authenticity. That is where the attraction of philosophy resides. This decadent aroma is philosophy's existential justification. The greatness of philosophy is this: for the layman, philosophy is a discipline of thought that seeks answers. For the initiated, philosophy is the donor of the calming perfume of an overcome reality. Philosophy is the existential proof of the mind's death, and the existential refutation of immortality.

8.2.0.3. The ivory tower, where the specter of the mind lives, consists of steps of logic, richly ornamented and covered with little silver bells that ring ethically. The smiling specter climbs up, serenely inductive, the steps of logic, in order to climb down, serenely deductive, whenever the ritual demands it. In this gracious passage, the bells of ethical teachings ring subtly, and the crowd of laymen at the foot of the tower receives the message, respectfully. Tired, and with semi-opened eyes, the philosophical specter watches this formless crowd, and thus it disappears before his vague gaze. And when the philosopher directs his gaze to the ivory tower where he lives, this tower dissolves into the fog of nothingness. The specter hovers above the clouds like the sage of Chinese paintings. He extends his tired arm into the clouds, and these form according to the movement of his arm. And when he looks at himself, he also becomes a cloud, floating among the other clouds, and is formed by them. No wind blows in this nebulous region, and no wind can give consistency to the clouds. Winds, if there are any, are phenomena of faith, and would not be recognized as such by the specter, even if they reached him. The last vestiges of faith died when the mind died. Philosophy is a flower in a vase of precious crystal. The meadow, from which the flower was cut, already lies forgotten, it no longer exists. Sometimes, a slight tremor seems to want to take possession of the flower; a slight heliotropic tendency; a movement that seems to seek the sun of faith animates the plant. At this moment, those ritual

gestures of philosophy called “faith in philosophy” emerge. But sadly, they are only smiling gestures; they are shadows. At these moments, altars and churches are erected upon the Elysian Fields of philosophy. The philosophical specters ritualistically bow before the statues of divinities, which seem to be the same as the ones that are adored outside the tower. However, these statues are also specters. The philosophical dance upon Hell’s stage copies, during these instances, the gestures of religion. That is when Heaven and Hell become indistinguishable.

8.2.1. Honesty

The mind leans toward sadness, and sloth seeks philosophy’s protecting hand. And philosophy introduces the novice to its sacred feast. This introduction is only an initiation to the secrets of philosophy. The great mystery that hides within the nucleus of the tower is the overcoming of immortality. The tired mind cries for death. Exhausted by the struggle between God and the Devil, entirely devastated by the acrobatics of pride, the sad and slothful mind asks to be annihilated. Philosophy takes the mind by the hand, and leads it, slowly and festively, through every corner of the tower, but always climbing, always seeking the tower’s culminating point, which is annihilation. The mind delivers itself to philosophy, and allows her to lead it. Without any preconceptions and without a program, the mind follows the path of the spirit of philosophy. This lack of preconceptions in the program characterizes the path of the mind surrendered to philosophy. The authenticity of the mind resides in this. The mind does not want to reach any point, it only wants to die, and that is all. All of the other mental activities, the activities of the minds that are still living, have some defined aim. Philosophy’s path is the only path of authenticity, because it is not deliberate. It is the only path toward death, and therefore accepts death. All the other activities of the mind are forms of inauthenticity, because they are escapes from death, and because they are impelled by the desire to avoid death. All other activities,

since they are activities of a living mind, have the stigma of the escape. Science and religion, art and engagement in society, are all hypocrisy, because they do not admit to being escapes from death. All of this seems and pretends to have a positive aim, when the fundamental and deliberate aim is negative: to avoid death. Everything, except philosophy, is lying pretentiousness. Only philosophy is authentic and modest. Philosophy admits that it has no aim, and advances without a deliberate program toward death. Philosophy admits this to the crowd outside the tower. And to itself, philosophy still admits that the very path it follows is pure gesture; a pure ritual calling of death. Philosophy admits that it surrendered itself passively to death, and that its apparent activity is the articulation of this passivity imposed by death. Philosophy's honesty resides in this. Philosophy admits that everything that it does is nothing but gesture. All of the other mental activities negate their inauthenticity. Philosophy admits its inauthenticity. Philosophy is honest. Life, in all of its manifestations, is an inauthentic negation of death. Philosophy alone is the affirmation of death.

8.2.1.1. This admission is the aim of the ritual of philosophy. The noble dance of philosophy's feast; that dance of specters, which initiates the mind's death, becomes ever slower and subtler, and imperceptibly leads the mind, step by step, festively, to the tower's summit, where the sadness of the heart resides, in its immobility. There, the philosophical calm reigns; the peace that was sought after for so long is finally found. From now on the mind rests. Nothing else is of interest. All suffering and every desire have died. The river of thoughts no longer flows. All noise has ceased. The current of language has stopped. The mind has entered, with its head held high and with open eyes, dignified and honest, into the bosom of death. Serene and calm it has chosen death. This is the aim of philosophy: a dignified and honest suicide.

8.2.2. The Purification Bath

Not everyone who penetrates philosophy's edifice can nurture the hope to reach this aim, this holiest point in the tower. It is necessary to go through the cathartic bath, to purify one's heart of everything that is opposed to death. The last vestiges of lust must be eliminated, since these tend to adhere obstinately. The ultimate residue of pride must be dissolved; since it was pride that has only recently dominated the mind. The last tenuous and fragile threads, which unite the mind to society, must be cut. The last remembrance of wrath, in the shape of curiosity, must be defeated. Now the mind is empty and may advance into philosophy. But the mind is a very complex formation. In it there are dark corners and places in which unsuspected detritus of days gone by may be hiding. It is also necessary to search these corners. It is philosophy's duty to search all of these corners and purify them. This is the scorched earth technique. What God and the Devil have forgotten to liquidate, must be liquidated by philosophy. Thus, philosophy finds, in unsuspected corners, the last remnants of faith and love, which hid there in order to wait for the struggle to end. The mind had already forgotten all about them. They must have hidden within immemorial times, times that initiated the feud between lust and inhibition, and were not discovered by any of the sins. It is sadness that discovers them.

8.2.2.1. As the sad mind discovers faith and love within itself, it cannot suppress a slight smile. So this modest flora stood through the violent struggle that went through the mind? The violent waves of lust, the burning fireworks of wrath, and the devouring act of gluttony did not destroy it? The gelid wind of envy and greed, and the contortions of pride did not extirpate it? Could it be that the modest and serene climate of sadness will end with it? The climatic extremes of all the other sins do not seem to have damaged this weed. On the contrary, it seems that within these climates, this flora continues to spread through the corners, even if the mind did not notice it. As it

contemplates this terrestrial vegetation, the sadness of the heart becomes a little sentimental and reminiscent. This vegetation evokes the mind's naive childhood. But it is necessary to extirpate it, as it is obviously a weed. Faith and love obviously obstruct the mind's suicide. They must be eliminated. The mind wants peace and quiet. It needs to uproot these plants from its Self. But the resistance of these little plants is surprising. Where do they come from? Which wind blew their seeds into the mind? This is an exotic flora. It could not have sprung from within the mind. It does not fit in the mind. It cannot adapt to the mind. It was a grave mistake of the mind to have forgotten them. They were meant to have been extirpated already during the phase of lust, when they fooled the mind. It is necessary to quickly fix this error. We do not need so much pomp and ceremony – out with this treacherous vegetation!

8.2.2.2. Now the weeds have been extirpated. Faith and love have been eliminated. They had very deep and long roots, although very fine. The mind suffered a slight shock as they were eliminated. But it should not waste its time with similar petty things. Now it has to climb, serenely and with dignity, toward peace and death. The mind is now empty. The mind is nothing. It can finally be silent. The wings of silence envelop the tired heart and cover, mercifully, the open wounds that were caused by the claws of Good and Evil in their terrible struggle. In covering these dark outgrowths, every spasm relaxes, every opposition dissolves, and every tension is subdued. Thoughts spin, subtly and slowly, only to then dilute. Feelings flow, weak and fine, only to then dry up. The Will moves, imperceptibly, and rests. The world and the Self fall and disappear, like the petals of a wilting flower. The mind dives into oblivion.

8.2.3. Let Us Not Speak About That

This is death. This is the aim of everything. This is peace and calm. However, Western tradition insists that this is the Devil's victory. This is the deepest Hell. Western tradition

insists that death is one of the Devil's illusions. It insists that the overcoming of the Devil is precisely the overcoming of death; that God created the immortal mind, and that it can be saved for eternal life, if it overcomes the Devil. And the whole of Western tradition is a violent affirmation of death's age. The West shouts, Death does not exist! Our religion, science, and art affirm this with loud cries. Death does not exist and the Devil does not exist. And what about this *Nirvana* of philosophical calmness, of the noble suicide, does this not exist? Western tradition answers: let us not speak about that. To speak of death is to provoke it. To speak of the Devil is to paint him upon a wall. How inauthentic the West is, when our path has clearly demonstrated that nothing exists except the Devil and death. If everything exists for death. If everything is absurd. How could we be quiet about that and speak about the rest? Philosophy, through its most recent current, Existentialism, finally opens its mouth in order to proclaim it.

8.2.3.1. Asian tradition diverges from ours. Its attitude in relation to death diverges from ours. It affirms somewhat like us, that death does not exist, but it laments this fact. That is why we cannot comprehend the terms and enunciations that this tradition, which diverges from ours, articulates. These terms and enunciations, when translated to our languages, suffer a complete reversal of meaning. They have a different meaning, because they approach death in a different manner. It is necessary to turn these terms inside out, if we want to grasp something of their meaning. Our "Heaven," and "eternal life," means "Hell" in the East, that is, the stage of the impossibility of death. The term "*Nirvana*" from the East means our "Hell," that is, definitive death. Our term "God," which is eternal life, means "Devil" in the East. The term "Buddha," which is definitive calm, means our "Devil." The West runs, desperately, from death. The East runs, equally desperately, from life. Let us cast, before we end this book, a gaze upon these different types of fugues. Perhaps this contemplation will shed some light upon the situation in which we find ourselves.

8.3. Inversion

The struggle between God and the Devil, which is the theme of this book, was described in Western terms, and should be reformulated in order to adapt itself to Buddhism. We tacitly presumed that the Divinity is reality, and that the mind, as it came into contact with reality, would become real and escape death. And we presumed that the Devil was an illusion and an enemy of reality, and that his path, the path of the sins, was a progressive alienation from reality. So we deliberately dove into death, once we discovered that there is no reality, therefore no salvation, and that everything is absurd. The ability to feel reality and to come into contact with it, we called "faith," and the loss of this ability, as a consequence of enlightenment, we called "despair." A Buddhist would have described the scene differently. He would say that our mind's attempt to establish contact with reality is the work of the Devil; that our mind is the work of the Devil; that which we call "faith" is the work of the Devil; that all of this is a type of thirst, and what an absurd thirst, because the more one drinks, the thirstier one becomes; that to negate reality is Divine; that to affirm illusion is Divine; that the search for definitive death and annihilation is the Divine path; that God is annihilation; that which we call "sin" is a somewhat confusing way of describing the path toward salvation, therefore, the path toward God; that which we call "faith" is the Devil's path, because it is the method to affirm the immortality of the mind; that which we call "despair" is an aspect of happiness; that happiness is something negative, or the overcoming of thirst; that happiness is the experience of annihilation; that Heaven is nothingness; that what we call "Heaven" is suffering; and that what we call "Hell" is *Nirvana*.

8.3.0.1. The situation, as described by the Buddhist, is fundamentally the same as the one described in this book, it does not differ in its basic lines. However, the Buddhist's aim is the opposite. The Buddhist seeks (to formulate his method with our terms) to lose faith, to negate God, and to reach,

thanks to the sins (and more specifically, thanks to sloth and sadness), the most profound hell. What is remarkable in all of this is that this aim of Buddhism, which for us seems so easily reachable, and against which we struggled throughout the book and throughout life, seems so arduous from the Buddhist's perspective. For us, the fall to Hell is an automatic thing; it does not require effort. The path to Hell becomes terrible because we resist the Devil at every step. But the Buddhist tells us a different story. We dread death, which can reach us at any moment, and we struggle for our immortality. The Buddhist dreads that dying is not enough, because the Devil instantly re-vivifies the mind and makes it be reborn and suffer again. We face nothingness at every step, ready to be swallowed. The Buddhist seeks nothingness, and there is always some illusion to block the way. The Devil seeks to annihilate us in every way. The Devil seeks to avoid the Buddhist's annihilation in every way. The Devil seeks to break our faith in any reality. The Devil seeks to generate faith in any reality within the mind of the Buddhist.

8.3.0.2. Western tradition proclaims the victory of the Divine. In the end, the Devil shall be defeated and pure Being shall emerge; pure reality. Every manifestation of the West is a variation of this theme, variations more or less infiltrated by the Devil. Eastern tradition proclaims nothingness. Every manifestation of the East is a variation on the theme of nothingness. How can this inversion of values be explained? How can it be interpreted? And how can it be explained that it is so difficult to reach nothingness, just as it is to reach reality? How is it possible to distinguish, from now on, between both projects, after a brief visit to the East? How can we distinguish between the silence of St. Thomas Aquinas and the silence of the Buddha? How can we distinguish between God and the Devil?

8.3.0.3. This is exactly what the Church intends to avoid, this comparison between Being and nothingness, between Heaven and Hell. The aim is far more profound than what we had imagined. The suicide of the mind is impossible. The Devil's

aim is impossible, as impossible as the Divine aim. Both are opposed and yet indistinguishable. It is impossible to sustain life, and it is impossible to sustain death. It is impossible to live and it is impossible to die. And here is the last conclusion from the experience of every thought: the terrible struggle that went on within our mind, and which this book attempted to describe in the best way it could, this struggle, makes life and death impossible. In the end, who is it that fights for our mind, and what is our mind? We do not know, but we suffer. We suffer terribly, because sadness and sloth came to nothing; came to nothingness. The struggle continues. It continues hopelessly and without something to struggle with. It continues between two indistinguishable contenders. It continues without rest and purpose, and it continues without the possibility of an end. Let us look at the last stage of this struggle. Let us hit the bronze gong, and let us watch the last act.

8.4. The Bronze Gong

The path of our mind, the path of our life, the path of this book, was therefore, unknowingly and without wanting to know it, one among the several paths of the Buddha. We were Buddhists in a Western sense, therefore in a much more immediate sense than those pseudo Buddhists who dedicate themselves to Zen Buddhism in the West. And we almost reached *Nirvana*. How did we do it? How did we become so saintly? By practicing all sins. We are therefore, the true spiritual guides of the West. We may now proclaim it to the four corners of the world! Be lustful without inhibitions, be wrathful without limits, be proud and never humiliate yourself, become sad and you shall reach the glories of salvation, of *Nirvana*. Look at how the West progresses; it is almost at *Nirvana*. Follow its steps.

8.4.1. However, our optimistic cry serves for nothing. The sages and saints of the East cannot follow our steps. Our news is good for nothing. They meditate and re-meditate, these Eastern sages, and dissolve their minds, becoming hollow and

empty; they cannot die, they cannot stop Being; they cannot save themselves. The two contenders cannot admit it. The sages cannot relate to the progress that we reached through the sins. It was not progress. It was merely one more step inside the eternal wheel. Everything turns and turns as it always does. Everything wanders absurdly in between the impossible death and the impossible life. And the teachings that these sages have to offer us Westerners, are equally innocuous and unproductive. They seem to tell us: do as we do, be passive, systematically kill your Will, and you shall be immortal like us, since we have also not reached *Nirvana*. The only consideration that softens this situation is its supreme ridiculousness. The only reaction that our life and our suffering can provoke is to laugh out loud. Could this laughter be diabolic? But who could be diabolic at this stage?

8.4.2. Let us cast one last gaze upon the scene of the struggle. What has come into the arena of our dilacerated heart, and ready for laughter? Two twin brothers have come in. They are indistinguishable. They lock in an embrace as if to fuse with each other. Do they embrace in order to kiss, or to strangle each other? We do not know. They are both quiet. They shall never speak; it is not good to ask them. They are both laughing and we shall never know why. Are they perhaps laughing at us, or at each other? There is an aura of light around them. It is an aura of sacredness. And this aura of light, which is the luminosity of the heavens and the fires of hell, is the only light that illuminates us. This light is our source and our aim. It warms and burns us. In it, we exist and are being annihilated. This light is everything and nothing. It is the sacred light of absurdity.

8.5. Lust Once Again

The two embrace. This struggle shall never end. In it, time stops. The filmstrip of this story has torn. The projection upon the screen, which is our mind, has petrified. The image has become fixed: the image of the struggle and the embrace.

The struggle shall never end and the embrace shall never be realized. However, we cannot even say that this process is over. No one has won and no one has been defeated. We cannot even say that the drama of our minds has come to a draw. Neither God, nor the Devil has disappeared. We cannot even say if they continue to exist, or if they ever existed. We cannot even distinguish between them. The only thing left is this stage of decided indecision. Could this be the overcoming of sadness and sloth? Could this be damnation? Could this be salvation? It is no use asking. It is no use writing. Therefore we continue to write. *Scribere necesse est, vivere non est.* We are in lust once again.

9. POST SCRIPTUM

At the beginning of this book we had the courage to define the Devil. At the end of this book our courage has evaporated. At the beginning of this book we had the ill-disguised aim to annihilate the Devil. At the end of this book we almost managed (but only almost) to annihilate ourselves. At the beginning of this book we wandered with our mind in the majestic regions of the stars and galaxies. At the end of this book we sought to hide ourselves, shaking, in little corners, and in the obscure folds of our deflated mind. We have become (to speak euphemistically) a little modest. And this is the only, shall we say, “positive” result of such a grandiose start to our journey, accompanied by so many lofty promises. But we should not completely underestimate this result. It is a symptom of the situation in which Western humanity finds itself. This result is, perhaps, our destiny. Maybe the moment has come, after such grandiose journeys, to return, somewhat modestly, to the deflated mind. Maybe we have reached, at this stage of “evolution,” the moment to have a little shame? After so many triumphs of the mind, after so many discoveries and inventions, after so many conquests and glories, perhaps the time for defeat has come?

This book does not want to be defeatist. It conserved, during the entire journey, the last vestiges of hope. Hope of what? This is a futile question. However, a conviction detains our mind: it is not possible to be silent. Be it a plague or a blessing, be it a gift or a punishment, the impossibility of being silent is the symbol of continuity. The only message that this book has, therefore, is this: let us continue.

9.1. They Abound

We followed, in this book, the search for the Devil, without a preconceived course. We allowed the seaman to take us wherever the course of the river took us, and we sought not to influence him “ideologically.” This book was for us, therefore, an authentic adventure. Perhaps the reader will be able to participate in this adventure. If so, then the leaps and waterfalls that mark the way shall be forgiven. And with this observation we bid farewell to the Devil and ask him to abandon us; to look for other hunting fields. They abound.