FEAR AND TREMBLING

REPETITION

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with Introduction and Notes by

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Was It Ethically Defensible for Abraham to Conceal His Undertaking from Sarah, from Eliezer, and from Isaac?

The ethical as such is the universal; as the universal it is in turn the disclosed. The single individual, qualified as immediate, sensate, and psychical, is the hidden. Thus his ethical task is to work himself out of his hiddenness and to become disclosed in the universal. Every time he desires to remain in the hidden, he trespasses and is immersed in spiritual trial from which he can emerge only by disclosing himself.

Once again we stand at the same point. If there is no hiddenness rooted in the fact that the single individual as the single individual is higher than the universal, then Abraham’s conduct cannot be defended, for he disregarded the intermediary ethical agents. But if there is such a hiddenness, then we face the paradox, which cannot be mediated, since it is based precisely on this: the single individual as the single individual is higher than the universal, whereas the universal is in fact mediation. The Hegelian philosophy assumes no justified hiddenness, no justified incommensurability. It is, then, consistent for it to demand disclosure, but it is a little bemuddled when it wants to regard Abraham as the father of faith and to speak about faith. Faith is not the first immediacy but a later immediacy. The first immediacy is the esthetic, and here the Hegelian philosophy certainly may very well be right. But faith is not the esthetic, or else faith has never existed because it has always existed.

It would be best at this point to consider the whole question purely esthetically and to that end enter into an esthetic inquiry, to which I invite the reader to give his entire attention momentarily, while I for my part shall adapt my comments to the subjects. The category I shall consider in more detail is the interesting, a category that especially now—since the age lives in discrimine rerum [at a turning point in history]—has become very important, for it is actually the category of the turning point. Therefore sometimes happens after one has been of it pro virili [with all one’s might], d because it grew away from one, but neither be all too greedy for it, for one thing interesting, to have an interesting life, is but a momentous privilege, which, like the world of spirit, is purchased only in Socrates was the most interesting man life the most interesting life ever led, but allotted to him by the god [Guden], and self had to acquire it, he was not a strain. To take such an existence in vain anyone who thinks more earnestly about age we frequently see examples of such more, the interesting is a border category territory between esthetics and ethics. Aamination must constantly wander into ethics, while in order to be of consequen problem with esthetic fervor and concup ethics rarely involves itself with a quest son must be that the system has no room one could do it in monographs, and, m not wish to go into detail, it could be achieve the same result—that is, if one his power, for one or two predicates can Shoul there not be room in the system f

In his immortal Poetics (Chapter 11), μέν οὖν τοῦ μυθοῦ μέρη, περὶ τοῦ άναγνώσις [two parts of the plot, thecovery (recognition), are on matters of course, only the second element that co γνώσις, recognition. Whenever and w to speak of recognition, there is eo ipso. Just as the recognition is the resolving, in dramatic life, so hiddenness is the ten What Aristotle develops earlier in the sa
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As the universal it is in an individual, qualified as individual, the hidden. Thus his ethical hiddenness and to become him desires to remain in immersed in spiritual trial by disclosing himself. The point. If there is no hiddenness the single individual as the the universal, then Abraham, for he disregarded the point of there is such a hiddenness, cannot be mediated, since individual as the single universal, whereas the universal an philosophy assumes no incommensurability. It is, disclosure, but it is a little hard Abraham as the father. Faith is not the first imm. The first immediacy is the philosophy certainly may very esthetic, or else faith has existed.

To consider the whole quest, at end enter into an esthetic der to give his entire attention part shall adapt my company I shall consider in more that especially now—since at a turning point in history, for it is actually the category of the turning point. Therefore one should not, as sometimes happens after one has been personally enamored of it pro virili [with all one's might], disdain that category because it grew away from one, but neither should a person be all too greedy for it, for one thing is sure, to become interesting, to have an interesting life, is not a handicraft task but a momentous privilege, which, like every privilege in the world of spirit, is purchased only in severe pain. Thus Socrates was the most interesting man who ever lived, his life the most interesting life ever led, but this existence was allotted to him by the gods [Guden], and inasmuch as he himself had to acquire it, he was not a stranger to trouble and pain. To take such an existence in vain is not becoming to anyone who thinks more earnestly about life, and yet in our age we frequently see examples of such an effort. Furthermore, the interesting is a border category, a con finium [border territory] between esthetics and ethics. Accordingly, this examination must constantly wander into the territory of ethics, while in order to be of consequence it must seize the problem with esthetic fervor and concupiscence. These days, ethics rarely involves itself with a question like this. The reason must be that the system has no room for it. Therefore, one could do it in monographs, and, moreover, if one did not wish to go into detail, it could be made brief and yet achieve the same result—that is, if one has the predicate in his power, for one or two predicates can betray a whole world. Should there not be room in the system for such little words?

In his immortal Poetics (Chapter 11), Aristotle says: dło w in tov mshon mep, peri tain etoi, perunytia kai anagynwias [two parts of the plot, then, peripety and discovery (recognition), are on matters of this sort]. It is, of course, only the second element that concerns me here: anagynwias, recognition. Whenever and wherever it is possible to speak of recognition, there is eo ipso a prior hiddenness. Just as the recognition is the resolving, the relaxing element in dramatic life, so hiddenness is the tension-creating factor. What Aristotle develops earlier in the same chapter with regard to the various merits of tragedy, all in relation to the
way περιπέτεια and ἄναγνώρισις carambolere [converge], as well as what he writes about the single and the double recognition, I cannot deal with here, even if tempted by its interiority and its quiet absorption, especially tempting to one who for a long time has been weary of the superficial omniscience of the survey writers. A broader comment may have its place here. In Greek tragedy, the hiddenness (and as a result of it the recognition) is an epic remnant based on a fate in which the dramatic action vanishes and in which it has its dark, mysterious source. Because of this, a Greek tragedy has an effect similar to that of a marble statue, which lacks the potency of the eye. Greek tragedy is blind. Therefore it takes a certain abstraction if one is to be influenced by it properly. A son murders his father, but not until later does he learn that it was his father. A sister is going to sacrifice her brother but realizes it at the crucial moment. Our reflecting age is not very concerned with this kind of tragedy. Modern drama has abandoned destiny, has dramatically emancipated itself, is sighted, gazes inward into itself, absorbs destiny in its dramatic consciousness. Hiddenness and disclosure, then, are the hero's free act, for which he is responsible.

Recognition and hiddenness are also an essential element of modern drama. It would belabor the point to give examples. I am sufficiently courteous to assume that everyone in our age—which is so esthetically voluptuous, so potent and inflamed, that it conceives just as easily as the partridge that, according to Aristotle, needs only to hear the cock's voice or its flight over her head—I assume that everyone who merely hears the word "hiddenness" will easily be able to shake a dozen novels and comedies out of his sleeve. I can therefore be brief and promptly suggest a rather broad observation. If anyone in playing the hiding game, and thereby providing the piece with dramatic yeast, hides some nonsense, we get a comedy; but if he is related to the idea, he may come close to being a tragic hero. To cite just one example of the comic: a man puts on makeup and wears a wig. The same man is eager to make a hit with the fair sex and is sure of success with the aid of the makeup. Together irresistible. He cannot be happy. Now comes the point to admit to his deception: he reveals himself as a person not thereby lose the belief for which esthetics alsoCLEAK of knowledge is no friend. him to laughter. This illus suggest what I mean, the interest for this investigation.

The road I must take through esthetics and esthetics and the par hiddenness and the p

A few examples. A girl without the pair's having each other as yet. Her (she may also be motivated by her parents, keeps her lover unhappy, and no others.)—A young swain, the object of his longing word will compromise, stroy a whole family. He "The girl must never find happiness with another; sons, both of whom are loved, are also hidden markable higher unity of hiddenness is a free act, to esthetics. But esthetics of knowledge that knowl manager. What does it mean to us the lovers. By a coincident, the prospective marriage gets a solemn decision. There is other and also a place am
bolere [converge], as: and the double rec-if tempted by its initially tempting to one if the superficial om-rader comment may he hiddenness (and as: remnant based on a shes and in which it use of this, a Greek marble statue, which gedy is blind. There-is to be influenced by; but not until later sister is going to sacr-cruel moment. Our this kind of tragedy. niny, has dramatically ward into itself, ab-
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ume that everyone in obous, so potent and as the partridge that, hear the cock’s voice everyone who merely be able to shake a sleeve. I can therefore broad observation, and thereby providing some nonsense, we get a he may come close example of the comic: nig. The same man is and is sure of success with the aid of the makeup and wig, which make him altogether irresistible. He catches a girl and is at the pinnacle of happiness. Now comes the point of the story. If he is able to admit to his deception, does he not lose all his charm? If he reveals himself as a plain, yes, even bald male, does he not thereby lose the beloved? The hiddenness is his free act, for which esthetics also makes him responsible. This branch of knowledge is no friend of bald hypocrites and abandons him to laughter. This illustration may be sufficiently merely to suggest what I mean; the comic cannot be the subject of interest for this investigation.

The road I must take is dialectically to pursue hiddenness through esthetics and ethics, for the point is to have esthetic hiddenness and the paradox appear in their absolute dissimi-larity.

A few examples. A girl is secretly in love with someone without the pair’s having definitively confessed their love to each other as yet. Her parents force her to marry another (she may also be motivated by daughterly devotion); she obeys her parents, keeps her love hidden “in order not to make the other unhappy, and no one will ever find out what she suf-fers.” —A young swain has but to say one word to possess the object of his longings and restless dreams. But this little word of compromise, indeed, perhaps (who knows?) destry a whole family. He nobly decides to remain in hiding: “The girl must never find out, in order that she perhaps may find happiness with another.” What a pity that here two persons, both of whom are hidden from their respective beloveds, are also hidden from each other; otherwise, a remark able higher unity could be brought about here. —Their hiddenness is a free act, for which they are responsible also to esthetics. But esthetics is a courteous and sentimental branch of knowledge that knows more ways out than any pawnshop manager. What does it do? It makes everything possible for the lovers. By a coincidence, the respective partners in the prospective marriage get a hint of the other party’s magnan-imous decision. There is an explanation, the lovers get each other and also a place among authentic heroes, for even though
they never had time to sleep on their heroic resolution, esthetics regards them as having bravely battled their intention through over a period of many years. As a matter of fact, esthetics is not much concerned about time; be it jest or earnestness, time goes just as fast for esthetics.

But esthetics knows nothing either of that coincidence or of that sentimental way to seek comfort from any other attitude, for the women he ought to as possible. On the other hand, hero also has to be tried in the tears of Clytemnestra and Iphigenia. It has a way out, readiness to disclose everything is in order.

But esthetics has no coincidence disposal. The esthetic idea cannot be implemented in actuality. For disclosure. The tragic hero demands in that he himself, not prey to denounce Iphigenia's fate to her. If hero is ethics' beloved son in which he remains silent, it may be because it easier for others, but it may makes it easier for himself. But if he remains silent, he takes a responsibility, inasmuch that may come from others, but he always expresses the requires courage, but part of this avoid any argument. Now it is dreadful argumentum ad hominem opponent's personal circumstance by nothing may well be moved. Iphigenia is permitted to weep; in admitted, as was Jepthah's daughter not in solitude but at her father's "which is tears alone," and to olive branch around his knees.

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now come to the tragic hero and for a moment would like to consider Iphigenia in Aulis by Euripides. Agamemnon is about to sacrifice Iphigenia. Esthetics demands silence of Agamemnon, inasmuch as it would be unworthy of the hero to seek comfort from any other person, just as out of solicitude for the women he ought to hide it from them as long as possible. On the other hand, in order to be a hero, the hero also has to be tried in the dreadful spiritual trial that the tears of Clytemnestra and Iphigenia will cause. What does esthetics do? It has a way out; it has the old servant\(^{12}\) in readiness to disclose everything to Clytemnestra. Now everything is in order.

But ethics has no coincidence and no old servant at its disposal. The esthetic idea contradicts itself as soon as it is to be implemented in actuality. For this reason ethics demands disclosure. The tragic hero demonstrates his ethical courage in that he himself, not prey to any esthetic illusion, announces Iphigenia's fate to her. If he does that, then the tragic hero is ethics' beloved son in whom it is well pleased.\(^{12}\) If he remains silent, it may be because he believes he thereby makes it easier for others, but it may also be because he thereby makes it easier for himself. But he knows he is free of that. If he remains silent, he takes a responsibility upon himself as the single individual, inasmuch as he disregards any argument that may come from outside. As the tragic hero he cannot do this, because ethics loves him for the very reason that he always expresses the universal. His heroic deed requires courage, but part of this courage is that he does not avoid any argument. Now it is certainly true that tears are a dreadful argumentum ad hominem [argumentation based on the opponent's personal circumstances], and one who is touched by nothing may well be moved by tears. In the play, Iphigenia is permitted to weep; in real life, she ought to be permitted, as was Jephthah's daughter,\(^{13}\) to weep for two months, not in solitude but at her father's feet, and to use all her art, "which is tears alone," and to entwine herself instead of an olive branch around his knees (see v. 1224).\(^{14}\)

Esthetics demanded disclosure but aided itself with a co-
incidence; ethics demanded disclosure and found its fulfillment in the tragic hero.

Despite the rigorousness with which ethics demands disclosure, it cannot be denied that secrecy and silence make a man great simply because they are qualifications of inwardness. When Amor leaves Psyche, he says to her: You will bear a child who will be divine if you remain silent but will be human if you betray the secret. The tragic hero, who is the favorite of ethics, is the purely human; him I can understand, and all his undertakings are out in the open. If I go further, I always run up against the paradox, the divine and the demonic, for silence is both. Silence is the demon's trap, and the more that is silenced, the more terrible the demon, but silence is also divinity's mutual understanding with the single individual.

Before proceeding to the story of Abraham, I shall summon a pair of poetic individualities. With the power of dialectics, I shall hold them at the apex, and by disciplining them with despair, I may prevent them from standing still, so that in their anxiety they may possibly be able to bring something or other to light.

* These movements and positions presumably may still become subjects for esthetic treatment, but to what extent faith and the whole life of faith can be that, I leave undecided here. Inasmuch, however, as it is always a joy for me to thank anyone to whom lowe something, I shall only thank Lessing for the several hints about a Christian drama found in his Hamburgische Dramaturgie. But he fixed his eyes on the purely divine side of this life (the consummate victory), and therefore he had doubts; perhaps he would have formed another judgment if he had been more aware of the purely human side. (Theologia via torum [theology of wayfarers]?) What he says is undeniably very brief, somewhat evasive, but since I am always very happy when I can find an opportunity to include Lessing, I promptly do so. Lessing was not only one of the most comprehensive minds Germany has had, he not only displayed an extremely rare precision in his knowledge, which enables one to rely on him and his autopsies without fear of being taken in by loose, undocumented quotations, half-understood phrases picked up in unreliable compendiums, or of being disoriented by a stupid trumpeting of something new that the ancients have presented far better—but Lessing also had a most uncommon gift of explaining what he himself had understood. With that he stopped; in our day people go further and explain more than they themselves have understood.

In his Politics, Aristotle tells of the disturbance in Delphi that grew out of the family venge, the family places a temple vessel as a temple priest, and its origin in his marriage, such as the crucifix moment when he comes to a married. More than this I do not think could hardly come to pass with make use of it, he no doubt co theo. Is it not dreadful that the exile in life is now deprived of this not give the lie to the old sa in heaven? Generally, it is all the finitude that, like evil spirits, we love has heaven on its side and triumphs over all enemies. Here rates what heaven itself, after all would have suspected this? Less a moment ago she was sitting in and the lovely maidens had so could feel justified before the was impossible for them to become was impossible for her to be no her room and was transformed every feminine art available war worthy one. Yet one thing was maidens had not dreamed of—a and yet more concealing veil thaens had enveloped her, a bridal knew anything about or could the bride did not understand he.

* According to Aristotle, the historic venge, the family places a temple vessel is condemned as a temple thief. But the not whether the family is ingenious or gains ideal significance only to the ex of the hero. Moreover, it is fateful enough trying to avoid it by not marrying and the divine in a double manner—first by being condemned as a temple thief.
found its fulfillment in ethics demands dignity and silence make a calamity to inwardness. A vatic to her: You will remain silent but will be the tragic hero, who is a man; him I can understand in the open. If I go paradox, the divine and terrible the demon, understanding with the Abraham, I shall sum-

With the power of discipline, and by disciplining him from standing still, possibly be able to bring

may still become subjects and the whole life of faith, however, as it is always a nothing, I shall only thank to the purely divine side of this doubts; perhaps he would have more aware of the purely pharisees]. What he says is I am always very happy of. Les-

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In his Politics, Aristotle tells a story about a political disturbance in Delphi that grew out of a marriage affair. The bridegroom, to whom the augurs prophesied a calamity that would have its origin in his marriage, suddenly changes his plans at the crucial moment when he comes to get his bride—he refuses to be married. More than this I do not need.* In Delphi this event could hardly come to pass without tears. If a poet were to make use of it, he no doubt could safely count on sympathy. Is it not dreadful that the love that so often was an exile in life is now deprived of heaven's aid as well? Does this not give the lie to the old saying that marriages are made in heaven? Generally, it is all the troubles and difficulties of finitude that, like evil spirits, want to separate the lovers, but love has heaven on its side and therefore this holy alliance triumphs over all enemies. Here it is heaven itself that separates what heaven itself, after all, has brought together. Who would have suspected this? Least of all the young bride. Just a moment ago she was sitting in her room in all her beauty, and the lovely maidens had so carefully adorned her that they could feel justified before the whole world, that they could not merely have joy from it but also envy—yes, joy that it was impossible for them to become more envious because it was impossible for her to be more beautiful. She sat alone in her room and was transformed from beauty to beauty, for every feminine art available was used to adorn worthily the worthy one. Yet one thing was still lacking, which the young maidens had not dreamed of—a veil, a more delicate, lighter, and yet more concealing veil than the one in which the maidens had enveloped her, a bridal dress that no young maiden knew anything about or could help her with. Indeed, even the bride did not understand how to help herself. It was an

* According to Aristotle, the historical catastrophe was as follows. In revenge, the family places a temple vessel among his kitchen utensils, and he is condemned as a temple thief. But this is immaterial, for the question is not whether the family is ingenious or stupid in taking revenge. The family gains ideal significance only to the extent that it is drawn into the dialectic of the hero. Moreover, it is fatal enough that he plunges into danger while trying to avoid it by not marrying and also that he comes in contact with the divine in a double manner—first by the augurs' pronouncement and next by being condemned as a temple thief.
invisible, a friendly power, one that finds its pleasure in adorning a bride, that enveloped her in it without her knowing it, for all she saw was the bridegroom walking by on his way to the temple. She saw the door shut after him, and she became even more calm and blissful, for she knew that he now belonged to her more than ever. The door of the temple opened, he came out; she, however, dropped her eyes in maidenly modesty and did not see that his countenance was disturbed, but he saw that heaven seemed to be envious of the bride's loveliness and of his happiness. The door of the temple opened, the young maidens saw the bridegroom come out, but they did not see that his countenance was disturbed, for they were busy bringing the bride. Then she advanced in all her maidenly humility, and yet like a mistress surrounded by her staff of young maidens, who curtseyed to her as young girls always curtsy to a bride. Thus did she stand at the head of this beautiful throng and waited—it was only a moment, for the temple was close by—and the bridegroom came—but he walked past her door.

But here I stop; I am not a poet, and I go at things only dialectically. In the first place, note that the hero obtains that information in the crucial moment. Therefore he is unstained and unremorseful; he has not irresponsibly bound himself to the beloved. In the next place, he has the divine pronouncement before him, or, more correctly, against him; thus he is not directed by self-opinionated sagacity as fickle lovers are. That testimony, of course, makes him just as unhappy as the bride, in fact, a little more so, because he is the occasion. To be sure, it is true that the augurs predicted a disaster only for him, but the question is whether this disaster is not of such a kind that in affecting him it will also affect their marital happiness. What should he do now? (1) Should he remain silent and get married, thinking: Maybe the disaster will not happen right away, and in any case I have maintained love and have not feared to make myself unhappy; but I must remain silent, for otherwise even this brief moment is lost. This seems plausible but definitely is not, for in that case he has offended against the girl. In a sense,
he has made the girl guilty by his silence, for if she had known of the prophecy, she certainly would never have given her assent to such an alliance. Then, in his hour of distress, he will have to bear not only the disaster but also the responsibility for remaining silent and her righteous anger over his remaining silent. (2) Should he remain silent and not get married? In that case, he has to involve himself in a hoax whereby he will destroy himself in his relation to her. Esthetics perhaps would sanction this. The catastrophe could then be shaped along the lines of the actual event, except that it would eventuate in a last-moment explanation, which nevertheless would come afterwards, inasmuch as the esthetic point of view requires that he die, unless this branch of knowledge finds itself able to cancel that fated prophecy. But however noble this conduct is, it is an offense against the girl and the reality of her love. (3) Should he speak? We must not forget, of course, that our hero is too poetical for renunciation of his love to mean no more to him than a frustrated business venture. If he speaks, the whole thing becomes an unhappy love affair in the same style as Axel and Valborg. *23 They become a couple whom heaven itself sep-

* For that matter, it is possible to take another dialectical direction at this point. Heaven prophesies that his marriage will result in a disaster, so he could indeed dispense with getting married without therefore giving up the girl; he could live in a romantic alliance with her, which would be more than adequate for the lovers. This, however, implies an offense against the girl, for he is not expressing the universal in his love for her. In any case, it would be a subject for both a poet and an ethicist who wishes to champion marriage. Generally, if poetry becomes aware of the religious and of the inwardness of individuality, it will acquire far more meaningful tasks than those with which it busies itself now. Again and again we hear this story in poetry: A man is bound to one girl whom he once loved or perhaps never loved properly, for he has seen another girl who is the ideal. A man makes a mistake in life; it was the right street but the wrong house, for directly across the street on the second floor lives the ideal—this is supposed to be a subject for poetry. A lover has made a mistake, he has seen the beloved by artificial light and thought she had dark hair, but look, on close scrutiny she is a blonde—but her sister is the ideal. This is supposed to be a subject for poetry. In my opinion, any man like that is an impudent young pup who can be unbearable enough in life but ought to be hissed off stage as soon as
arates. But in the situation at hand the separation is to be regarded somewhat differently, because it, too, results from the individuals' free act. The great difficulty in the dialectics of this affair is that the disaster is supposed to strike only him. Unlike Axel and Valborg, they do not achieve a common expression for their suffering, whereas heaven separates Axel and Valborg equally because they are equally close to each other. If this were the case here, then there would have been a way out. Since heaven does not use any visible force to separate them but leaves it up to them, it is conceivable that they would decide together to defy heaven along with its disaster.

But ethics demands that he speak. His heroism, then, essentially consists in abandoning the esthetic magnanimity, which in casu [in this case], however, cannot easily be imagined to have any infusion of the vanity that is implicit in being concealed, since it certainly must be clear to him that he is making the girl unhappy. The reality of this heroism is that he had his presupposition and canceled it; for otherwise plenty of heroes could be had, especially in our day, which has developed an exceptional skill in the forgery that does the highest by leaping over what lies between.

But why this sketch, since I still get no further than the tragic hero? Because it was, after all, possible that it could throw some light on the paradox. Everything depends upon the relation in which the bridgroom stands to the augurs' pronouncement, which in one way or another will be decisive for his life. Is this pronouncement public juris [public property] or a privatissimum [private matter]? The scene is Greece; an augur's pronouncement is understandable by all. I think that the single individual not only can understand the contents lexically but is also able to understand that an augur is declaring heaven's decision to the single individual. Thus he wants to put on airs in poetry. Only passion against passion provides a poetic collision, not this hurly-burly of minuette within the same passion. In the Middle Ages, for example, when a girl, after having fallen in love, becomes convinced that earthly love is a sin and prefers a heavenly love, this is a poetic collision, and the girl is poetic, because her life is in the idea.

the augur's pronouncement is in but also to all and does not ev to the divine. He can do what he predicted will happen. He does not prediction to the divine either by do does not become the object of it. The outcome will be just as un the hero, and there is no secret decipher. If he wants to speak, he can make himself understand it is because in the capacity of wants to be higher than the un self with all sorts of fantastic idea forget this sorrow etc. But if the declared to him by an augur, if i quite privately, if it had entered to him, then we are in the pres is any at all (for my deliberation is not speak, however willing he would not enjoy his silence but this indeed would be the assurance his silence would not be due to as the single individual in an ab but to his having been placed a absolute relation to the absolute, would also be able to find in noble silence would always be the ethical. It would be altogether sometime attempt to begin wi ended—in the illusion of mag this, it would be working hard for this is the only power that its battle with the ethical. Que state her love for Essex by sig was a heroic act, even though senentment involved because he is known, he had in fact done se ing had held it back. It is said, n
and the separation is to be because it, too, results from that difficulty in the dialectics it is supposed to strike only if they do not achieve a coming, whereas heaven separates use if they are equally close to here, then there would have does not use any visible force up to them, it is conceivable to defy heaven along with speak. His heroism, then, esthetic magnanimity, ever, cannot easily be imagine vanity that is implicit in y must be clear to him that The reality of this heroism is and canceled it; for otherwise especially in our day, which ill in the forgery that does it lies between.

still get no further than the er all, possible that it could x. Everything depends upon room stands to the augurs’ way or another will be deci-
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passion against passion provides a minuta within the same passion. a girl, after having fallen in love, a sin and prefers a heavenly love, etic, because her life is in the idea.

the augur’s pronouncement is intelligible not only to the hero but also to all and does not eventuate in any private relation to the divine. He can do what he wants; whatever has been predicted will happen. He does not enter into a closer relation to the divine either by doing it or by not doing it; he does not become the object of the divine’s mercy or wrath. The outcome will be just as understandable to anyone as to the hero, and there is no secret code that only the hero can decipher. If he wants to speak, he can very well do that, for he can make himself understandable; if he wants to be silent, it is because in the capacity of being the single individual he wants to be higher than the universal, wants to delude himself with all sorts of fantastic ideas about how she will quickly forget this sorrow etc. But if the will of heaven has not been declared to him by an augur, if it had come to his knowledge quite privately, if it had entered into a purely private relation to him, then we are in the presence of the paradox, if there is any at all (for my deliberation is dilemmatic)—then he could not speak, however willing he might be to do so. Then he would not enjoy his silence but would suffer the agony, but this indeed would be the assurance that he was justified. Then his silence would not be due to his wanting to place himself as the single individual in an absolute relation to the universal but to his having been placed as the single individual in an absolute relation to the absolute. Then, as far as I can see, he would also be able to find inner peace therein, whereas his noble silence would always be disturbed by the demands of the ethical. It would be altogether desirable if esthetics would sometime attempt to begin where for so many years it has ended—in the illusion of magnanimity. As soon as it did this, it would be working hand in hand with the religious, for this is the only power that can rescue the esthetic from its battle with the ethical. Queen Elizabeth sacrificed to the state her love for Essex by signing his death decree. 24 This was a heroic act, even though there was a little personal resentment involved because he had not sent her the ring. As is known, he had in fact done so, but a spiteful lady-in-waiting had held it back. It is said, ni fallor [if I am not mistaken],
that Elizabeth learned of this and sat for ten days with one finger in her mouth, biting it and not saying one word, and thereupon she died. This would be a subject for a poet who knew how to pry secrets out of people; otherwise, it can best be used by a ballet master, with whom the poet frequently confounds himself these days.

Now I shall develop a sketch along the lines of the demonical, and for that I can use the legend about Agnes and the merman. The merman is a seducer who rises up from his hidden chasm and in wild lust seizes and breaks the innocent flower standing on the seashore in all her loveliness and with her head thoughtfully inclined to the soughing of the sea. This has been the poets' interpretation until now. Let us make a change. The merman was a seducer. He has called to Agnes and by his wheedling words has elicted what was hidden in her. In the merman she found what she was seeking, what she was searching for as she stared down to the bottom of the sea. Agnes is willing to go with him. The merman takes her in his arms. Agnes throws her arms around his neck; trusting with all her soul, she gives herself to the stronger one. He is already standing on the beach, crouching to dive out into the sea and plunge down with his booty—then Agnes looks at him once more, not fearfully, not despairingly, not proud of her good luck, not intoxicated with desire, but in absolute faith and in absolute humility, like the lowly flower she thought herself to be, and with this look she entrusts her whole destiny to him in absolute confidence. And look! The sea no longer roars, its wild voice is stilled; nature's passion, which is the merman's strength, forsakes him, and there is a deadly calm—and Agnes is still looking at him this way. Then the merman breaks down. He cannot withstand the power of innocence, his natural element is disloyal to him, and he cannot seduce Agnes. He takes her home again, he explains that he only wanted to show her how beautiful the sea is when it is calm, and Agnes believes him. Then he returns alone, and the sea is wild, but not as wild as the merman's despair. He can seduce Agnes, he can seduce a hundred Agneses, he can make any girl infatuated—but

* The legend could be treated as has seduced many girls before. He is no longer a merman, or, if who for some time now has sat-grieved. But he knows—as the legend by the love of an innocent girl, he does not dare to approach them. He has already seen her many; captured by her beauty, her quiet sadness, not wild desire. And whispering of the rushes, she spirits; she is lovelier than any guardian angel who inspires the courage, approaches Agnes, wins Agnes is not a quiet, tranquil girl; sad sighing of the waves gave her raged more violently. She wants into the infinite with the merman. She disdained his hunts, the waves froth, and plunges into the abyss with full of lust, because in this girl he tired of Agnes, but no one has mermaid who lured men with he
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sea is wild, but not as wild
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any girl infatuated—but

Agnes has won, and the merman has lost her. Only as booty
can she be his; he cannot give himself faithfully to any girl,
because he is indeed only a merman. I have taken the liberty
of changing* the merman somewhat, and essentially I have
also changed Agnes a little, for in the legend Agnes is not
entirely without guilt, since generally it is pure nonsense and
game-playing and an insult to the female sex to imagine a
seduction in which the girl is utterly, utterly, utterly inno-
cent. To modernize my idioms a bit, the Agnes of the legend
is a woman who demands the interesting, and anyone like
that can always be sure of having a merman close by, for
mermen discover this kind with half an eye and dive after
them like the shark after his prey. Thus it is very stupid to
say—or perhaps it is a rumor that a merman has helped to
circulate—that so-called culture protects a girl from seduc-
ion. No, existence is more impartial and equitable; there is
only one means, and that is innocence.

* The legend could be treated in another way as well. Even though he
has seduced many girls before, the merman is reluctant to seduce Agnes.
He is no longer a merman, or, if you please, he is a poor miserable merman
who for some time now has sat down there at the bottom of the sea and
grieved. But he knows—as the legend in fact tells us—that he can be saved
by the love of an innocent girl. But he has a bad conscience about girls and
does not dare to approach them. Then he sees Agnes. Hidden in the rushes,
he has already seen her many times wandering along the beach. He is
captured by her beauty, her quiet self-engagement, but his soul is filled with
sadness, not wild desire. And when the merman’s sighs blend with the
whispering of the rushes, he stands still and listens and loves herself in
dreams; she is lovelier than any other woman and even as beautiful as a
guardian angel who inspires the merman’s confidence. The merman takes
love, and hopes for his salvation. But
Agnes is not a quiet, tranquil girl; she enjoyed the roar of the sea, and the
sad sighing of the waves gave her pleasure only because the internal storm
raged more violently. She wants to be off and away, to storm wildly out
into the infinite with the merman, whom she loves—so she inflames the
merman. She disdained his humility and now his pride awakens. And the
sea roars and the waves froth, and the merman locks Agnes in his embrace
and plunges into the abyss with her. Never had he been so wild, never so
full of lust, because in this girl he had hoped for his salvation. Soon he grew
tired of Agnes, but no one has ever found her corpse, for she became a
mermaid who lured men with her songs.
We shall now give the merman a human consciousness and let his being a merman signify a human preexistence,\textsuperscript{31} in consequence of which his life was entrapped. There is nothing to hinder his becoming a hero, for the step he now takes is reconciling. He is saved by Agnes; the seducer is crushed, he has submitted to the power of innocence, he can never seduce again. But immediately two forces struggle over him: repentance, Agnes and repentance. If repentance alone gets him, then he is hidden; if Agnes and repentance get him, then he is disclosed.

But now if the merman is seized by repentance and he remains hidden, he certainly will make Agnes unhappy, for Agnes loved him in all her innocence; even when he seemed to her to be changed, however well he concealed it, she still thought it was true that he merely wished to show her the beautiful stillness of the sea. Meanwhile, in his passion the merman himself becomes even more unhappy, for he loved Agnes with a complexity of passions and in addition had a new guilt to bear. Now the demonic in repentance probably will explain that this is indeed his punishment, and the more it torments him the better.

If he surrenders to this demonic element, he perhaps will make another attempt to save Agnes, just as in a sense one can save a person with the aid of evil. He knows that Agnes loves him. If he could tear this love away from Agnes, then in a way she would be saved. But how? The merman is too sensible to reckon that a frank confession will arouse her loathing. Maybe he will endeavor to incite all the dark passions in her, to belittle her, to ridicule her, to make her love ludicrous, and, if possible, to arouse her pride. He will spare himself no anguish, for this is the deep contradiction in the demonic, and in a certain sense there is ever so much more good in a demoniac than in superficial people. The more selfish Agnes is, the more easily she will be deceived (for it is only the very inexperienced who think that it is easy to deceive innocence; existence is very profound, and it is easiest for the clever to fool the clever), but all the more terrible will be the merman’s sufferings. The more ingeniously he designs his deception, the less Agnes will suffer from him; she will use it will not be without effect—that is to tormenting him.

With the assistance of the demonic, if he can make Agnes happy by his silence, he can make Agnes happy by his silent, humanly speaking, to crush Agnes, for she has, therefore, a certain similarity to the merman. Thus, all the anguish the merman suffers from is the proof that his silence is justified. The one who can speak. So if he speaks, and so if he speaks, in my opinion a grandiose, perhaps few who grasp what constitutes the counter to that paradox, therefore, a certain similarity to the merman. Thus, all the anguish the merman suffers from is the proof that his silence is justified. The one who can speak.

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\footnote{Esthetics sometimes treats a similar way. The merman is saved by Agnes, a happy marriage! A happy marriage—that is to speak at the wedding. I think it would be the cloak of love over the merman, and superficial to believe that marriage is like sold in whatever condition it is when the lovers find each other the rest. If only it would see what a time for that and promptly proceeds to the end. Of all the branches of knowledge, ethology who has really loved it becomes in one never loved it is and remains a pain [dum}
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designs his deception, the less Agnes will modestly hide her sufferings from him; she will use every resource, and they will not be without effect—that is, not of displodging him but of tormenting him.

With the assistance of the demonic, therefore, the merman would be the single individual who as the single individual was higher than the universal. The demonic has the same quality as the divine, namely, that the single individual is able to enter into an absolute relation to it. This is the analogy, the counterpart to that paradox of which we speak. It has, therefore, a certain similarity that can be misleading. Thus, all the anguish the merman suffers in silence seems proof that his silence is justified. Meanwhile, there is no doubt that he can speak. So if he speaks, he can become a tragic hero, in my opinion a grandiose tragic hero. There are perhaps few who grasp what constitutes the grandeur.* He will then have the courage to divest himself of every illusion that he can make Agnes happy by his art; he will have the courage, humanly speaking, to crush Agnes. Incidentally, I would like to make just one psychological comment here. The more selfishly Agnes has been developed, the more glaring the self-deception will be. Indeed, it is not inconceivable that in real life the demonic ingenuity of a merman could not only save Agnes, humanly speaking, but could also elicit something extraordinary from her, for a demonic knows how to extort

* Esthetics sometimes treats a similar situation in its usual game-playing way. The merman is saved by Agnes, and the whole thing ends with a happy marriage! A happy marriage—that is easy enough. But if ethics were to speak at the wedding, I think it would be another matter. Esthetics throws the cloak of love over the merman, and everything is forgotten. It is also superficial to believe that marriage is like an auction, where everything is sold in whatever condition it is when the auctioneer's hammer falls. Esthetics just sees to it that the lovers find each other and does not concern itself about the rest. If only it would see what happens afterwards, but it has no time for that and promptly proceeds to slap a new pair of lovers together. Of all the branches of knowledge, esthetics is the most faithless. Anyone who has really loved it becomes in one sense unhappy, but he who has never loved it is and remains a pecus [dumb brute].
powers out of even the weakest of people, and in his own way he can be very well meaning with a person.

The merman stands at a dialectical apex. If he is rescued from the demonic in repentance, there are two possibilities. He can hold himself back, remain in hiding, but not depend upon his sagacity. Then he does not as the single individual enter into an absolute relation to the demonic, but he finds peace of mind in the counterparadox that the divine will save Agnes. (This is how the Middle Ages would make the movement, for according to its way of thinking the merman is obviously turned over to the monastery.) Or he can be saved by Agnes. This must not be interpreted to mean that by Agnes’s love he would be saved from becoming a seducer in the future (this is an esthetic rescue attempt that always evades the main point, the continuity in the merman’s life), for in that respect he is saved—he is saved insofar as he becomes disclosed. Then he marries Agnes. He must, however, take refuge in the paradox. In other words, when the single individual by his guilt has come outside the universal, he can return only by virtue of having come as the single individual into an absolute relation to the absolute. Now here I would like to make a comment that says more than has been said at any point previously. Sin is not the first immediacy; sin is a later immediacy. In sin, the single individual is already higher (in the direction of the demonic paradox) than the universal, because it is a contradiction on the part of the universal to want to demand itself from a person who lacks the conditio sine qua non [indispensable condition]. If, along with other things, philosophy were also to think that it just might enter a man’s head to want to act according to its teaching, we would get a strange kind of comedy out of it. An ethics that ignores sin is a completely futile discri-

* Up until now I have assiduously avoided any reference to the question of sin and its reality [Realtit]. The whole work is centered on Abraham, and I can still encompass him in immediate categories—that is, insofar as I can understand him. As soon as sin emerges, ethics founders precisely on repentance; for repentance is the highest ethical expression, but precisely as such it is the deepest ethical self-contradiction.

pline, but if it affirms sin, then it has Philosophy teaches that the immediate. This is true enough, but what is not true of the immediate, 33 any more than faith diate. 34

As long as I move around in these easy, but nothing of what has been sa

ham, for Abraham did not become a way of sin—on the contrary, he was a chosen one. The analogy to Abraham parent until after the single individual position where he is capable of fulfilling now the paradox repeats itself.

Therefore, I can understand the man, whereas I cannot understand pre

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pline, but if it affirms sin, then it has eo ipso exceeded itself. Philosophy teaches that the immediate should be annulled. This is true enough, but what is not true is that sin is directly the immediate, any more than faith is directly the immediate. As long as I move around in these spheres, everything is easy, but nothing of what has been said here explains Abraham. It is not the single individual by way of sin—that is, on the contrary, he was a righteous man, God’s chosen one. The analogy to Abraham will not become apparent until after the single individual has been brought to a position where he is capable of fulfilling the universal, and now the paradox repeats itself.

Therefore, I can understand the movements of the merman, whereas I cannot understand Abraham, for it is precisely by way of the paradox that the merman reaches the point of wishing to realize the universal. If he remains hidden and is initiated into all the anguish of repentance, he becomes a demoniac and as such is destroyed. If he remains hidden but does not sagaciously think that by his being tormented in the bondage of repentance he can work Agnes free, then he no doubt finds peace but is lost to this world. If he becomes disclosed, if he lets himself be saved by Agnes, then he is the greatest human being I can imagine, for it is only esthetics that thoughtlessly supposes it is praising the power of love by having the prodigal be loved by an innocent girl and thereby saved; it is only esthetics that perceives mistakenly and believes that the girl is the heroic figure instead of the merman. The merman, therefore, cannot belong to Agnes without, after having made the infinite movement of repentance, making one movement more: the movement by virtue of the absurd. He can make the movement of repentance under his own power, but he also uses absolutely all his power for it and therefore cannot possibly come back under his own power and grasp actuality again. If a person does not have sufficient passion to make either of the movements, if he skulks through life repenting a little and thinking everything will come out in the wash, then he has once and for all re-
nounced living in the idea, and in this way he can very easily achieve the highest and help others achieve it as well—that is, beguile himself and others into thinking that things happen in the world of spirit as in a game in which everything happens by chance. Then it is amusing to think how odd it is that doubt about the immortality of the soul can be so prevalent in the very age when everyone can achieve the highest, for the person who has actually made just the movement of infinity scarcely doubts. The conclusions of passion are the only dependable ones—that is, the only convincing ones. Fortunately, existence is here more affectionate and loyal than the wise assert it is, for it excludes no human being, not even the lowest; it fools no one, for in the world of spirit only he is fooled who fools himself. It is everyone's opinion—and if I may be permitted to make a judgment about it, it is also my opinion—that to enter a monastery is not the highest, but by no means do I therefore believe that everyone in our day, when no one enters the monastery, is greater than the deep and earnest souls who found rest in a monastery. How many in our time have sufficient passion to think this and then to judge themselves honestly? The very idea of being conscientious about time this way, of taking the time to scrutinize in sleepless vigilance every single secret thought, so that if a person does not always make the movement by virtue of the noblest and holiest in him, he may in anxiety and horror discover* and lure forth—if in no other way, then through anxiety—the dark emotions hiding in every human life, whereas in association with others one so easily forgets, so easily evades this, is stopped in so many ways, get the opportunity to begin afresh—this thought alone, conceived with due deference, could, I believe, chastise many a man in our day who believes he has already attained the highest. But

* Our earnest age does not believe this, and yet, oddly enough, even in the inherently more irresponsible and less reflective paganism the two authentic representatives of the Greek view of life, ἡμιαν νοεων [know yourself], each in his own way hinted that, by penetratingly concentrating on oneself, one first and foremost discovers the disposition to evil. I scarcely need to say that I am thinking of Pythagoras and Socrates.


Trembling

... and in this way he can very easily others achieve it as well—that is into thinking that things hap-
... in a game in which everything is amusing to think how odd mortality of the soul can be so when everyone can achieve the as actually made just the move-
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... have sufficient passion to think lives honestly? The very idea of the this way, of taking the time face every single secret thought, always make the movement by rest in him, he may in anxiety forth—if in no other way, then notions hiding in every human others one so easily forgets, ed in so many ways, get the this thought alone, conceived believe, chastise many a man in already attained the highest. But this, and yet, oddly enough, even in less reflective paganism the two au-
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... a way that they have renounced everything or have received everything? How many are merely so honest that they know what they are able to do and what they are unable to do? And is it not true that if there are any such people at all, they are most likely to be found among the less educated and in part among women? The age reveals its defect in a kind of clairvoyance, just as a demoniac discloses himself without understanding himself, for again and again the age demands the comic. If this were actually what our generation needed, then the theater perhaps needs a new play in which someone’s dying for love is made ludicrous, or would it not perhaps be more salutary for the age if such a thing occurred among us, if the age were to witness an event such as this, so that for once it could find the courage to believe in the power of the spirit, the courage to stop cravenly suffocating the better side of itself, jealously smothering it in others— through laughter. Should it be necessary for our age to have the ridiculous Erscheinung [appearance] of an enthusiast in or-
... order to find something to laugh at, or is it not rather more
necessary that such an inspired character would remind it of what has been forgotten?

If a similar but even more moving plot is wanted, because the passion of repentance was not set in motion, one could use a story from the book of Tobit.38 The young Tobias wishes to marry Sarah, the daughter of Raguel and Edna. But this girl has a tragic background. She has been given to seven men, all of whom perished in the bridal chamber. For my plot, this is a defect in the story, for the comic effect is almost unavoidable when one thinks of a girl’s seven futile attempts to get married, although she was very close to it, about as close as a student who failed his examination seven times. In the book of Tobit, the accent lies elsewhere, and this is why the high number is important and in a certain sense contributes to the tragedy, because the young Tobias’s magnanimity is all the greater, partly because he is his parents’ only son (6:14), partly because the appalling aspect obtrudes all the more. Consequently, this must be put aside. Sarah, then, is a girl who has never been in love, who still has a young girl’s beatific treasure, her prodigious, enormous mortgage on life, her “Vollmachtbrief zum Glücke” [full warrant for happiness]39—the capacity to love a man with all her heart. And yet she is unhappier than anyone else, for she knows that the evil demon who loves her will kill her bridegroom on the wedding night. I have read about many griefs, but I doubt that there is to be found a grief as profound as the one in this girl’s life. But if the unhappiness comes from without, consolation is still to be found. If existence has not provided a person with that which could have made him happy, it is still consoling to know that he could have received it. But what an unfathomable grief that no amount of time can chase away, no amount of time can cure—to know that it would be of no help if existence did everything! A Greek author hides so infinitely much in his simple naïveté when he says: πάντας γὰρ οὐδὲς ἔρωτα ἔργεν ἢ φεύεται, μέχρι ὅν κάλλος ἢ καὶ ὀρφαλμοὶ βλέπον [For there was never any yet that wholly could escape love, and never shall there be any, never so long as beauty shall be, never so
...would remind it of plot is wanted, because in motion, one could... The young Tobias of Raguel and Edna. She has been given to the bridal chamber. For the comic effect is of a girl’s seven futile lives very close to it, his examination seven and in a certain case the young Tobias’s because he is his par- sentence appalling aspect ob­ his must be put aside. been in love, who still her prodigious, enor- brief zum Glücke” [full y] to love a man with than anyone else, for loves her will kill her have read about many found a grief as pro- but if the unhappiness ill to be found. If ex- that which could have he knew that he could omable grief that no unt of time can cure—t existence did every- much in his simple... For there escape love, and never duty shall be, never so long as eyes can see] (cf. Longus, Pastoralia). Many a girl has become unhappy in love, but she nevertheless did become that; Sarah was that before she became that. It is grievous not to find the person to whom one can give oneself, but it is unspeakably grievous not to be able to give oneself. A young girl gives herself, and then it is said: Now she is no longer free. But Sarah was never free, and yet she had never given herself. It is grievous if a girl gives herself and is deceived, but Sarah was deceived before she gave herself. What a world of sorrow will come as a consequence of Tobias’s finally marrying her! What wedding preparations, what ceremonies! No girl has been as defrauded as Sarah was, for she was defrauded of the highest bliss, the absolute richness possessed by even the poorest of maidens, defrauded out of the assured, unlimited, unbounded, uninhibited devotedness, for there should indeed first be smoke from the placement of the heart and liver of the fish on the glowing embers. And how must the mother take leave of her daughter, who, just as she herself is defrauded of everything, must in turn defraud the mother of the most beautiful of all. But read the story. Edna prepared the chamber, and she escorted Sarah into it and wept, and she received her daughter’s weeping. And she said to her: My child, take heart. The Lord of heaven and earth may exchange your sorrow for joy! Daughter, take heart. And now comes the time of the wedding. We read on—if we can read at all through our tears: But when the door was shut and they were together, Tobias rose from the bed and said: Rise up, sister, and we will pray that the Lord may have mercy upon us (8:4).

If a poet read this story and were to use it, I wager a hundred to one that he would make everything center on the young Tobias. The heroic courage to be willing to risk his life in such obvious danger—as the story reminds us once again, for the morning after the wedding Raguel says to Edna: Send one of the maids to see if he is alive, so that, if not, I can bury him and no one will know it (see 8:13)—this heroic courage would be the subject. I venture to propose another. Tobias behaves gallantly and resolutely and chivalrously, but
any man who does not have the courage for that is a milksop who does not know what love is or what it is to be a man or what is worth living for; he has not even grasped the little mystery that it is better to give than to receive and has no intimation of the great mystery that it is far more difficult to receive than to give, that is, if one has had the courage to do without and in the hour of distress did not prove a coward.

No, Sarah is the heroic character. She is the one I want to approach as I have never approached any girl or been tempted in thought to approach anyone of whom I have read. For what love for God it takes to be willing to let oneself be healed when from the very beginning one in all innocence has been botched, from the very beginning has been a damaged specimen of a human being! What ethical maturity to take upon oneself the responsibility of permitting the beloved to do something so hazardous! What humility before another person! What faith in God that she would not in the very next moment hate the man to whom she owed everything!

Imagine Sarah to be a man, and the demonic is immediately present. The proud, noble nature can bear everything, but one thing it cannot bear—it cannot bear sympathy. In it there is a humiliation that can be inflicted on a person only by a higher power, for he can never become the object of it by himself. If he has sinned, he can bear the punishment without despairing, but to be without guilt from his mother’s womb and yet to be destined as a sacrifice to sympathy, a sweet fragrance in its nostrils—this he cannot endure. Sympathy has a curious dialectic: it demands guilt one moment and refuses it the next, and that is why being predisposed to sympathy becomes progressively more dreadful the more the individual’s unhappiness is oriented to the spiritual. But Sarah has no guilt; she is thrown as prey to every suffering and then in addition is to be tormented by human sympathy, for even I, who admire her more than Tobias loved her, even I cannot mention her name without saying: The poor girl!

Imagine a man in Sarah’s place; let him learn that if he loves a girl an infernal spirit will come and murder the beloved on the wedding night. He will be demonic, inclose himself up in his demonic nature speaks in secret: ceremonies and complexities; I do not love at all, for I can in fact be a delight in seeing maidens die on rule, we get to know very little though this is a subject that has a especially in our time, and even knows anything at all about moniac—can use practically anybe In that kind of thing, Shakespeare has depicted but also depicted Gloucester (later Richard III)—moniac? Apparently his inability to upon him from childhood. His man Richard III has more value than which have no intimation of the of their explanation.

. . . Ich, roh geprägt, und alle Vor leicht sich dreh’nden Nyn Ich, so verkürzt um schönes E Geschändet von der tückischer Entstellt, verwahrlost, vor der In diese Welt des Athmens, ha Gemacht, und zwar so lahm u Dass Hunde bellen, hink’ ich

[I, that am rudely stamp’d, and To strut before a wanton am Cheated of feature by dissembl Deform’d, unfinished’d, sent be Into this breathing world, scar] And that so lamely and unfas That dogs bark at me as I hal
encourage for that is a milksop or what it is to be a man not even grasped the little more difficult to one has had the courage to do the soul did not prove a coward. She is the one I want to have read any girl or been tempted of whom I have read. For one willing to let oneself be sinning one in all innocence beginning has been a damnation! What ethical maturity to any of permitting the beloved what humility before another she would not in the very from she owed everything! the demonic is immediate nature can bear everything, cannot bear sympathy. In it inflicted on a person only forever become the object of it can bear the punishment without guilt from his mother as a sacrifice to sympathy, this he cannot endure. SYM-mands guilt one moment why being predestined to more dreadful the more the to the spiritual. But Sarah says to every suffering and by human sympathy, for Tobias loved her, even I saying: The poor girl! let him learn that if he come and murder the be-

loved on the wedding night. He might possibly choose the demonic, inclose himself up in himself, and speak the way a demonic nature speaks in secret: “Thanks, I’m no friend of ceremonies and complexities; I do not demand the delight of love at all, for I can in fact be a Bluebeard and have my delight in seeing maidens die on their wedding night.” As a rule, we get to know very little about the demonic, even though this is a subject that has a valid claim to be discovered especially in our time, and even though the observer—if he knows anything at all about making contact with the demonic—can use practically anybody, at least momentarily. In that kind of thing, Shakespeare is and remains a hero. That horrible demonic, the most demonic figure Shakespeare has depicted but also depicted in a matchless way—Gloucester (later Richard III)—what made him into a demonic? Apparently his inability to bear the sympathy heaped upon him from childhood. His monologue in the first act of Richard III has more value than all the systems of morality, which have no intimation of the nightmares of existence or of their explanation.

... Ich, roh geprägt, und aller Reize bar,
Vor leicht sich dreh’nden Nymphen mich zu brüsten;
Ich, so verkürzt um schönes Ebenmass,
Geschändet von der tückischen Natur,
Entstellt, verwahrlost, vor der Zeit gesandt
In diese Welt des Athmens, halb kaum fertig
Gemacht, und zwar so lahm und ungeziemend,
Dass Hunde bellen, hink’ ich wo vorbei.

[I, that am rudely stamp’d, and want love’s majesty
To strut before a wanton ambling nymph;
I, that am curtail’d of this fair proportion,
Cheated of feature by dissimbling Nature,
Deform’d, unfinish’d, sent before my time
Into this breathing world, scarce half made up,
And that so lamely and unfashionable
That dogs bark at me as I halt by them—.]
Natures such as Gloucester's cannot be saved by mediating them into an idea of society. Ethics actually only makes sport of them, just as it would be a taunting of Sarah for ethics to say to her: Why do you not express the universal and get married? Natures such as those are basically in the paradox, and they are by no means more imperfect than other people, except that they are either lost in the demonic paradox or saved in the divine paradox. Time and again people have been pleased that witches, nisses, trolls, etc. are malformed creatures, and no doubt everyone has an inclination, when he sees a malformed person, to attach to him the idea of moral depravity. What a glaring injustice, since the relation ought to be turned around: existence itself has damaged them, just as a stepmother makes the children perversive. The demonic, for which the individual himself has no guilt, has its beginning in his originally being set outside the universal by nature or by a historical situation. Thus Cumberland's Jew is also a demonic, even though he does good. The demonic can also express itself as contempt for men, a contempt, please note, that does not lead the demonic himself to act contemptuously; on the contrary, he has his strength in his awareness that he is better than all those who judge him.

With regard to all such things, the poets ought to be almost the first to sound the alarm. God only knows what books the present generation of young versifiers is reading! Their study probably consists of learning rhymes by heart. God knows what importance they have in this world! At this moment, I know of no benefit from them other than that they provide an edifying proof of the immortality of the soul, since of them one may safely say to oneself what Baggesen says about the local poet Kildevalle: If he becomes immortal, then all of us will.

Everything said here about Sarah, chiefly with regard to poetic presentation and therefore with an imaginary presupposition, has its full meaning when with a psychological interest one explores the meaning of the old saying: *Nullum unquam exstitit magnum ingenium sine aliqua dementia* [No great genius has ever existed without some touch of madness]. [45

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For such dementia is the suffering, the expression, if I dare say so, of genius aspect is the expression of pain. In despair over his limitations (his omnipotence to impotence), and for this reason does not wish to men, or whether he religious for the divine. Here are the psychology it seems to me, one could joyfully yet we seldom hear a word about between mental derangement and strued from the other? In what so the genius master of his mental do out saying that up to a point he is would actually be insane. But such a high degree of ingenuity, forior person is very difficult. If on reading a few authors of the great- sible just once, although with great- little.

To take yet another case, let us by being hidden and remaining universal. For this I can use the I doubt, an apostate of the spirit*

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* If we do not wish to use a doubter, for example, an ironist whose sharp eye is diocrous of life and whose secret understand of what the patient desires. He known- ter, and if he wishes to use it, he is sure of more, of his own happiness. He knows up to restrain him, but he knows that he men can still be made to seem earnestly of- secretly they yearn to laugh with him; he made to hold the fan momentarily before he knows that she is laughing behind the fan completely opaque; he knows that one can he knows that when a woman flutters her
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For such dementia is the suffering of genius in this world, is the expression, if I dare say so, of divine envy, whereas the genius aspect is the expression of preferment. Thus from the beginning the genius is disoriented with the universal and gets there basically in the paradox, imperfect than other people, in the demonic paradox or some and again people have trolls, etc. are malformed. He has an inclination, when he attach to him the idea of injustice, since the relation itself has damaged them, children perverse. The deicide himself is no guilt, has its set outside the universal by. Thus Cumberland’s Jew does good. The demonic for men, a contempt, please monastic himself to act con­one has his strength in his all those who judge him.

The poets ought to be all. God only knows what young versifiers is reading! learning rhymes by heart. have in this world! At this from them other than that the immortality of the soul, to oneself what Baggesen says: If he becomes immortal, in, chiefly with regard to 43 with an imaginary presup­45 with psychological in­of the old saying: Nullum sae aliqua dementia [No great some touch of madness].

Problema III
flesh. This is the poet’s interpretation, and although it is repeated again and again that every age has its Faust, nevertheless one poet after the other undauntedly walks this beaten path. Let us make a little change. Faust is the doubter \( \pi \alpha \tau \varepsilon \) \( \kappa \gamma \omega \nu \varepsilon \) [par excellence], but he has a sympathetic nature. Even in Goethe’s version of Faust, I miss a profound psychological insight into doubt’s secret conversations with itself. In our age, when indeed all have experienced doubt, no poet as yet has made any step in this direction. I feel like offering them government bonds on which to write the sum total of their experiences in this respect—they would scarcely write any more than could be accommodated on the top margin.

Only when one turns Faust into himself can doubt take on a poetic aspect; only then does he actually discover within himself all the sufferings of doubt. Then he knows that it is spirit that maintains existence, but he also knows that the security and joy in which men live are not grounded in the power of the spirit but are easily explained as an unreflected bliss. As doubter, as the doubter, he is higher than all this, understood him. He has infallible information about the way laughter sneaks in and lives secretly in a person, and when it has taken up residence, it watches and waits. Let us imagine such an Aristophanes, such a slightly altered Voltaire, for he is also sympathetic: he loves existence, he loves men, and he knows that even if denunciation by laughter may rear up a new, redeemed generation, at the same time a great number of his contemporaries will be destroyed. So he remains silent and as far as possible forgets himself how to laugh. But dare he remain silent? There may be some who simply do not understand the difficulty of which I speak. They presumably think it was an admirable magnanimity to remain silent. I cannot agree at all, for I believe that anyone so constituted, if he has not had the magnanimity to remain silent, is a traitor to existence. Consequently, I demand this magnanimity of him; but if he has it, dare he then remain silent? Ethics is a dangerous branch of knowledge, and it was surely possible that Aristophanes for purely ethical reasons decided to let laughter pass judgment on the perverse age. Esthetic nobility cannot help, because one does not venture such things on that score. If he is to remain silent, he must enter into the paradox.

As yet another plot, I suggest, for example, that someone has an explanation of a hero’s life, but one that explains it in a lamentable way, and yet a whole generation has absolute confidence in this hero without suspecting anything like this.

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Trembling
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very age has its Faust, neverthe-
undoubtedly walks this beaten
range. Faust is the doubter who
has a sympathetic nature. Even I
miss a profound psychological
conversations with itself. In our
experienced doubt, no poet as yet
feels like offering them
with his Huns, Faust knows how to do with his doubt—
to rouse men up horrified, to make the world totter under
their feet, to split men apart, to make the shriek of alarm
sound everywhere. And if he does that, then he is no Tam-
erlane; in a certain sense he is authorized and has the mandate
of thought. But Faust has a sympathetic nature, he loves ex-
istence, his soul knows no envy, he perceives that he cannot
stop the fury he certainly can arouse, he aspires to no He-
rostratic honor—he remains silent, he hides doubt more
carefully in his soul than the girl who hides a sinful fruit of
love under her heart, he tries as much as possible to walk in
step with other men, but what goes on inside himself he
consumes and thus brings himself as a sacrifice for the uni-
versal.

Now and then, when some unconventional fellow churns
up a whirlwind of doubt, we hear people say: Would that he
had remained silent. Faust fulfills this idea. Anyone who has
a notion of what it means for a person to live on spirit also
knows what the hunger of doubt means and knows that the
doubter hungered just as much for the daily bread of life as
for the nourishment of spirit. Notwithstanding the possibil-
ity that all Faust’s agonies may be a very good argument that
it is not pride that has possessed him, I shall nevertheless take
a precautionary measure, which is easy for me to devise, for
just as Gregory of Rimini was called tortor infantium [tor-
mentor of infants] because he accepted the damnation of in-
fants, I could be tempted to call myself tortor heroum [tor-
mentor of heroes], for I am very inventive when it comes to
tormenting heroes. Faust sees Margaret, but not after having
chosen lust, for my Faust does not choose lust at all; he sees
Margaret not in Mephistopheles’s concave mirror but in all
her adorable innocence, and since his soul has retained its
love for people, he can also very easily fall in love with her. But he is a doubter; his doubt has destroyed actuality for him, for my Faust is so ideal that he is not one of those scientific doubters who doubt one hour every semester on the podium but otherwise are able to do everything else, as they do even this, without the help of the spirit or the power of the spirit. He is a doubter, and the doubter hungered just as much for the daily bread of joy as for the nourishment of spirit. But he holds to his resolution and remains silent and does not tell anyone of his doubt, nor does he tell Margaret of his love.

It goes without saying that Faust is too ideal a figure to be satisfied with the nonsense that if he spoke he would prompt a general discussion, or that the whole affair would pass without any consequences, or perhaps this or perhaps that. (Here, as any poet will readily see, is the dormant comic element in the plot, that is, bringing Faust into an ironic relation to those slapstick fools who chase after doubt in our day, present external arguments to prove that they actually have doubted—for example, a doctoral diploma—or swear that they have doubted everything, or prove it by once having met a doubter in their travels, those couriers and sprinters in the world of spirit who very hastily pick up a little tip about doubt from one person and something about faith from another and then wirtschaft [do business] in the best manner, all according to whether the congregation wants to have fine sand or gravel.) Faust is too ideal a figure to go around in bedroom slippers. Anyone who does not have an infinite passion is not ideal, and anyone who has an infinite passion has long since saved his soul from such rubbish. He remains silent in order to sacrifice himself—or he speaks in the awareness that he will throw everything into disorder.

If he remains silent, then ethics condemns him, saying, “You must acknowledge the universal, and you acknowledge it specifically by speaking, and you dare not to have compassion on the universal.” This observation should not be forgotten when at times a doubter is judged severely because he speaks. I am not inclined to judge such conduct mildly, but here, as everywhere, doubts take place normatively; doubter—even though by some tune possible down upon the to these wretched sweet-toot want to cure doubt without a rule are themselves the chief wildly and uncontrollably thing into disorder, for even not find that out until later, a person either in the moment responsibility.

If he remains silent on his assumably act magnanimously, trial to his other agonies, to torment him and say: You sh going to be sure that your cryptic pride?

But if the doubter can be as the single individual stand absolute, then he can get autobi case, he must make his dou within the paradox, but then may have another doubt.

Even the New Testament! In the passage shows clearly that there are even places irony, provided that it is used. But this movement is just as thing else that is based on higher than actuality. Our awareness about this; on the who more about irony than was enough, did not understand it, which our age has it has to guard itself against Mount, it says: When you in your face, that your fasting...
fall in love with her.

ruhe not one of those who do everything else, as the spirit or the power of the doubter hungers just for the nourishment of doubt and remains silent and then does he tell Margaret

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dems him, saying, and you acknowledge you dare not to have no reservation should not judged severely be judged such conduct

mildly, but here, as everywhere, the point is that the movements take place normatively. If worst comes to worst, a doubter—even though by speaking he brings every misfortune possible down upon the world—is still to be preferred to these wretched sweet-tooths who taste of everything and want to cure doubt without recognizing it and who then as a rule are themselves the chief reason why doubt breaks out wildly and uncontrollably. If he speaks, he throws everything into disorder, for even if it does not happen, he does not find that out until later, and the outcome cannot help a person either in the moment of action or with respect to responsibility.

If he remains silent on his own responsibility, he can presumably act magnanimously, but he will add a little spiritual trial to his other agonies, for the universal will constantly torment him and say: You should have spoken. How are you going to be sure that your resolution was not prompted by cryptic pride?

But if the doubter can become the single individual who as the single individual stands in an absolute relation to the absolute, then he can get authorization for his silence. In that case, he must make his doubt into guilt. In that case, he is within the paradox, but then his doubt is healed, even if he may have another doubt.

Even the New Testament would acknowledge such a silence. There are even places in the New Testament that praise irony, provided that it is used to conceal the better part. But this movement is just as much one of irony as is everything else that is based on the premise that subjectivity is higher than actuality. Our age does not want to know anything about this; on the whole, it does not want to know more about irony than was said by Hegel, who, curiously enough, did not understand much about it and bore a grudge against it, which our age has good reason not to give up, for it has to guard itself against irony. In the Sermon on the Mount, it says: When you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by men. This passage shows clearly that subjectivity is incommensurable
with actuality, indeed, that it has the right to deceive. If only the people who tramp about these days talking loosely about the idea of congregation would read the New Testament, maybe they would get some other ideas.56

But now to Abraham—how did he act? For I have not forgotten, and the reader will please remember, that I got involved in the previous discussion to make that subject an obstacle, not as if Abraham could thereby become more comprehensible, but in order that the incomprehensibility could become more salient, for, as I said before, I cannot understand Abraham—I can only admire him. It was also pointed out that none of the stages described contains an analogy to Abraham; they were explained, while being demonstrated each within its own sphere, only in order that in their moment of deviation they could, as it were, indicate the boundary of the unknown territory. If there is any question of an analogy, it must be the paradox of sin, but this again is in another sphere and cannot explain Abraham and is itself far easier to explain than Abraham.

So Abraham did not speak, he did not speak to Sarah, or to Eliezer, or to Isaac; he bypassed these three ethical authorities, since for Abraham the ethical had no higher expression than family life.

Esthetics allowed, indeed demanded, silence of the single individual if he knew that by remaining silent he could save another. This alone adequately shows that Abraham is not within the scope of esthetics. His silence is certainly not in order to save Isaac; in fact, his whole task of sacrificing Isaac for his own and for God’s sake is an offense to esthetics, because it is able to understand that I sacrifice myself but not that I sacrifice someone else for my own sake. The esthetic hero was silent. Meanwhile, ethics passed judgment on him because he was silent on account of his accidental particularity. It was his human prescience that led him to remain silent. Ethics cannot forgive this. Any human knowing of that sort is only an illusion. Ethics demands an infinite movement, it demands disclosure. The speak but will not.

The authentic tragic hero sacrificed that is his for the universal; his act belong to the universal; he is open, is the beloved son of ethics. This does nothing for the universal and

Now we are face to face with the single individual as the single individual relation to the absolute, and conse the highest, or Abraham is lost: is nor an esthetic hero.57

Here again it may seem that this and easiest of all. May I repeat, he remains convinced of this is not a and anxiety are the only justificati is not conceivable in general, for celed.

Abraham remains silent—but he the distress and anxiety. Even tho and day without interruption, if I stood when I speak, then I am not with Abraham. He can say everyth and if he cannot say that way that the other understands it. The relief provided by speaking is the universal. Now, Abraham can in the most beautiful words to I. But this is not what is on his mind that he is going to sacrifice him one can understand the latter, an misunderstand the former. The distress. In the first place, by every counterargument has had everyone an opportunity to stand nestra, Iphigenia, Achilles, the every voice from humanity’s he alarming, every incriminating, eve
At it has the right to deceive. If only about these days talking loosely about I would read the New Testament, some other ideas.56

—how did he act? For I have not will please remember, that I got discussion to make that subject an ham could thereby become more order that the incomprehensibility present, for, as I said before, I cannot only admire him. It was also of the stages described contains an were explained, while being dem­own sphere, only in order that in they could, as it were, indicate own territory. If there is any ques­tion be the paradox of sin, but this and cannot explain Abraham and in than Abraham. peak, he did not speak to Sarah, or bypassed these three ethical author­ethic had no higher expression and demanded, silence of the single by remaining silent he could save lately shows that Abraham is not. His silence is certainly not in his whole task of sacrificing Isaac's sake is an offense to esthetics, and that I sacrifice myself but not for my own sake. The esthetic ethic passed judgment on him count of his accidental particular­ence that led him to remain si­this. Any human knowing of that ethic demands an infinite move­ment, it demands disclosure. The esthetic hero, then, can speak but will not.

The authentic tragic hero sacrifices himself and everything that is his for the universal; his act and every emotion in him belong to the universal; he is open, and in this disclosure he is the beloved son of ethics. This does not fit Abraham; he does nothing for the universal and is hidden.

Now we are face to face with the paradox. Either the single individual as the single individual can stand in an absolute relation to the absolute, and consequently the ethical is not the highest, or Abraham is lost; he is neither a tragic hero nor an esthetic hero.57

Here again it may seem that the paradox is the simplest and easiest of all. May I repeat, however, that anyone who remains convinced of this is not a knight of faith, for distress and anxiety are the only justification conceivable, even if it is not conceivable in general, for then the paradox is can­celed.

Abraham remains silent—but he cannot speak. Therein lies the distress and anxiety. Even though I go on talking night and day without interruption, if I cannot make myself under­stood when I speak, then I am not speaking. This is the case with Abraham. He can say everything, but one thing he cannot say, and if he cannot say that—that is, say it in such a way that the other understands it—then he is not speaking. The relief provided by speaking is that it translates me into the universal. Now, Abraham can describe his love for Isaac in the most beautiful words to be found in any language. But this is not what is on his mind; it is something deeper, that he is going to sacrifice him because it is an ordeal. No one can understand the latter, and thus everyone can only misunderstand the former. The tragic hero does not know this distress. In the first place, he has the consolation that every counterargument has had its due, that he has given everyone an opportunity to stand up against him: Clytem­nestra, Iphigenia, Achilles, the chorus, every living person, every voice from humanity's heart, every cunning, every alarming, every incriminating, every commiserating thought.
He can be sure that everything permitted to be said against him has been said ruthlessly, mercilessly—and to fight against the whole world is a consolation, to fight against oneself is frightful. He does not have to fear having overlooked anything, so that later on he perhaps must cry out as King Edward IV did on hearing of the murder of Clarence: 64

Wer bat für ihn? Wer kniet in meinem Grimm
Zu Füssen mir und bat mich überlegen?
Wer sprach von Bruderpflicht? Wer sprach von Liebe?

[Who sued to me for him? Who (in my wrath)
Kneel’d at my feet and bid me be advis’d?
Who spoke of brotherhood? Who spoke of love?]

The tragic hero does not know the dreadful responsibility of loneliness. Moreover, he has the consolation that he can weep and lament with Clytemnestra and Iphigenia 65—and tears and cries are relieving, but groanings that cannot be uttered are torturing. Agamemnon can quickly concentrate his whole being in the certainty that he is going to act, and then he still has time to comfort and encourage. This Abraham cannot do. When his heart is moved, when his words would provide blessed comfort to the whole world, he dares not to offer comfort, for would not Sarah, would not Eliezer, would not Isaac say to him, "Why do you want to do it, then? After all, you can abstain." And if in his distress he wanted to unburden himself and clasp to himself all that he held dear before he proceeded to the end, the terrible consequence might be that Sarah, Eliezer, and Isaac would take offense at him and believe him to be a hypocrite. Speak he cannot; he speaks no human language. And even if he understood all the languages of the world, even if those he loved also understood them, he still could not speak—he speaks in a divine language, he speaks in tongues. 66

This distress I can understand very well. I can admire Abraham. I have no fear that anyone reading this story will be tempted rashly to want to be the single individual. But I also confess that I do not

61 Abraham cannot speak, would explain everything, that it is an ordeal such as temptation. 62 Anyone pleased from the sphere of the
say the next thing. To reply earlier, Abraham may not have been preserved, his or her, "Although the god de possible that he would not the absurd"—then he went to Iphigenia. If he could say, Iphigenia would very result Agamemnon would ment of resignation and the soothsayer’s declaration is is a vaudeville.

63 So Abraham did not has been preserved, his or that he had not said any where the lamb is for th
also confess that I do not have the courage for it and that I would gladly renounce every expectation of proceeding further if it were even possible, be it ever so late, that I should come that far. At every moment, Abraham can stop; he can repent of the whole thing as a spiritual trial; then he can speak out, and everybody will be able to understand him—but then he is no longer Abraham.

Abraham cannot speak, because he cannot say that which would explain everything (that is, so it is understandable): that it is an ordeal such that, please note, the ethical is the temptation. Anyone placed in such a position is an emigrant from the sphere of the universal. But even less can he say the next thing. To repeat what was sufficiently developed earlier, Abraham makes two movements. He makes the infinite movement of resignation and gives up Isaac, which no one can understand because it is a private venture; but next, at every moment, he makes the movement of faith. This is his consolation. In other words, he is saying: But it will not happen, or if it does, the Lord will give me a new Isaac, that is, by virtue of the absurd. The tragic hero, however, comes to the end of the story. Iphigenia submits to her father's resolve; she herself makes the infinite movement of resignation, and they now have a mutual understanding. She can understand Agamemnon, because the step he is taking expresses the universal. But if Agamemnon were to say to her, "Although the god demands you as a sacrifice, it is still possible that he would not demand it, that is, by virtue of the absurd"—then he would instantly be incomprehensible to Iphigenia. If he could say this by virtue of human reckoning, Iphigenia would very likely understand him, but as a result Agamemnon would not have made the infinite movement of resignation and thus would not be a hero; then the soothsayer's declaration is a sailor's yarn, and the whole event is a vaudeville.

So Abraham did not speak. Just one word from him has been preserved, his only reply to Isaac, ample evidence that he had not said anything before. Isaac asks Abraham where the lamb is for the burnt offering. "And Abraham
said: God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.”

I shall now consider in more detail these last words by Abraham. Without these words, the whole event would lack something; if they were different words, everything perhaps would dissolve in confusion.

It has frequently been the subject of my pondering whether a tragic hero, culminating either in a suffering or in an action, ought to have last words. As far as I can see, it depends on the sphere of life to which he belongs, whether his life has intellectual significance, whether his suffering or action is related to spirit. It goes without saying that the tragic hero, like any other man who is not bereft of speech, can say a few words in his culminating moment, perhaps a few appropriate words, but the question is how appropriate is it for him to say them. If the meaning of his life is in an external act, then he has nothing to say, then everything he says is essentially chatter, by which he only diminishes his impact, whereas the tragic conventions enjoin him to complete his task in silence, whether it consists in action or suffering. In order not to wander too far afield, I shall take the most pertinent example. If Agamemnon himself, not Calchas, should have drawn the knife to kill Iphigenia, he would only have demeaned himself if in the very last moment he had said a few words, for the meaning of his deed was, after all, obvious to everybody, the process of reverence, sympathy, emotion, and tears was completed, and then too, his life had no relation to spirit—that is, he was not a teacher or a witness of the spirit. However, if the meaning of a hero’s life is oriented to spirit, then the lack of a statement would diminish his impact. What he has to say is not a few appropriate words, a short declamatory piece. Instead, the significance of his statement is that he consummates himself in the decisive moment. An intellectual tragic hero like that ought to have and ought to retain the last word. He is required to have the same transfigured bearing proper to every tragic hero, but one word is still required. If an intellectual tragic hero like this culminates in a suffering (in death), he be last word before he dies, which does not become immortal until Socrates can be used as an example.

Socrates can be used as an example. His death sentence—moment he dies, for anyone who always dies before he dies will view of life. As a hero Socrates and collected, but as an intellect to have enough spiritual strength to summarize himself. He cannot concentrate on self-control in must make this movement as is instantly and consciously bey himself. Thus, if Socrates had been he would have diminished the a suspicion that the elasticity of power but a game, the resilient an inverted scale in order to crucial moment.

These brief suggestions are ham if one expects to be abl analogy an appropriate final we apply if one perceives the necmate himself in the final mombly but to have a word to he has absolute significance or in advance any idea of what he said it, I presumably can unde

* There can be various opinions as be regarded as decisive, inasmuch as in so many ways. I suggest the follow to him, and in that same moment he is over death and consummates himself, surprised to have been condemned by not have bantered more ironically with the foolish comment of an idle condemns him to death.
in a suffering (in death), he becomes immortal through this last word before he dies, whereas the ordinary tragic hero does not become immortal until after his death.

Socrates can be used as an example. He was an intellectual tragic hero. His death sentence is announced to him. At that moment he dies, for anyone who does not understand that it takes the whole power of the spirit to die and that the hero always dies before he dies will not advance very far in his view of life. As a hero Socrates is now required to be calm and collected, but as an intellectual tragic hero he is required to have enough spiritual strength in the final moment to consummate himself. He cannot, as does the ordinary tragic hero, concentrate on self-control in the presence of death, but he must make this movement as quickly as possible so that he is instantly and consciously beyond this struggle and affirms himself. Thus, if Socrates had been silent in the crisis of death, he would have diminished the effect of his life and aroused a suspicion that the elasticity of irony in him was not a world power but a game, the resilience of which had to be used on an inverted scale in order to sustain him in pathos at the crucial moment.

These brief suggestions are indeed not applicable to Abraham if one expects to be able to find by means of some analogy an appropriate final word for Abraham, but they do apply if one perceives the necessity for Abraham to consummate himself in the final moment, not to draw the knife silently but to have a word to say, since as the father of faith he has absolute significance oriented to spirit. I cannot form in advance any idea of what he is going to say; after he has said it, I presumably can understand it, perhaps in a certain

* There can be various opinions as to which of Socrates’ statements may be regarded as decisive, inasmuch as Plato has poetically volatilized Socrates in so many ways. I suggest the following: the verdict of death is announced to him, and in that same moment he dies, in that same moment he triumphs over death and consummates himself in the celebrated response that he is surprised to have been condemned by a majority of three votes. He could not have bantered more ironically with the idle talk in the marketplace or with the foolish comment of an idiot than with the death sentence that condemns him to death.
sense understand Abraham in what was said without thereby coming any closer to him than in the preceding exposition. If there were no final lines from Socrates, I could have imagined myself in his place and created some, and if I had been unable to do so, a poet would have managed it, but no poet can find his way to Abraham.

Before considering Abraham’s final words more closely, may I first point out the difficulty for Abraham to manage to say anything at all. As explained above, the distress and anxiety in the paradox were due in particular to the silence: Abraham cannot speak.* Thus it is a self-contradiction to demand that he speak, unless one wishes him out of the paradox again, so that he suspends it in the decisive moment and thereby ceases to be Abraham and nullifies all that preceded. Thus, if Abraham were to say to Isaac in the decisive moment: You are the one intended—this would simply be a weakness. For if he could speak at all, then he ought to have spoken long before this, and the weakness then would be that he had not had the spiritual maturity and concentration to think through the whole agony beforehand but had shoved something aside in such a way that the actual agony was more than that in thought. Moreover, by speaking thus, he would have turned away from the paradox, and if he actually wished to speak with Isaac, he would have had to change his position to one of spiritual trial, for otherwise he could say nothing, and in that case he would not even be a tragic hero.

But a final word by Abraham has been preserved, and insofar as I can understand the paradox, I can also understand Abraham’s total presence in that word. First and foremost, he does not say anything, and in that form he says what he has to say. His response to Isaac is in the form of irony, for it is always irony when I say something and still do not say anything. Isaac questions Abraham in the belief that Abraham knows. Now, if Abraham—he would have spoken an untruth, for he demands Isaac as a sacrifice, and this very moment is willing to make this movement, he has at his movement, has made the movement absurd. Thus he is not speaking verse of the absurd it is indeed something entirely different. So truth, but neither does he say anything in a strange tongue. This becomes more evident if one considers that it was Abraham himself could not have known this. If the task had been demanded Abraham to bring Isaac sacrifice in that way, then Abraham justified in speaking as enigma himself could not have known what he himself will do, and consequently, he has to act; consequently, he has to say that, however, is merely a resignation; then his words are also very far from being Abrahamic than a tragic hero—indeed, the solution who cannot make up his mind and for that reason always speaks—this, however, is merely a paradox.

Here again it is apparent that Abraham, but only in the way of I, for my part, perhaps can und

* If there is any analogy at all, it is one such as provided by the death scene of Pythagoras, for in his final moment he had to consummate the silence he had always maintained, and for this reason he said: It is better to be killed than to speak. See Diogenes, VIII, para. 39.71
said without thereby preceding exposition. Presumably, I could have imagined it to be otherwise, and if I had been forced to imagine it, but no poet
words more closely, Abraham to manage love, the distress and particular to the silence: himself-contradiction to him out of the particular, the decisive moment nullifies all that previous Isaac in the decisive this would simply be a when he ought to have been then would be ineffably and concentration stand but had shoved the actual agony was by speaking thus, he asked, and if he actual have had to change otherwise he could not even be a tragic
preserved, and in can also understand First and foremost, First and foremost, form he says what he form of irony, for and still do not say the belief that Abraham provided by the death pro- consummate the parasite said: It is better to

Problema III

ham knows. Now, if Abraham had replied: I know nothing—he would have spoken an untruth. He cannot say anything, for what he knows he cannot say. Therefore he answers: God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son! From this we see, as described previously, the double-movement in Abraham’s soul. If Abraham in resignation had merely relinquished Isaac and done no more, he would have spoken an untruth, for he does indeed know that God demands Isaac as a sacrifice, and he knows that he himself in this very moment is willing to sacrifice him. After having made this movement, he has at every moment made the next movement, has made the movement of faith by virtue of the absurd. Thus he is not speaking an untruth, because by virtue of the absurd it is indeed possible that God could do something entirely different. So he does not speak an untruth, but neither does he say anything, for he is speaking in a strange tongue. This becomes still more evident when we consider that it was Abraham himself who should sacrifice Isaac. If the task had been different, if the Lord had commanded Abraham to bring Isaac up to Mount Moriah so that he could have his lightning strike Isaac and take him as a sacrifice in that way, then Abraham plainly would have been justified in speaking as enigmatically as he did, for then he himself could not have known what was going to happen. But given the task as assigned to Abraham, he himself has to act; consequently, he has to know in the crucial moment what he himself will do, and consequently, he has to know that Isaac is going to be sacrificed. If he has not known this for sure, he would not have made the infinite movement of resignation; then his words certainly are not untruth, but he is also very far from being Abraham, and he has less significance than a tragic hero—indeed, he is a man devoid of resolution who cannot make up his mind one way or the other and for that reason always speaks in riddles. A vacillator like that, however, is merely a parody of the knight of faith.

Here again it is apparent that one perhaps can understand Abraham, but only in the way one understands the paradox. I, for my part, perhaps can understand Abraham, but I also
realize that I do not have the courage to speak in this way, no more than I have the courage to act as Abraham did; but by no means do I therefore say that the act is of little importance, since, on the contrary, it is the one and only marvelous.

And what was the contemporary age's verdict on the tragic hero? That he was great and that it admired him. And that honorable assembly of noble-minded men, the jury that every generation sets up to judge the past generation—it gave the same verdict. But there was no one who could understand Abraham. And yet what did he achieve? He remained true to his love. But anyone who loves God needs no tears, no admiration; he forgets the suffering in the love. Indeed, so completely has he forgotten it that there would not be the slightest trace of his suffering left if God himself did not remember it, for he sees in secret and recognizes distress and counts the tears and forgets nothing.

Thus, either there is a paradox, that the single individual as the single individual stands in an absolute relation to the absolute, or Abraham is lost.
Once when the price of spices in Holland fell, the merchants had a few cargoes sunk in the sea in order to jack up the price. This was an excusable, perhaps even necessary, deception. Do we need something similar in the world of the spirit? Are we so sure that we have achieved the highest, so that there is nothing left for us to do except piously to delude ourselves into thinking that we have not come that far, simply in order to have something to occupy our time? Is this the kind of self-deception the present generation needs? Should it be trained in a virtuosity along that line, or is it not, instead, adequately perfected in the art of deceiving itself? Or, rather, does it not need an honest earnestness that fearlessly and incorruptibly points to the tasks, an honest earnestness that lovingly maintains the tasks, that does not disquiet people into wanting to attain the highest too hastily but keeps the tasks young and beautiful and lovely to look at, inviting to all and yet also difficult and inspiring to the noble-minded (for the noble nature is inspired only by the difficult)? Whatever one generation learns from another, no generation learns the essentially human from a previous one. In this respect, each generation begins primitively, has no task other than what each previous generation had, nor does it advance further, insofar as the previous generations did not betray the task and deceive themselves. The essentially human is passion, in which one generation perfectly understands another and understands itself. For example, no generation has learned to love from another, no generation is able to begin at any other point than at the beginning, no later generation has a more abridged task than the previous one, and if someone desires to go further and not stop with loving as the previous generation did, this is foolish and idle talk.

But the highest passion in a person is faith, and here no generation begins at any other point than where the previous
one did. Each generation begins all over again; the next generation advances no further than the previous one, that is, if that one was faithful to the task and did not leave it high and dry. That it should be fatiguing is, of course, something that one generation cannot say, for the generation does indeed have the task and has nothing to do with the fact that the previous generation had the same task, unless this particular generation, or the individuals in it, presumptuously assumes the place that belongs to the spirit who rules the world and who has the patience not to become weary. If the generation does that, it is wrong, and no wonder, then, that all existence seems wrong to it, for there surely is no one who found existence more wrong than the tailor who, according to the fairy story, came to heaven while alive and contemplated the world from that vantage point. As long as the generation is concerned only about its task, which is the highest, it cannot become weary, for the task is always adequate for a person's lifetime. When children on vacation have already played all the games before twelve o'clock and impatiently ask: Can't somebody think up a new game—does this show that these children are more developed and more advanced than the children in the contemporary or previous generation who make the well-known games last all day long? Or does it show instead that the first children lack what I would call the endearing earnestness belonging to play?

Faith is the highest passion in a person. There perhaps are many in every generation who do not come to faith, but no one goes further. Whether there also are many in our day who do not find it, I do not decide. I dare to refer only to myself, without concealing that he has a long way to go, without therefore wishing to deceive himself or what is great by making a trifle of it, a childhood disease one may wish to get over as soon as possible. But life has tasks enough also for the person who does not come to faith, and if he loves these honestly, his life will not be wasted, even if it is never comparable to the lives of those who perceived and grasped the highest. But the person who has come to faith (whether he is extraordinarily gifted or plain and simple does not mat-
all over again; the next generation does not leave it high and dry, as, of course, something that the generation does indeed have to do with the fact that the previous one, that is, if one did not leave it high and dry, one, presumptuously assumes who rules the world and when one is weary. If the generation wonder, then, that all existence surely is no one who found a sailor who, according to the rule alive and contemplated it. As long as the generation which is the highest, it cannot always be adequate for a per- vacation have already played ask and impatiently ask: Can't —does this show that these more advanced than the previous generation who does it all day long? Or does it mean lack what I would call to play?

There perhaps are not come to faith, but no also are many in our day side. I dare to refer only to he has a long way to go, live himself or what is great disease one may wish to life has tasks enough also to faith, and if he loves time wasted, even if it is never who perceived and grasped has come to faith (whether and simple does not mat-

ter) does not come to a standstill in faith. Indeed, he would be indignant if anyone said this to him, just as the lover would resent it if someone said that he came to a standstill in love; for, he would answer, I am by no means standing still. I have my whole life in it. Yet he does not go further, does not go on to something else, for when he finds this, then he has another explanation.

"One must go further, one must go further." This urge to go further is an old story in the world. Heraclitus the obscure, who deposited his thoughts in his books and his books in Diana's temple (for his thoughts had been his armor in life, and therefore he hung it in the temple of the goddess), Heraclitus the obscure said: One cannot walk through the same river twice.* Heraclitus the obscure had a disciple who did not remain standing there but went further—and added: One cannot do it even once.** Poor Heraclitus, to have a disciple like that! By this improvement, the Heracleitean thesis was amended into an Eleatic thesis that denies motion, and yet that disciple wished only to be a disciple of Heraclitus who went further, not back to what Heraclitus had abandoned.

* Καὶ ποιματως γοη ἕκαστός ἑαυτὸν τὰ δύσει εἰς δὲ τοὶ ἀιῶν τοιαύτην σύν 
βρήκε [He compares being to the stream of a river and says that you cannot go into the same river twice]. See Plato, Crito, 402. Ast., III, p. 158.