



Why and How We Study Philosophy

Summer 1952

Lecture I

In philosophy we have no right to throw out one erroneous answer if that answer has quality (human experience), and since in philosophy we are concerned with the idea itself (for example: philosophy is concerned with the idea of God, religion with the existence of God) and how it was possible for man to arrive at that idea or answer at all, we have always to look and to inquire again. So in discussing the situation we now find ourselves in and how it came about and man's changed position in the world, we have to look back at how man lived up to 1800 and have to ask: How was it possible and how did it happen that man believed in God almost up to 1800 and then suddenly stopped--replacing this dropped belief with a merely negative belief that God did not exist.

This we will try to find out, but first let's start with this negative belief--for a belief it is--that God does not exist. Since Kant showed us that we cannot know whether God exists or not, it means that the atheist cannot possibly know that God does not exist--so he is really a believer in nothingness. This brings us immediately to the question of faith and to the distinction between faith and belief. Pure faith (which philosophy can accept as such) means that you believe in God although you know that you cannot pretend to know that He exists. Belief on the other hand implies that you pretend to know that God exists (or, as in the case of the negative belief of the atheist, that God does not exist). In faith you cross the borderline from reason to faith, but so long as you never try to convince anyone else of your faith, it can be a question of pure faith, and as such something that philosophy (free philosophy) can accept; the minute you try to convince anyone else of your faith, it means that you have to try to argue philosophically and to pretend to believe. The medieval mystic could still try to talk of his own experiences because they were so strong and because he still lived in an age of belief, but now the situation is such that a philosopher like Karl Jaspers has said that if a mystic would come to him, he would have to say: "I am sorry, but I cannot talk to you about this. I am not in a state of grace."

The negative belief of the atheist brings up yet another point with his "I believe that I do not believe.", we come into the realm of the demoniacal. Old theologians always said that the denial of God was done by the Devil, but this denial of the atheist is not diabolical. It concerns an inner human experience which has much to do with the principle of the demonic. Thinking in the West (Heidegger, etc.), combining with the thoughts of psychology, has lately found that there is such a thing as being possessed. Scientifically explained, this means that a man is possessed by his own mental processes which he cannot control--like the *idée fixe*, for example, where the man is not thinking, but is "being thought." Since Nietzsche a branch of psychology has developed in

which an analysis has been made of certain motives human beings use--especially of inferiority and the development of the quality of resentment as a negative form of action. Relating this to the atheist, we see that while he claims not to have a mystical experience as the saint does, actually he does. The atheist after being driven into a corner will suddenly pop out with "But I believe that I do not believe in God." A terrible inner action is taking place here: the atheist has experienced his own inner nothingness; he denies God compulsively because he feels himself to be nothing--and the relation with the demonic is clearly there.

In philosophy we would then have to say that with this we have an answer and would have to ask: What makes this reaction possible? and why do most people who have had the inner experience of their own nothingness react so wildly and so especially against God? They react this way because if a man feels himself to be valueless and is penetrated by that feeling (the personal nihilistic experience), then the will to destruction of all values is the immediate reaction. Destruction of all values means to aim at the thing always valued most highly by man: God. It is not the Devil in action but man who has been robbed of all feelings of his own personal quality; man who has been driven into the feeling of no qualities of his own whatsoever along with tremendous resentment against himself. But we are very bad self-destroyers for human beings have also a quality of grandeur--which Pascal put forward as one-half of man's basic condition (the other being misery). The quality that makes for man's grandeur is that he can love somebody else more than himself. This is one of the peaks of the possible creativity of man, but on the other hand, man can never take anyone else more seriously than himself. This is automatic because man lives with himself, even in dreams, mirroring himself continuously, and he cannot possibly spend the same energy on anyone else. If he is in a state of love, loving someone more than himself, then he is safe. But this borderline man we are talking about has paid for this nothingness with the loss of the capacity to love. So he is only left with the other quality--the inability to take anyone else more seriously than himself--and he must deny the worth and value of everyone else.

These have all been preliminary probings into the question in order to give you an idea of how philosophy proceeds, but before I go on I must say that I have a funny feeling in starting this course. I have always felt that I would never give such a course; in fact I have always made it a condition in taking a job not to give an introductory course in philosophy--for that is impossible, and the man who does is either a fool or a teacher of a science (the history of philosophy). An introductory course in philosophy is doing that which philosophy teaches--teaching life (which is all that philosophy can teach). Then the modern situation forced a thinker, Karl Jaspers, to give a series of lectures on the "Way to Wisdom: An Introduction to Philosophy." I had supposed that he would take the position I have always taken, but then I saw why he could do it. Jaspers is an existentialist who comes from psychology. His position is that philosophy cannot be taught, but philosophizing can be taught. Since he has a most definite answer to the question of what philosophy is (philosophy is philosophizing) and because he is a very skeptical man, he gives a very different introduction to philosophy. I want you to have this book in order to check on me. This is always good; it makes you feel independent. You will find that Jaspers says that what philosophy is, nobody knows and that for as many philosophers as there are, there are as many definitions. Jaspers feels that the very definition a philosopher gives of what philosophy is shows what he, the philosopher, is. It would seem by this that we would be stuck with an infinity

of philosophical systems--and we are. Jaspers in his youth wrote an excellent history of philosophy and made a comparative study of things that they had in common. He was of the opinion that there had been no real development in philosophy and that everyone had to make his own philosophy--some, of course, were more gifted than others in this. This position is of a tremendous educational value, but it also changes philosophy into pedagogy.

With a philosopher, and especially with a modern philosopher, we must always ask: What is he fighting for? Of the modern philosophers, Jaspers and Camus (with the exception of Heidegger, who is different again) are the only ones who make a stand. They are really rebellious humanists and what they are fighting for is a revival of metaphysical humanism. They became aware that the humanism of the 19th Century had an anti-humanistic element and led straight into the nihilistic situation which led again to totalitarianism. They want to fight totalitarianism and by means of re-establishing certain values of humanism so that we can make a kind of liberal restoration and thereby get into a position where we have a leg to stand on in the nihilistic situation. Metaphysically speaking, we are still lost, and politically, even in democracy we do not have a counter-proposition to totalitarianism. They believe that we have underrated liberalism and that it can be restored. But what they both do is to fall back on a proposition that only holds true for the individual. If we consider the nihilistic situation to be a great flood, they are building walls. But we cannot build walls against a flood; we must build an ark--or to speak modernly, we must learn to fly; we must overcome it. The masses are falling and are being driven into a trap by social circumstances created by nihilism and we cannot stop them by the mere means of educating the individual. Jaspers is a great educator and can have the effect upon an individual of making him really tough against the nihilistic situation, but it takes years to acquire the necessary knowledge—which is a very suspicious fact in itself: it means that he goes back to science. One should not need that much knowledge; it is not really creative philosophical work any more (though it is re-creative). And this is why I differ from him--I think there is something more.

Philosophy also shows where human thinking now stands because every philosophy designed means that man--the philosopher is not a man alone, but representative--in a certain situation has tried to take a new position in the world toward the world and toward himself. A history of philosophy, as Hegel thought, cannot exist as a thing in itself. There is no such continuity or unity, but there is a much deeper unity: the unity of human experience within the world in different situations which shows the basic identity of the will. If we look at philosophy as attempts to regulate the position that man takes in the world at a certain time and in a given situation, then we can talk about a certain history of philosophy: an history of the continuous widening of the range of the human mind and the deeper and higher meanings of life that are gained. In that sense it is worthwhile to teach the history of philosophy, but it is only taught now in Hegel's or Jaspers' way.

But we are interested in the question: What is philosophy? Philosophy cannot be taught. Why not? Because everybody is a philosopher; he just does not know it. There are two kinds of professional human beings who have to argue with every idiot in the world: philosophers and politicians. Everyone feels he knows about politics and about life--who should have a greater life experience than he - that little idiot - and he is right. We are obliged to try to be creative in those

fields or we might lose our freedom. That is also the reason why everyone should study philosophy. He is in it anyway and mostly he has no idea of what a bad performer he is. Philosophy now means only free philosophy. Philosophy has not existed yet on its own. It has been driven into its own by the nihilistic situation and science, and forced away from religion and the cosmos. In that most dangerous situation in which we find ourselves philosophy for the first time has to answer the question: What are you? Previously, philosophy was mixed up with every trend of human life, but now it has to account for itself and to show that it is something that human beings need. We are forced to raise the question seriously in our time: What is philosophy? We cannot answer with Jaspers' reply that everyone has to make up his own mind what philosophy is. We must find out what philosophy really is.

Philosophizing does not mean that we all think independent thoughts. We all think thoughts of others and most people cannot get out of this framework of thinking with the thoughts and prejudices of others. We must develop philosophy by developing what creates philosophy: the mind that thinks. A being grows by continuous exhaustion: in love by continuous loving, in thinking by exhausting the mind. This is a funny phenomenon and there is no natural explanation for it. Here we have the first point to go on if we want to find out where man has been entirely enslaved by pseudo-scientific ideologies. All have one thing in common: they tell us that man is entirely explainable out of his circumstances. If we know his circumstances, we can know him more and more. He is a product of the world; a product of things as they are. This would mean that the world including man could be explained physically.

Now I call physically everything that comes into and goes out of being without the help of man. I use it in the Greek sense of *physis*--the thing that emerges--and add to that: without the help of man. I call them occurrences because we do not know even if things exist. A lot of phenomena come about without our will, including dreams. Thus the physical is everything in being that does not come into being or go out of being with our help. Metaphysically I call everything (an event) that would not have happened if man would not have done it. This is the sphere of man's freedom and creativeness. An event we cause has metaphysical significance; but if the wind blows a book on the floor, it is an occurrence. It happens in a definite line of other occurrences (which we might be able to control by scientific means but which we do not create); they are interrelated chains of occurrences. No metaphysical implication whatsoever is involved; no meaning whatsoever is involved--though consequence and sense might be involved (we could follow the line of the wind or measure the strength of the wind). By no meaning I mean that everything in the realm of the physical has the implication of being merely functional. It can be measured and grasped merely by functional means. Anything that has meaning must have intention. In the case of an *idée fixe*, for example, the patient's mental processes have lost meaning; they are merely functional now.

Formerly when we believed in God and the cosmos we believed that natural things had meaning because God put meaning into them, but now we cannot believe in this. There are no spirits in the cosmos that set their will against us; we have overcome them. There is absolutely no meaning in the intentional sense in physical occurrences, but if I throw a book on the floor, doing it intentionally, this means it has meaning. This action I caused--intention causes an action; an action causes an event--and now I can really talk of cause and effect (and we all think

now in terms of cause and effect). It is also an occurrence because the strength by which I did that--throwing the book on the floor--was coming into my body from an uninterrupted chain of occurrences. I used this to bring about an event so both occurrence and event are therefore involved. The metaphysical action of the human will also manifests itself by butting into a chain of given occurrences, putting it into the service of the human will and bringing it into an event. Now the occurrence has meaning too; intention has been put into the occurrence. What Heidegger calls "the things in hand" is the exact togetherness of an occurrence and an event. Intention has gotten hold of a chain of occurrences and transposed it into another chain of occurrences that now has meaning--which is what we used to call form. But this being that can do that cannot be explained out of all the chains of occurrences in the world--and here lies the first proof for human freedom.

Kant still thought that freedom could not be proved (along with God and immortality) and one shortcoming of Kant was stopping there. (He also had one wrong question: the question was not one of immortality but eternity; immortality is only personal. We are only concerned with immortality because we are concerned basically with eternity.) The other shortcoming of Kant was that he believed those three things--freedom, God, and immortality--must be believed in or the human mind would not function in freedom. And since philosophy is concerned with freedom, and has always been distinguished from religion by caring for freedom first, God next, as religion cared always for God first freedom second--or morally speaking, philosophers have always cared for truth first, goodness second; religious thinkers for goodness first, truth second--we must now raise again the question: What is freedom? and can a human being be free? and how? This is the pivotal question.

We believed up to 1800 that knowledge and understanding were the same, that understanding was a higher kind of knowledge. Even now we do not have the concept that knowledge and understanding are entirely different, but we could believe in the identity of knowledge and truth only so long as we believed in the identity of the physical and the metaphysical as well. And only so long as we believed in cosmical events and not in natural occurrences, could we believe that they revealed meaning, that there was a guidance inherent in what we call natural occurrences. That means we are no longer entitled to say that understanding and knowledge are the same, that knowledge makes for truth. This error had its source in Greek thinking--in Platonic and Aristotelian thinking. If the idea of an object in my mind coincided with the object itself, it used to be called truth; now it is only adequate because truth must have meaning in it, and it must be more than recognition. Jaspers has made a new theory uniting against knowledge and understanding, saying that the scientist is concerned with truth--which is true, but he is only concerned with the pre-conditions of truth. Understanding is applicable only to the metaphysical; knowledge to the physical. Understanding enables us to communicate with other beings; knowledge is always one-sided because knowledge only enables us to handle things--and things know nothing of us (they only answer by changing, which is no answer) and we can never know things in themselves (Kant was right). However, when meaning, which is intentional, has been put into a thing, as with human-produced things, then we can and we must listen to what other human beings have put into a thing. Since this thing was built for a purpose, it has the language of form and it speaks and has intention.

Lecture II

I want to talk now about the difference of my approach and Jaspers' on why and how do we study philosophy so that you can make the differentiations as you read Jaspers' book, but first I want to change the title of this course to: Why and How Must Every Man Study Philosophy--the reason for which I will explain in a minute.

Jaspers' approach is the last and most noble philosophical theory about philosophy that grows out of the most pure of all humanistic and liberalistic thinking in Western Europe. Jaspers and Camus are the only ones (along with Heidegger) who make an attempt to overcome the nihilistic situation, but both fall back into the nihilistic situation. They cannot find a way out because there is only the way up--as long as they work within the framework of it, they must fall back into it. Jaspers and Camus do not see that even the most pure line of humanistic and liberal thought cannot get away from the sorry situation which leads us to ask: Must there not be in fact something absolutely wrong in the very starting position of that thinking, something that has always been in it--its opposite which leads back into the nihilistic situation?

Jaspers says that basically philosophy cannot claim to be practical--though he claims it to be so, but only so far as the inner experience of man in his individual existence. He claims that by philosophizing we can come into a state where, by purifying our thoughts and ourselves, we can get sure of the fact that man has the possibility of transcendence to God--the forever unknowable God. The individual can get the experience that everything he finds out for truth can be rejected, but he must transcend this. By proving his strength to go on he will find inner assurance of his own transcendence. Inner experience (which is psychological and mystical) can always lead to a certain proposition of mysticism and with Jaspers it becomes the proposition that the individual will get an inner feeling finally that he is really able to transcend and that will give him assurance of his own worthiness against despair. Out of inner subjective experience he wants to lead on to a way that will give each one assurance against the nihilistic situation.

Now in science polemics is necessary, but not in philosophy. The only criticism allowed in philosophy is to do it better. Every new approach must take into account what has gone before. Jaspers' approach I feel is valuable and valid in terms of education and self-education, by which we can make single individuals to a certain degree bullet-proof to the nihilistic approach. This is the positive reason why I chose this book as a parallel study. Unfortunately, the conclusion is that Jaspers cannot speak to man any more; he can only speak to men or only to single human beings. He cannot possibly make any approach which by finding out our common situation can help us to overcome the nihilistic situation. This is why he feels that philosophy is helpless and that philosophy cannot enforce itself. Old philosophy wanted to gain power over the human mind--claiming to be the mediator between God and man or between the meaning of the cosmos and man--but it did not claim, as philosophy did later, to be the ruler of man. As soon as the cosmological and theological approach broke down (with Kant), philosophy had to find out what it really had to claim for itself. This opened up the possibility of pure philosophy, which we are pursuing here, but it also opened up the possibility for the absolute claim to rule--which all 19th Century philosophers made. Jaspers makes yet a third approach--we, as philosophers, can give someone certain guidance but we cannot prove anything to him or claim leadership--that is

honorable in a negative way, growing out of Kant (as opposed to Hegel and Nietzsche who claimed the absolute leadership of man).

Jaspers' approach is one of the finest to show scientists that they are really priests when they claim to be absolute experts; that they want to rule the minds of men when they claim to have the truth instead of searching for it. He shows that a philosopher too much knows that truth is infinite and that he should never claim to be in possession of it. But the weakness of Jaspers is that he claims for a philosopher only the role of a man who guides individuals--the philosopher must sit there waiting for the enlightened ones who turn to philosophy, for the ones who have been faced with life problems and have found science wanting in the answering of those problems. His position is a noble one and in a way a Christian one in his relation to goodness and God in order to show the way back to God (not religion.) But I am very suspicious of all those positions because the half-religious or religious thinker always puts goodness first and truth second, God first and freedom second. Pure philosophical thinkers are concerned the other way around--truth first goodness second, freedom first God second--though you will find the reverse is true in certain cases of philosophers and theologians. My position is that we cannot know about God, so let's not aim for God. If we come into a position in the search for truth where we can make an approach to God visible, all right--but otherwise forget it.

And just as I am always a little critical of a philosopher concerned with goodness because it means he places truth second, I am a little bothered by Camus because he is concerned about the happiness of man--which means that he is concerned with feelings first. A philosopher is not entitled to that. When Nietzsche's sister wrote to him about religion, he replied: "If you want to be elevated and feel fine, go on that way. I am ready to take the truth first----even if it is the cruel and killing one." He made this decision in order to make sure that the search could not creep in the uncontrolled human longing for feeling better. He would rather feel worse and know that he had the truth. As long as the concept of the whole human personality held fast to provide a certain safeguard, that cruel distinction as to truth and feeling was not so necessary (and in a concept of freedom, which becomes possible with free philosophy, we do not need such a distinction at all), but Nietzsche made his stand when the splitting of the personality had already occurred. All longing for goodness was already sentimental; all longing for truth merciless because truth had become the search of the cold human intellect. The heart had degraded into the cold human soul, the mind into the intellect. Coldness of intellect is necessary for science and scientists, but they do not have to believe it is their mind. When Nietzsche took his stand against his sister, it was in reality a stand for the intellect against the soul (sentimentality).

In physics there is a definition of dirt as matter in the wrong place. But if we sweep that dirt together until we have a pile of it and put it in the garden, when it rains we have top soil. Sentimentality is feeling in the wrong place--displaced feeling not rightly employed--and one proof of this is in the worst situation of displaced feeling (and a situation very much prevailing): the function of self-pity, which is displacement of the strength of human feelings into the reverse. In a case of self-pity a man is mirrored and remirrored on himself until finally he can feel sorry only for himself. That man always wonders why no one feels for him but the answer is simple: he feels so much for himself he has nothing left to give to others--his feelings are all misplaced. It is not a question of morals and we are not accusing such a person of being selfish (in fact it

might be better if he really were), but he has become an example of absolute sentimentality and lives always in tears for himself. This misplacing, or the possibility of it, has its roots in the split between the human mind and the human heart which turned the mind into the intellect and the heart into sentimentality which cannot be controlled any more.

If we take the concept of freedom we see that pure philosophy puts its interest in freedom first and in God second; then we see that the concept of freedom is unable to show us even a possibility of a cleavage between the mind and the heart. If someone is interested in freedom, he is interested with his heart as well as with his mind. Freedom is also a necessity for the human heart because it makes us feel fine without our being able to distrust that feeling. We have our own dignity (that is a feeling too) and the possibility of self-respect--the possibility of self-respect as a feeling relating to the human heart. But because it is such an essential feeling, if we do have it, we take it for granted. We do not realize that we have it--and we do the same with political freedom. In America, for instance, we have taken freedom for granted for a long time. We have forgotten that it is there and that it is something. We have forgotten it as we forget air--until we come into a special situation (if we are suddenly faced with the possibility of drowning, for example) and realize that it is a fundamental need of life, or as we suddenly and consciously experience the joy of breathing in the mountains after months in a city. This is comparable to freedom as a metaphysical experience, as a necessity of the mind as well as of the heart. We see suddenly for the first time the whole functioning of the human being in unity, in one. So I say that I care for freedom first (Kant was the greatest and last one in the line) and this divides me from Jaspers' approach.

Now to go back for a moment to why I changed the title of this course. The answer to the new title--"Why Must Everybody Study Philosophy?" or "Why Must Every Human Being Philosophize?"--is quite simple: he cannot avoid it. We have gotten into the habit of calling every theory about something a philosophy (such as a philosophy of gardening!), and it is a kind of muddle-headedness which shows that a sense of philosophy is entirely lost. I had the opportunity not so long ago to talk to a G. I. who had been in Germany during the occupation, and he told me: "If there is one thing I simply cannot stand to hear one more time, it's the word 'culture'!" I also had a chance to talk with a German who told me: "There's one thing I simply cannot stand to hear again --and that is the word 'democracy' !" The American was right about the German who always talks about culture because he is no longer creative. The German was wrong about democracy because the Germans have an entirely different concept of democracy, but he was right about the use of the word. The word "philosophy" has had something of the same fate--"Let's now take the philosophy of Mr. Taft or Mr. Eisenhower." or "What is your philosophy?"--but this is also in a way a very healthy thing. A dim awareness is shown in these primitive people who talk that way that philosophy is something that a human being leads his actions by. They have a feeling, in all its primitiveness and even banality, for the deep fact that free philosophy is really the activity by which human beings make up their minds. We want now to try to go to the heart of this matter, to find the creative thoughts that guide action, and to ask: How is it possible that a human being can design certain plans in life, see that they hold true, and then be able to make them truer by changing them? What gives him this quality--the quality of philosophical thinking--which leads to freedom as I define it?

Freedom is a rubber word; it has been stretched in every direction. The moment in history when man really wanted to be absolutely free—the French Revolution--and designed his own destiny, the real age of revolutions set in. He fought under the flag of freedom and his battles only earned him more slavery. Liberty and freedom mean about the same to the English and American mind except for the use of these two words in their plural form. The word 'liberties' is used in a way that 'freedom' never is and the double-meaning of freedom is just contained in this split. Preliminarily and paradoxically, the fight for freedom that started at the beginning of our modern age might have been lost just because it was always fought under the flag of liberties and we have never gotten the flag of freedom yet. Camus tries to put forward a theory that the real fault is that we have always made revolutions rather than stopping at rebellion. Unfortunately, this is not true. He tries to prove that the revolter manifests the truth of the common dignity of man--but the revolter is really a slave and creates a new master. What would be required would be an absolute transformation of man's situation in the world.

Why must man work philosophically and live philosophically? That can only be explained by the seeming rigidity of this proposition, which almost brings in a categorical imperative. I condemn Nietzsche and Hegel for bringing in the "you must" (instead of Kant's "you shall") because it means if you do not, you will be a dope. Yet, I too introduce a "you must." What do I mean? I mean only the decision itself. I mean to make man aware that his freedom consists in his being a metaphysical being—a being who can decide. And just in this ability of decision lies the secret of freedom. The first decision by which the power of decision has to be manifested by every man is the decision for freedom itself. When we were after a definition of freedom (even Kant in the noble line which Jaspers closes), we still considered that we were born free (as it was practically manifested in the American Constitution): that is, freedom was given as a quality--and this has been the foundation of the rights of man. Metaphysically speaking, the fight between totalitarianism and what is good in the United States is the fight between the rights of man and, on the other side, the absolute denial of his qualities as man (not just his rights, even his qualities). Unfortunately, this humanistic foundation does not hold water now. The nihilistic situation has been able to show that freedom is not given as a quality of man. Men have not been born free any more than they have been born equal. Here seems to be the danger--the danger that all American freedom has come out of this and if it can be proved that it does not hold, then we are all lost. One of the reasons why American propaganda is ineffective and Russian propaganda is effective in Europe is that every belief has vanished in Europe. This concept of being born free is still based on a religious condition--just as the so-called dignity of man stems from his being made by God. It is a remainder of Christian thought, which philosophically can no longer hold water since religion has lost its central position and we no longer believe these things are given by God. This does not mean that America is politically endangered from this yet, but metaphysically speaking, we must ask: If we do not believe that men are born free, how can they be free?

We have now to find the proof of human freedom in human creativeness itself and since religion has been blown out of the center of the creative activities of human beings, we must show first that the human being is a metaphysical being without the help of religious transcendence. We will take only the fact of the life activity of man himself into consideration--and in his life activity man shows the possibility of a creativity to bring things into the world that have not been there

before. If man is creative with the possibility of decision--to go one step deeper and one step back--we find that we come back once again to the position of the Enlightenment. Man has been born as a metaphysical being who has the possibility to make himself free; he has been given a creativeness that can help him to make himself free, to create freedom, to make it—which means the first decision that man has to make is for freedom itself. So I introduced a “must”: man must make a decision for freedom if he wants to develop himself in freedom, if he wants to live in freedom; and having made that decision, then he must study philosophy because philosophy cares most for freedom and the development of it. Philosophy studies freedom because freedom is the central source of human life itself (as distinguished from existence)--life can only be created in freedom.

And this, of course, brings us to the question of truth and to what its methods might be. By this very example of my own procedure--that the nihilistic arguments against the rights of man are valid--I have tried to find more truth, and we find here something characteristic for philosophy: all human truth is to be found in the same spot. In philosophy truth is always located in the same place. If we want to go deeper into the rights of man, we take up the same question again. Let us assume that truth is the source of life, then the eternal procedure of man can be compared to a well-digger who comes again and again to the same spot. The source got dirtied and dried up after the Enlightenment, but if we go back to the same spot and go deeper, the water will spring up again for a while, then become dirtied, to be found again by once more going deeper. The procedure of philosophy--of all the procedures we have to design to make human life and the world more meaningful--is the very procedure of human life itself.

Discussion Period:

Now for a word about discussion. Discussion is particularly important in a course of this kind and I want to allow as much time as possible for it, but first I want to say that here the topic in itself is not so important as what can be shown by the discussion: that is, the topic is only used as a model in order to make it clear methodologically how we proceed and to show how philosophy can answer where other things cannot.

Nietzsche was the first one to hit upon a certain contradiction in freedom: "Forget to tell me free from what but rather tell me free for what." Camus brings out that revolution and revolt start with concrete liberation from certain things. We have always been aware of what we wanted to be free from, but as soon as we use the plural form (liberties), we lose the metaphysical meaning of freedom. In China, in trying to free themselves from the white man and imperialism, they ended up taking the road of total imperialism. The foundations that guarantee certain liberties are especially needed now because we want to be free from something. We want to go on with liberties, but we overlook the fact that in the very procedure of giving liberties their very source is taken away. Freedom consists in the open possibility of gaining more and more liberties, that is true; it consists in a procedure of infinite liberation--but it is a procedure of freedom for what, not freedom from what, that gives every citizen the possibility to decide what new liberties should be gained and what old ones defended. In revolution we give that away, which is why all

revolutions end in slavery unless they end in a constitution that is really followed by all, guaranteeing the possibility of new liberties.

It has always been accepted in politics and it has always been a principle in politics that the end justifies the means, but this is only true in science where it deals with things; it is absolutely impossible in politics. If the means are not right, the end will not come out; if the means are slavery, no freedom is possible. Abstractions, which are rightly used in science dealing with things, applied to beings that kill human life. But science has to go parallel and be related to philosophical procedure and in turn philosophy has to check itself on concrete scientific facts of the historical moment. If a philosopher would say that science is not creative work in its own field and that he will disregard it, he would soon become a fool. He must keep the stream of philosophy clear, but he cannot disregard the other streams.

We cannot concede to everyone boundless freedom because it would lead to anarchy and to the impossibility of building a human community, but a decision for freedom must be made. If we think that by not making a decision for freedom we have just rejected something, we will find out soon enough that we have actually accepted something else: slavery. If we do not fight for freedom, we are ready for slavery--which brings in another facet of the question (there is a dialectic relationship involved in this). In a marriage, for example, where the girl gives herself into voluntary slavery, so to speak, what that girl actually does as a slave in a marriage of this kind--by making her husband a tyrant by her voluntary slavery--is to become a tyrant too; she wants to become a tyrant. It would seem then that tyranny can only be fought by setting limits to indulgence in voluntary slavery. Something entirely inhuman must be involved if someone wants to be a slave--and one of the best examples of an awareness of this is to be found in the ancient Jews. In those hard and meager times it often happened that a man could not pay his debts. The Jewish law provided that if this man could not pay his debts he could be taken into slavery for a certain period of time (seven years) by the creditor until the debt was paid off by labor. But if it happened, as it does happen, that this man after seven years was afraid to go back into the world as a free man, that he hated to leave the security of slavery, the Jewish law made a provision that he must first be nailed through the ear to a door for one day so everyone could see this man who wanted voluntarily to give up his freedom for slavery. Once this was done he could then be a slave for life.

Lecture III

I have said that I differ from Jaspers and his approach to the reasons why we should study philosophy and that it was mainly on the point that I think in our modern situation it should be: Why must modern men philosophize? I will try to give reasons for this out of the very situation in which we are and what we have found up to now about belief and reason.

When we rejected God philosophically, we lost our belief. Now even men of the church have lost their ability to believe. Their historical training and their training in the natural sciences have disabled them to believe in a specific God painted by the Jewish and Christian myth. We are in a situation where we are not free any more to decide if we want to be believers or non-believers.

If some of us think of ourselves proudly as men who are independent and strong because we do not believe, we overrate ourselves. Formerly (up to 1800) When science could still try to bring about an alliance between science and religion (and even philosophy), real doubters turned up; not in the masses but in strong individuals and very strong thinkers who had to put in a lot of effort to doubt. With us it is quite different: we are pushed into non-belief. Now it is the man who tries to go into belief who might claim a boldness of spirit and independence of thought because he is not pushed into belief. But we are pushed into non-belief; it is made too easy for us. All of us are involuntarily doubters, including those who go to church, whether we realize it or not. This is why the Catholic Church tries to tell us all dogmas are scientifically proved. What are they trying to do? Is a scientific religion being served to us now?!! The Pope tells us there is now proof for the miracles; it is written down. You are a dope if you do not believe because it is scientifically proven--and don't you believe in science? But as a philosopher I would say, "No, I do not believe in science; I know science." Modern man, however, believes in science; he is a believer. So it is a nice trick to get man back into religion by pseudo-scientific means. He can be gathered in again by superstition (belief in science is superstition), and the worst kind of superstition is used to lead people back into the church. Here are the perplexities of the nihilistic situation. Most people are pushed into disbelief and do not even know what they have lost.

To believe in science is superstition because we believe in the scientific method. We believe that everything can be cleared up and found out by scientific methods--people too. But no proof of that can be given; on the contrary there is counter-proof against handling people by scientific methods--proof that scientific methods applied to people can lead to such things as concentration camps, etc. It has nothing to do with truth or with human beings, and metaphysically speaking, it turns out to be a crime. Engels once said, "Common sense can experience its 'blue wonders' if it dares to enter the field of science.", and we now unfortunately have had the experience that we do experience "blue wonders" when scientific methods are applied to people. All of which only means that we have to get things straight. What can science do for us and what can it not do? What can religion do for us and what can it not do? What can philosophy do for us and what can it not do? Later we must ask this of politics too. We have to find the original sources of those different phenomena that are brought about by us. So the approach we have to make is to find out what philosophy is and how to use it. We have to get at a clear concept of what philosophy is as a specific human activity and what the other human activities are. We have also to find out how we can know their limits and how we can avoid mixing them up.

Up to 1800, roughly speaking, the intermixture of those different activities of man had not been too dangerous because they were held together by the general religious setting. Goethe could believe in the cosmos as well as in God. Being a scientist, poet and philosopher he could still unite all those things in himself and it would not harm him. But from around 1800 on those mixtures started to be poisonous to man because religion had been dropped out. Then the whole conglomerate drifted apart and we tried to connect different things with the result that we mixed them up instead--which was a very dangerous thing. Roughly speaking, we can find that philosophy is the center of all creative human activities and that they can be brought into coordination not directly but via philosophy--because it is through philosophy that their limits can

be checked. As a design (not a proposition) we could really find out what we are doing in those fields--and there is nothing left to the philosopher but that approach.

We have tried every approach in the past. We have made propositions of being which we could not control and started with those propositions of being which we could not control--including that ghost, the self of Kierkegaard, of which we do not even know whether it exists or not. We have found that the self is most unlikely to know something about itself and we must reject this idea of self. If someone loves that self, then the one who loves can have more insight into that self than the self itself. Even Heidegger's proposition to call it abstractly "existence" contains this idea of self when he says it is possible to say that existence is something only human beings have, that human beings have a certain type of being, that being--or "being there" (a more accurate translation from the German)--relates only to human beings. Heidegger then tries to find out what this existence is and again makes an abstraction to try to reach existence in general. But he still has to say: "Existence is always only yours, always individual."--which especially shows that his proposition for being is this self of Kierkegaard's. He wants to get away from it but he cannot because it is based upon it.

Nietzsche said, "Everything is united by being the will to power, so being is the will to power." This is absolutely true--this will to power--and Nietzsche only took the mask away from this hidden will of man. We fought apparently for freedom but it turned out we fought only for power. Nietzsche was right about what we were doing at that time and his proposition--everything that is has in common to act and to act in a way to overwhelm other beings--historically was quite true. But he thought to re-unite the Greek cosmos into a funny, meaningless cosmos and to see meaning in it only insofar as it acts, and he made a mythical illusion of the cosmos out of his proposition. Nietzsche's position that "Everything that is can only be perceived by me by its action; and if that thing is more than its action and what it does to me, I do not know what more it is." is only the old proposition of Kant that we cannot know that things are because we only get their effects. So if we want to put forth a scientific explanation of being (which means it would be meaningless)--taking the nihilistic position that being has no meaning--we could then make the nihilistic proposition into a scientific one: Everything in being is only action. This proposition has no meaning, but it explains; it is adequate and right, but it does not make sense or give meaning to being; it does not answer why, only how. Science and philosophy are already so mixed up that a true scientific proposition such as Nietzsche's can be put forth as a philosophical proposition and the philosopher does not even know it. So metaphysically we cannot take it seriously because it does not tell us anything.

The nihilistic formula, "Nothing is true; everything is permitted.", abstractly means that being has no meaning. We want to overcome this proposition which is the basis of our modern thinking. We lose control in our thinking as soon as we start thinking that being has no meaning, as soon as philosophy declares itself to be bankrupt--and the nihilistic situation is a declaration of bankruptcy made quite sincerely ("We owe our results to a sense of absolute sincerity."--Nietzsche). Coming after Kant, philosophers found out that the only thing they could find out was that there was no truth. But is there not inherent in this the claim that truth is that there is no truth--and did they not claim this? We run now into a circle of contradictions until it comes finally into empty logical procedure and becomes a mere process of thinking with no

substance any more. All that is left is bare logic--the sheer mechanics--which becomes a mortal proposition to life. We did try to put forth new propositions of being (as the existentialists did, for example), but we failed. Now the only thing left to us is to do what we failed to do. We tried to take over on our own, yet we failed to ask one question: Who are you? Who is man?

"Know Thyself" was the inscription of Apollon on the temple of Delphi--which seems to have been a strange inscription for a place where people came to hear the future! The people who came there really wanted to know metaphysically about being when they wanted to hear the future from Apollon, but if they were to take the inscription "Know Thyself" seriously, it would mean that the visitor coming there to find out what was going to happen, philosophically speaking, could only act consequently by going home--though only Socrates took the inscription that seriously and acted so by not going there in the first place. Someone else (an overzealous pupil) took it upon himself to go and ask for Socrates and in reply to his question, "Who is the wisest man?", the oracle answered, "Socrates." When Socrates heard about this he was clever enough to know how terrible the oracle could be when it spoke out directly (because then it wanted to destroy), so he avoided the curse of the Gods (called "the envy of the Gods") by saying, "I am the wisest only because I know that I know nothing." So perhaps we should go back to the temple of Delphi and read the inscription again--"Know Thyself"--for it is only by finding out who we are that we can begin to find the answer--and this is the hidden and ironical meaning of the Greek oracles. When a king came to the oracle to ask what would happen if he went to war with the Persians, the oracle answered, "If you cross the river, you will destroy a great empire." The empire he destroyed was his own. Could he have known better if he had understood himself? Yes! For then he would have known that he wanted to destroy a great empire; then he would have understood that there were two empires to be destroyed and would have been warned. On the other hand if he had known that he wanted to build an empire (the right proposition) and the oracle had said, "You will destroy one empire.", then it would have been the other empire.

People can only understand others by understanding themselves—it is a two-way street. But if we want to go back to ask the one question we have failed to ask in this our modern situation--Who is man?--then we must understand one thing: --if we start with the individual or humanity or society, we can never come to the question of man or to the question: What do we have in common that all of us have in common?--which also must be answered so we can at least control our mutual thoughts on the subject in order to talk to each other and give essential proofs in freedom. When we ask someone, "Did you have the same experience?", and he answers "Yes!", we know that men have a thing in common, and when we know what it is they have in common, we will know what man might be.

When we rejected the cosmological and theological propositions, we said that we did not want to be in father's lap any more. Metaphysically, this meant to challenge ourselves to show that we are creative; that we are beings not entirely determined by the world, but beings who in a way transcend the world, who cannot be explained in full by the world; that we are beings who out of freedom are able to invent freely and to put things into the world which without us would not be there; that we are beings who have creativeness, but not as rivals of God. We are challenged to find out if we are metaphysical beings and we can only find this out by analyzing our main

creative activities. What are we doing to ourselves and to the world when we think metaphysically (philosophically)? What are we doing to the world and to ourselves when we think calculatively (scientifically)? What are we doing to ourselves and to the world when we think metaphorically (artistically)? What are these creative activities? What do they mean? What do they say about us? This way is the only one left to find something that we are sure that it is.

Now we want to find out how we are (how we act) and to analyze what we are really doing. Let's first look into a position expressed by Heidegger, who found an approximate formula for the situation of man in the world: "Man is thrown into the world and he tries to answer this being thrown into it by a design that he makes to become himself, to assert himself." Only one thing in this position is important for us right now: the situational aspect. This being thrown into the world can be doubted, but one thing is sure: man in a way as never before feels alien in the world. Man always before has found himself in a certain situation with regard to the world--and perhaps not always a comfortable one--but he has never felt so much a stranger as in modern times because he has made himself a stranger voluntarily by a real fall (and one he brought about himself by telling God that he did not need Him any more). We have to realize that we are in a situation where we are perfect strangers to a world that is perfectly strange to us (which I once called in a course "Man Alone"). In this situation we cannot go from outdoors to indoors any more; we can only go indoors out. We have to check what we are really doing, to check our own activities. This gives us a possibility to get a new position toward the world--rather than the position that "man is thrown into the world," which involves the fact that man is lost (the real nihilistic consequence) and means that all he can do is to be concerned with overcoming his inner fears in that terrible situation and to fortify himself against it. In the nihilistic situation he can only take the position of Sisyphos. Sisyphos was a man who defied the Gods like Prometheus, but Prometheus was a Titan and Sisyphos was a plain man who thought that he was wise--wiser than the Gods, and showed them that he was. (The Greeks dared to put this into their myth--a man showing himself to be wiser than the Gods!) His punishment was that he was damned always to roll a rock up to the top of a hill, and at the moment he was almost there, the rock would roll down to the bottom and he would have to start all over again.

Camus' position is that life is absurd, that the situation makes no sense, has no meaning, and we cannot possibly do anything about it. We have, according to Camus, to consider and then to reject suicide (which would seem to be a positive action against the situation); then we have to consider and also reject the possibility of committing murder (since it makes an assertion). That leaves us with one possibility: --to take on the role of Sisyphos--and to take it on if only for one thing: to show human pride against a senseless, meaningless fate (against the Gods who do not exist). This is the last humanistic proposition, and it is also nihilistic because the nihilistic position is the result of humanism.

Heidegger has only inwardness by which we might change our terrible situation--to express ourselves by the making of voluntary designs that can help us develop our own personality. But unfortunately this does not hold true. If we are so lost in the world that we cannot do anything meaningful toward any other human being, it follows then that we cannot do anything meaningful inwardly either. Once my communication with other human beings is broken I become absolutely meaningless within myself--and there is no way out of that conclusion. The

trouble with life in general is that if we refuse to face the consequences of one single action, that thing runs after us--usually catching up with us at the most inconvenient moment--and it is much harder because it is always behind us. Schopenhauer once defined the main qualities of man as cowardice and laziness. We all try to put forth certain propositions without thinking of the consequences, but someone always comes along to see to those consequences. The consequences in this proposition of Heidegger's would be that every man would become meaningless in himself also.

Kant once said that philosophy was only concerned with the plainest things that everyone thought he understood but hardly ever did understand; and common, human, daily life occurrences were the start Kant made to approach the questions of freedom, God, and immortality. We in this inquiry have also to go back to the fundamental questions and life problems of man and take another look at man and at the situation he finds himself in in order to take a position towards it. We not only have to realize how terrible the situation is but also that it is absolutely dissimilar to any other situation man has ever been in and that it means a fundamental transformation of what man has thought up to now. But it might be that man is lost in the world only as he has lost his ground to stand on. He might just be stumbling and not really lost. He might be able to find a position toward the world that he can take in his own situation today—as soon as he realizes what that situation is. And since philosophy has to answer what for and why, we, as philosophical men and women, have to try to answer again: What is the meaning of being? We have to ask such questions as: What is thinking without which man does not exist? And if we try to answer that question, we find that thinking is our inner action already aiming at something and that it can show man to be a very peculiar being: namely, a being itself (all other so-called beings are things).

Lecture IV

Let's start today with a distinction not between the scientific position and the philosophic position, but rather between two things that relate to them: the scientific disposition of a man and the metaphysical disposition of a man--looking at them and at what is implied by taking a scientific position in a certain situation within a certain historical setting and taking a philosophical position. Jaspers' example of this is the difference in position taken by Galileo and Giordano Bruno when both were accused of atheism and heresy. Bruno was burned at the stake; Galileo was not. Jaspers takes the position that Galileo claimed a scientific proposition when he advanced the proposition that the earth was not the center of the world, as thought by Ptolemy, but that it revolved around the sun. The church, when it learned of Galileo's proposition, said this could not be true because it directly opposed the Bible.

This position of the church has been interpreted in just a little too shallow a manner by modern "free" thinkers (who are really slave thinkers). They think the church merely was afraid because something in the Bible was doubted, but this was not quite true--for the church had a metaphysical position too. If religious Jews, as members of the reigning church, had been confronted with Galileo, they too would have opposed Galileo because in both the Jewish and Catholic religions a cosmology is inherent, supposing a cosmos created by God based on iron

laws--and as they are set, so they will stand in all eternity. Built on that is the whole theology of Judaism and Christianity, which guarantees man his place in the world and which makes sure that man cannot come to a position which might drive him into nihilistic despair.

This hangs together with the physical proposition of an earth created for man. As soon as an astronomer comes to tell us that the earth is not immovable or the center of the universe, that heaven does not stand fast and that everything is in movement, then any trained theological thinker could see the conclusions which might follow both metaphysically and scientifically. If such a theory were possible scientifically, we would end up seeing everything in continuous movement and change, which would mean that in the case of an established religion it would be gone. The Jewish and Christian religions would be lost when that is true--and that was just what those theologians saw because they were metaphysical thinkers who could think speculatively as well as analytically (as the scientist thinks). They knew what was implied, so it was not just to maintain the church but also because of inner fear that this just could not be true.

Jaspers thinks that Galileo put forth a merely scientific proposition when he put forth the proposition that the earth revolves around the sun, and therefore that he was perfectly right to deny the truth he had discovered in order to stay alive because Galileo had made a merely scientific proposition which could be proved objectively about a merely physical matter. The fact that the earth really revolves around the sun could not be abolished by the denial of Galileo, which meant that he might safely stay alive because another could come to rediscover that fact, which was an objective fact. So he would have been a fool to risk his life, being sure that another scientist would come along to find out the fact and to state it again in an age when the church would not be so opposed to it.

Bruno on the other hand put forward a metaphysical proposition. He took the position of pantheism and tried to bring in the Greek cosmos. It was on new scientific terms but metaphysically it meant the Greek cosmos. Spinoza developed this, then from Spinoza, Goethe translated this great pantheistic belief--which was the belief from the time of the Renaissance on to 1800--into poetic terms. Bruno thought that he only put forward a metaphysical proposition without realizing that also contained in this proposition was a belief that this cosmos was really existent--and that inherent in this pantheistic belief was the fact that philosophy was really trying to break away from religion. Although Bruno did not realize this, the church knew very well that it was a claim by philosophy to replace religion by a substitute of religion (philosophy) and that it excluded a personal God. Bruno's concept of the world as a cosmos was a mythical concept and was not clean philosophically because he had in his cosmos divine powers--nature had inherent in its divine powers--though it was in the cosmological sense rather than in the sense of nature. The church knew this meant replacing one God with an infinity of divine powers within a cosmos which was sheer heathen thinking. For that they proposed to burn him--and did.

Jaspers thinks that Bruno also was right. He had to make this decision because he was a philosopher. He had put forward a philosophical proposition, and if he had not stood his ground he might not have been burned at the stake, but his books would have been burned and he would not have written what he had written again. We might never have gotten this philosophical proposition because it depended upon one human mind. I would say for this proposition of Jaspers' that it is true.

Philosophy to a certain degree and in some aspects of its qualities resembles art more than science (which it also resembles in other respects). First, quality counts in philosophy as well as in art. For this let me give a most modern example (which is only an opinion of mine): I think that this attempt (and a brave attempt it is) that Heidegger makes now to overcome the nihilistic situation will only result in putting us deeper into it; nevertheless, I do not feel entitled to reject this work because the quality is so high and the depths of problematical thinking so great, and he puts the discussion on such a profound level that no one can afford to reject it. Heidegger tries now to overcome Nazism as a consequence of his own Nazism. (He was a Nazi for one year, then broke away and took real risks against them.). He makes an attempt now, as a philosopher should, to atone for his sin. The spot on him may always remain, but let's forget about that for now because the quality of Heidegger's thought is necessary.

The second thing that philosophy has in common with art is a difference it shares with art as to science. A discovery in science not made today, will be made tomorrow, but in art a picture Leonardo da Vinci did not paint, will never be there. There is no possibility of replacing art and no possibility to think of such a thing. Art is entirely spontaneous (which science can never be) and philosophy has this much in common with art: if Bruno had not stood up for his system, we might have lost his metaphysical proposition and Spinoza might not have been able to design a system of modern pantheism without Bruno.

So Jaspers discovers when one puts forward a metaphysical proposition, one has to stand up for it even against death. Jaspers does not draw conclusions from this, but I will. A philosopher might make a discovery of scientific value and might save it without risking his life, but Bruno did more: Bruno put forward what Jaspers calls a philosophical proposition and what I call a metaphysical proposition--which would mean that this proposition contained an element of freedom, an element of intention and decision of the human will. The statement of Bruno, that the world was a cosmos with an infinity of divine powers, contained in it a statement of a situational judgment that nature might be that cosmos and that there were indications for that. It also contained a positional statement to man himself to look at it as that so man would be able to develop more freely a deeper and higher meaning of human life.

Bruno was not aware of the fact that a metaphysical proposition always contains these two elements--and up to now no philosopher has ever been aware that this was so. In old theological thought they believed that they merely interpreted God and in old philosophical thought they also believed they interpreted only given things (the laws of the cosmos, for example). No philosopher was ever aware of this and this is why philosophy is not yet in its pure state. This means that with Kant it was not only a matter of finding out about human reason--what it was, what it could do and its limits--but it was also the beginning of the self-criticism of philosophy itself. What has to be done is that philosophers must become aware first what they are really doing when they put forth a proposition. They always thought it was a statement; they never knew and did not want to know that they also put forward a proposition, and that with this proposition a philosopher has to say: "This in my opinion is more and more truth than we have known up to now, but I do not claim that this is the truth; I am not competing with people who claim to have the truth." Philosophers are not entitled to make this claim--the claim to have the truth--yet they always have.

In a metaphysical proposition there is always an element of will. A human being judges the situation of man in the world and as to all things in the world and makes up his mind. He describes it and proposes that this situation makes possible a position we can take out of which to develop a new way of life, and that he, the philosopher, is proposing a new way. A philosopher has to feel responsible for the part of his proposition that is a part of freedom and the will, and to say: "This is what I think we should do, and do you agree?" It is not for the philosopher to say: "This is what it is and how it is and this is what you have to do." The theologian can say, "This is so because this is how God made it.", but if a philosopher does this he shows that he is still a mythical thinker and that he claims a higher power behind him. The last power behind philosophy was claimed as human reason--human reason as a God telling us what to do and philosophy had only to find out what that reason required. But there is no such thing as human reason as a thing we can get hold of; it is only a permanent procedure of the human mind. It is a human thing and we have to say about reason what we say about the New York weather: "It can change in ten minutes." There is no possibility to get hold of the whole of reason and to say it functions such and such, and demands this and this when applied to a certain position. This is either fake or it is a belief.

Hegel too believed in reason and then he made an equation between the human spirit and God to get even more authority into his statement. But a philosopher cannot claim authority because by claiming authority he claims that he is an initiated one (told by God, so to speak), that he knows better, and therefore is entitled to raise that claim. Neither can a scientist claim to know better. The theologian can and does because he is supposed to have a higher knowledge to which we cannot claim, but if a scientist claims to know better, it is already a theological claim, and a claim to which only a theologian is entitled for it is only within religion that such a claim can be made. The scientist is a faker if he raises such a claim; he denies that he is aware that science is a human performance. If we raise absolute claims on that, we are betrayers, almost criminals. Philosophers up to now (and that includes all of them in a way) have also raised the claim of knowing better: either in the old way of being initiated to the cosmos (the whole) and of knowing what being was and from this followed what you had to do; or in the new way of the rationalists--of the men who believed in human reason and said to us, "We know about it and can tell you about it and about what you have to do."

This is why we cannot study philosophy; we can only work philosophically and study philosophers. Philosophers thought they had human reason; now we find it is very changeable too and we cannot make that claim. Pure philosophy is a kind of metaphysical thinking in which man makes up his mind about a certain situation in the world, tells his fellow men he has made up his mind about this situation, and leaves it up to them to see whether their experiences also show if the situation is really there; then he puts forward a proposition: "Let's take a position of our will and our doing which seems to me, as I have made up my mind, to be the most pertinent one and the one which I think I can prove to you will help you to get at a higher and deeper meaning of life. If you agree, then let's proceed along these lines. This philosophy of mine pretends only to help you to make up your own mind." Philosophy is helping man to make up his mind and in that sense philosophy teaches life; not with authority but only by proposing new possibilities and other ways of life. If people feel that these propositions are the most valuable

ones for them, then they will go this way and be in the same stream of creativity that this philosopher started.

So a philosopher can never be a leader--one who claims authority. Philosophy is the only creative human activity that has to reject any authority whatsoever. If we take politics as a creative activity (which may seem a strange idea at first), we will see, of course, that in politics we have to grant a certain authority to statesmen in a case of emergency. We have to control it and have to ask later for an accounting, but still we have to grant that authority. In science, certainly, authority to a degree is unavoidable and also has to be granted. To be a scientist may mean to have a certain career where the community has a responsibility to decide what that science is to be used for, but it also means to have a career--take an atom physicist for example--where the community (through sheer lack of knowledge--if nothing else) cannot claim to be able to control what the scientist does--though he certainly does not have the authority some of them claim. So in science it is impossible to avoid a certain authority, but it has to be controlled as much as possible. In art an absolute authority is granted. If it is a great work of art, it does not ask you whether it is or not; the artist, as to form, is an absolute monarch.

But in pure philosophy--after self-criticism would be complete and accepted--I think we would find out that pure metaphysical, speculative thinking is the freest kind of human activity and the most decisive because it can influence all others, and therefore it has to be the only one not entitled to raise any claim of authority--it has to be entirely a matter of proposition. This seems to bring in the question of arrogance and modesty and we have to look into this for a moment. All philosophers in the past have been very arrogant because of this claim of authority behind them--the claim to know the truth, the claim of being initiated ones, the claim of knowing better--but since a philosopher is not the chosen one, as they thought, but the cursed one, it would seem perhaps that modesty of claims would be the indicated approach. One notable exception to the group of arrogant philosophers might give us a clue to this: Karl Jaspers--who has such modesty as never before seen in a philosopher. He has the extreme modesty not to claim that he has a special way to the truth (in fact he hates philosophers who claim absolute truth), but unfortunately, he also makes truth so relative that it would seem that modesty cannot be the right approach either,

So if a philosopher is no longer entitled to be arrogant because of the claim of higher authority behind him and if modesty does not seem to be the answer, what can be the position of the pure philosopher who has to see that he never claims to be backed by a higher power, whatever it might be--which means that his task is much harder--so that he might help man to make up his mind by making up his own. Putting it in a popular form, a philosopher is not the leader of the Mormons into the new land, he is not even a pioneer--he is the scout always in new country to discover new paths, who comes back to the settlers to tell them about the country ahead and to propose to them paths and a way through the new country. He might even go along a way with them to show them, but not as a leader and he should reject all authority people try to give him (even titles or certain assignments, which of course sometimes the philosopher may have to accept because he too has to eat). That is not his business--though he could seduce them into believing that he is an initiated one. Pure philosophy, as well as politics, has to be done by everyone, and everyone has to be told in such a way so that he can understand. Everyone is

entitled to butt in and to ask, "What do you mean?", because it also means, "What do you want me to do because you are about to propose something."

Bruno, when faced with the decision of denying his proposition or being burned at the stake, was not aware of all these things, but he felt that if he would deny what he had said, he would be denying philosophy--whether it was in the way Jaspers thinks he might have felt, or whether it was in the way I think he might have meant it: I have made this proposition to go this way of life; now I may die for it; but if I thought it so important then that I proposed to others to go this way, surely it is no less important now that I may have to go this way to death.

Socrates too was faced with a decision when he was asked to stop--to stop, as his accusers put it, "seducing the youngsters of Athens." But he did not want to stop because he thought he had a way of philosophy--a way, as I see it, of a pure philosopher who did not raise a claim but showed that he knew as little as the others. Socrates claimed to be a midwife (here we find the irony of Socrates and also--because it was Greek thought--an erotical element) and said that he helped bring forth the child (the thought). What he really meant (and did not say) was that he engendered the thought. He felt that it took two people to bring forth a thought, that without communication thought was not possible, and that in making up his mind he could help make up the minds of others. He was not a midwife when you see that he had this impression. This was the first attempt at pure philosophy without the claim of a higher power (which Plato tried very hard to hide). Socrates knew that all the established values of justice did not hold water; he knew that we had to look for justice every day and that we could only know more and more justice--never all of it. He knew that at least in ethical philosophy it was a living procedure--so he too had to die.

Now is Jasper's also right when he tells us that Galileo also made the right decision? Galileo had put forth a mere scientific discovery. He could be sure that it would be rediscovered (In fact, he did not even make the discovery; he only rediscovered it. It was first discovered by an old Greek when the Greeks did not want such a fact, and later again by Leonardo da Vinci.) because the fact existed, and so Jaspers thinks--since Galileo could be sure it would not be lost--that he was right. If it could have been only a scientific statement, Galileo would have been right; but since the statement was made by not just a scientist but also a man and since a whole man is a metaphysical being with all that implies, could it be just a scientific statement? Galileo made the statement at a certain time when it was clear that science was trying to get out from under the tutelage of the church and to come into its own: that means that involved in this was the position of a scientist fighting for the independence of science against the church--which would mean that he was also faced with a metaphysical, political decision. If Galileo had not denied his proposition, he could have been sure that a whole generation of scientists would have followed in his footsteps in order to vindicate him. But he did deny his proposition and while scientifically he may have been right, I doubt very much if he did not do wrong for science as a creative human capability. On the other hand there is the possibility that Galileo may have thought in another way: I will save my life so that I can go on with the other discoveries I am about to make--and I can fight again for the position of science. And Galileo's further life did show that in spite of his denial he never ceased to fight for the position of science, and he did make further discoveries.

Now I have passed judgment on a procedure of philosophy that has always been used--namely, the raising of that claim of authority, whatever it might be--and it may seem that I too am one of those philosophers who claims all the other philosophers are wrong; but what I want to say (and the distinction I want to make) is quite another thing. We have advanced far enough to doubt all those philosophers and pseudo-scientists of the 19th Century and their claims--the claim of evolution, for example, or the claim that history has in itself certain laws according to which it proceeds and that we can only move according to those laws--and we have become very skeptical of any proposition based on those claims. We have become most skeptical about any historical proposition since we have seen the claim of history fail and we have become equally skeptical about any hypothesis of evolution since we have seen that it turned out to be a ghastly hypothesis. Real scientists do not talk about evolution any more or about development--it was all very useful for research but now it has to be rejected. Nevertheless, I think we can still talk about development--though not in the sense of progress--when speaking of one phenomenon: namely, that phenomenon which produces metaphysical thinking and realizes it--which we will call preliminarily the human mind. This is not a natural or a physical phenomenon; this is not a brain that grows, but a human mind that develops. And it is a phenomenon that can only develop because it has the magical ability to be self-developing--an ability not caused by any physical or outside interference, but brought about by its own activity in the physical as well as in the metaphysical realm.

So in this sense I think there becomes a certain history--but not a history of philosophy as Hegel made of it where he tried to show that all Western thinking was one continuous becoming (with matters proceeding on their own laws) until it got to Hegel as its goal. Man now finally had the truth; he had only to apply it--which meant that those thinkers to come afterwards could not be original thinkers any more. Philosophers were now what most Germans have always loved so much (and the only thing they have in common with the Jews): schoolmasters. The truth had now only to be taught (and here the comparison with the Jewish love of schoolmasters must stop for their love was theological which was quite different). So the pure schoolmaster was Hegel--and it was the greatest schoolmaster idea developed since Aristotle (who also had a schoolmaster mind)--who had finished everything for man. Everything was all done now and topped by Hegel's system. And man had only to learn that system and how to behave according to it. So this history I speak of is not a history of philosophy, but rather of the countless attempts of the human mind to cope with the different situations in which man has found himself in the world and the capabilities of the mind shown in such attempts (In the development of the human mind we find the real battles of life.). A kind of historical, metaphysical approach becomes possible to show why it was so hard and took so long to become aware of the fact that in the procedure of thinking, acting, and realizing going on in the human mind many capabilities have been involved, and it also becomes possible to show why those capabilities were always mixed up and mistaken each for the other, developing together originally in a conglomerate, as in myth.

As Kant once said, "I am in a discipline in metaphysics where we have to say only a few steps have been made--and they are only half-steps in millenniums. We do not even know in metaphysics what we know by metaphysics." He was aware how slow those steps are. If you take from me a mere figure (not meant to prove anything) and think of the whole world of the

human mind as a great organ fugue, then you will hear those very slow steps which are only a few but which will decide the whole fugue: the organ bass. And the reason why those steps are so slow is because they are going on at the profoundest level the human mind can reach at that time. Anyone who has made an earnest training attempt to really study theology or ontology will know how difficult it is to put one thing of metaphysical concern into clear terms and into clear conceptions--it causes our brain its greatest pain--but that does not mean (as it was believed up to 1800, and in a way now also because we think scientifically) that if a metaphysical statement contains a contradiction, it is wrong. It can only be maintained that the statement has not been adequately stated, that it has a verbal fault but is not necessarily wrong. In philosophy there are no errors--only more or less truth--and every previous step is necessary before the next step can be made. That is the reason why it is only possible now for philosophy to go in for self-criticism to the full in order to find out what it really is in its pure content.

Socrates knew--and he was the first to discover this--that we have to take philosophy into everyday life (which is another reason why philosophy cannot claim authority). He knew when he asked the shoemaker his point of view on life, taking him as a man and not merely as a shoemaker, that everyone has a point of view and it may be valuable philosophically. Only a lie has to be rejected. If a statement is made sincerely and shows genuine life experience, it may contain a deeper insight and starting point than most philosophical systems. And if a man becomes a philosophical man (as I maintain that everyone has to become) it means that he has to take everyone else just that seriously as soon as a sincere statement is made relating to a genuine life experience--as a philosopher has to do also. Now if we only can put forward a proposition like this--asking everyone that he becomes a philosophical man (or woman). I say this because I think that I can prove we are obliged to philosophize or we will fall prey to all the cheap and ever-cheapening beliefs put forward to us by science or any ideology that happens to come along. Our situation is a question of life and death for everyone, and so also for philosophy. A philosopher has to get into direct communication with everyone he can reach, with everyone who philosophizes--not as a priest but as a worker who can show a model on how to work.

I want to show methodologically how all those creative capabilities that once were one in the myth have developed into the crisis of the nihilistic situation--into a death crisis where the human mind can break apart and where the whole of all the creative activities of man by flying apart can break up each single individual into all its parts. We have never been farther away from a whole--either as human beings or as to our situation in the world. We are being driven into a state of more and more confusion where we answer with more and more cynicism, letting ourselves be driven on because the mind is tired and confused. In this crisis we are now in, there is the possibility that the whole human mind will go to pieces--torn asunder not only by the breaking up of that whole of the mind's creative activities but also by the very creations of that mind. The machines we have created have become our very masters--and this is a symptom for the whole situation. There is so much confusion resulting from such an infinite multitude materially of creations and realizations of the human mind and such confusion in our social organization that the way is opening into more and more possibilities for tyranny again. So we cannot be too serious about this situation if we really want to take the responsibility for the human race--and if we do not want to take that responsibility then we are really already on the

declining side. We have to be concerned with the wholeness of human life and of the human race.

We are in a special situation because these capabilities are driving more and more apart, and we want to try to find out how they might be brought back together again. Even politically we are growing apart; the faster we can fly to Paris, the greater seems to be the misunderstanding between the French and the American people. We do not have a center of understanding any more because we have rejected philosophy--because we have rejected philosophy for practicality. "The devaluation of values" (as Nietzsche said) was not enough; we had to turn lower values into higher values and higher ones into the lower values--and now we are standing on our heads. So because of that crisis, a course in how and why do we study philosophy becomes a basic course in philosophy and it becomes, as I have said, a question of: Why must modern man philosophize and learn to philosophize? and why must modern man become a philosophical man? Philosophy in the system of human capabilities is the center, the orientation point and if that is lost or not established, then any orientation is lost. Philosophy is not a leader but an orientation point. But since it is only lately, so to speak, through free philosophy that we have been able to try to establish this central position of philosophy, we must first ask: What was it that centered those creative human activities up to the time they began to blow apart into this situation we now find ourselves in? and how was it possible for man to live so long before he found himself in this situation?

Formerly a center had been developed instinctively because men felt their unity by thinking that they were centered about an unmoving center: religion. And up to 1800 religion was still the center. There was also, of course, science and philosophy, but instinctively direction was always given by religion and even the so-called freest thinkers always kept in touch with that. This center was blown out with Kant when he destroyed the cosmological and theological approach. So what happened? Let's imagine what would happen to a planetary system if the center blew out into outer space--which is just what happened to all those creative human activities that for so long had been united into a conglomerate. Already when the first moment of mythical thought came about that conglomerate was there with all powers acting together indiscriminately. That means that for all that time man had a safeguard against the nihilistic situation first in the conglomerate that was already there in myth, and after myth, then in either God or the cosmos--until Kant showed us that we can never assume the existence of an ordered cosmos with meaning or the existence of God because just there human reason finds its limit.

We find in myth a creation into which went about everything at once and all together; a creation that knew no distinctions--between Zeus and the sun, between Zeus and the soul and a tree. Everything went all together into one conception--in a metaphor, which is an artistic conception, that can be interpreted indefinitely. That is why we can interpret a myth by so many approaches--psychologically, philosophically, symbolically--and can always find elements to serve us. That is why we can always use myths in philosophy as examples, in art for symbols, and why they always bring in a new aspect of meaning--so dense has been their original meaning.

This makes one look with quite another opinion at the so-called primitive mind--which was as much of a miracle as the so-called developed mind. The quality and intensity of thought were

always the same. There may be no distinctions in a figure of myth, where everything was put to work at once to make it, but all distinctions can be found if we break it up because all the distinctions are there. Plato was the first to have a feeling of this. He tried to destroy myth, but still he used it. Instinctively he knew that if you change a mythical proposition around you will have an example of metaphysical thought. We can see this also in Jewish theology where distinctions have been made to the point of even taking letters apart (to where in cabalism it becomes almost mechanical). If you even change one letter in the so-called mythical words (words put into a mythical context), the most amazing thing happens: a new aspect of meaning of the thing can be gained even in the seemingly mechanical aspects of it.

In art along comes Kafka who writes certain parabolas (which I have edited)--parables about topics of Greek, Jewish, and Chinese myths—and always out of the mythical content he gets the most modern meaning possible. It is possible to open up the most modern aspects of the human soul out of the very oldest myths. The content is so penetrating, as to the essential elements of human life, that myths lend themselves to countless interpretations. And this is not arbitrary--it is like a work of art. If you have a hundred people, you have a hundred interpretations of it, and if you analyze them you find that not a single one was able to get away from the essence found in the work of art; all relate to it—even the most shallow ones cannot get away from a real relation to the essential content of a work of art. (Even a study of "Moby Dick" that was made from a psycho-analytical approach and interpreted entirely from the point of view of Melville's relationship to his father--even such foolishness as this could not help but relate to the essential content of the book.) And so it is with myth. You cannot get away from the essence; you can only get around it. It is always possible to open up new aspects of the center of creation that myth really is. Myths--the most concentrated form of thought possible--are concepts of the people put into one context, which will always live and always give life.

Lecture V

Now let's go back for a moment to our old distinction between chains of occurrences and lines of events. We have found that we can butt in on certain chains of occurrences and by that transform them into events; we can bring them into certain contact with a metaphysical subjugation, putting them to the use of a metaphysical purpose and proposition. Let's take a modern phenomenon for an example: the atom.

Pseudo-scientifically, the atom is described as certain particles that move within a certain framework of two concepts--matter and energy--but we have to tell the scientist now that he no longer is entitled to use the terms "matter" and "energy". Since they were designed out of an old metaphysical distinction between matter and spirit by philosophy that we do not follow any more, we have to tell the scientist he cannot be allowed to use the terms "matter" and "energy" because he cannot prove that this is matter or that is energy. According to new metaphysical thinking, in order to be metaphysically exact we would have to consider or describe the atom as a complex of occurrences (and by saying that we put a meaning into it). In order to be scientifically exact (in the pure form of science), the scientist would have to consider or describe the atom in a series of mathematical formulas made up of symbols. (Every letter, sign, and

figure is a symbol, which means nothing in itself but stands for something else. Symbols are inventions of the mind to cope with finding certain relationships between occurrences.)

But for our purpose here, in order to make things easier, let's call the atom a "thing" in the old sense: that means that while this thing, an atom (which is approached in the sciences as a thing in itself) may be something, as Kant discovered, that we can never find out, it can be found out that it is a thing for us. We can, by gaining knowledge about it, turn it into a thing for us that we can handle and use. All that we can do by means of symbols--finally gathering together the whole of science to its center of symbolic logic. So this whole inquiry makes the atom a thing for us--leaving out for the moment what it might be in itself.

Now in art the modern artist approaches the atom too. Modern artists are very fascinated by all the new discoveries of science for the mere formal possibilities of new formal movements, curves, etc., and the relating of forms that now seem to be possible here. But this is not, as many say, scientific art--even though one of our modern architects will say in speaking about his work: "Well, I am making this according to the laws of nuclear physics." Actually, he knows nothing about it--though he is quite convinced that he does--but one thing is sure: he is fascinated by the possibilities it offers for new visual relations. The artist is able to paint possible new form relations similar to and related to the atom. Artists do here to the atom what is always done in art: art changes a thing into a thing of us; art changes a thing into a being--this is the secret of art. Whatever art it is, it shows us a world in which meaning and being are identical and undistinguishable. The forms in a work of art are form itself--and being form it means that meaning and being are absolutely identical. What it really means is the complete identification of essence and existence, of being and meaning. This can only occur in a dream world, the dream world of art--a dream world of transcendental dreams (not day dreams or nightmares) which contain (and this is the essence of beauty) in them the absolute fulfillment of man's deepest metaphysical longing: the longing that all contradictions between appearance and essence and being and meaning might be resolved; that the essence and appearance might be identical. Our dream of beauty is exactly that and art does that. Metaphysically speaking, art changes the things of the world into things of us, into a part of our innermost life; things--if they are representational (and all art is representational; even in so-called non-representational art, things are represented)--have been changed by art into things of us with the very essence and substance of our life.

But let's go back to our example of the atom to see what the position of philosophy is as to things--and what the distinction between philosophy and science is as to what is meant by handling things in the right way or the wrong way. When the physicist handles an atom, he makes it a thing for us--which can also become a thing against us if we handle it in the wrong way. But the great distinction between philosophy and science in this particular matter is this: according to science and scientific distinctions, we would have to consider that the atom has been handled in the right way if it is successfully used in an atomic bomb--because that means that it works correctly and therefore the atom has been used rightly. But from a philosophical point of view it suddenly turns out that what was a thing for us becomes a thing against us. Now if we want to ask: What do we want to handle the atom for? and if we want to make a decision as to what to handle it for--which is a philosophical concern--we have to realize that it is a

decision and as such involves metaphysical thinking. If we are afraid that we might blow up the world, we have to consider: Is this the way we really want things to be? And with this immediately another consideration enters in. If we decide not to handle the atom for destruction, it is a free decision--but not so free as it seems because we are at the same moment presented with the problem of putting our decision through--and to put our decision through would involve at once politics. (To use a most immediate example: if war becomes necessary, it is almost sure that if we can control atomic warfare, we will use it. The only reason chemical warfare has not been really used up to now is because it has not been practical.)

Now it is within our power of decision not to fall into the mere physical, but it certainly is necessary in order not to do so--and to be masters rather than exponents--that we make a metaphysical decision of what to use the physical for. But then we have to draw the conclusion that in order to realize our decision we have to change the present social organization of humanity--because now with this metaphysical decision we come back into a chain of occurrences that originally were metaphysical decisions but in the meantime have become patterns that we are not able to master. We are coping with things that are semi-physical, with many elements of the physical already implied. It becomes very apparent that we would have a hard time to carry this decision through--and to be able to do so at all, we would have to proceed on metaphysically political lines, inquiring of politics: What is political life? Is politics metaphysical creativity too? The nihilistic philosophers (with their so-called laws of development along historical lines) said there was no such thing. But if free philosophy could find a point to prove that there is a possibility to go about political events metaphysically, to design political actions and aims according to principles (and metaphysical principles--not ideas or what Plato called eternal ideas), we could redesign whole patterns of political behavior that might already have become historical (physical) by redesigning them according to these metaphysical procedures. If this were possible then we would have the possibility to really decide the question of what to handle the atom for--but not before.

So this decision is bound up with a whole field where the physical has its hand in it and we are in for a long procedure of creative efforts in order to make a decision about the atom--not only according to our will, but also to be able to realize it. But if we do not even know the way, if we never know how and when to interconnect certain procedures in the sciences with philosophical procedures and political procedures and artistic procedures, then the way is not only long, but it runs in circles and we can never get in a straight line or get results. Even with the best will, if we move in circles and do not know about the interrelations, the circle will always reproduce the power of the physical. It will always produce patterns and it will enhance rather than diminish the process we are in instead of deciding the question of what to handle the physical for.

This now brings us to another point: What is the responsibility of the single human being--the atom physicist or the conscientious objector, for example--in a situation involving everyone else? The objections of the conscientious objector against killing even in war might be a very fine thing, but it is terribly hard to find out if that is what it really is--it could also be cowardice, foolishness or almost anything. How do we find out? Suppose they are all sincere--even then they might still have a hard time to convince us. Let's assume next that they are Christians. Now if you are a Christian, you can only do one thing: you can refuse to do it, but you cannot refuse

to take it. If you refuse to do it and you want to be a Christian, you still must turn the other cheek. First, to convince us you have to show us that you really want to follow up your decision--and there has been an example of those who followed it to the very end. There was a group of English conscientious objectors in World War II who parachuted into battle to care for the wounded--Germans and English alike. They proved their point and they followed their decision through to the bitter end, showing by their actions that they were entitled to take so much consideration of their inner feelings. The same implications are involved for an atom physicist who decides he no longer wants to be involved in what he believes is only to be a means of destruction. He too has to prove that he is entitled to take so much consideration of his feelings.

A truth is never achieved; one can only go deeper into truth. One little piece of truth exacts the next and the next. Truth is never established once and for all. I can only act good (I am not good), and as soon as I cease to act the truth I am out of it. Truth is really an eternal procedure--a wheel that should not stop going; it is not an infinite process in infinity that is just an infinite going on. Also, to be true to myself is really not possible; being true to myself is a psychological mistake. It means an infinite reflection --I am after myself and I will never find myself trying to find myself. If I can never know myself, how can I be true to myself? It is rather a matter of establishing more and more truth in each and every situation, a matter of being able to keep promises. It is really that I am being true to what I thought to be true and what I promised to be true.

This being, the human being (which is really a tautology because no other beings are beings since they are not free), has a strange habit: it questions. Now preliminarily let me invent for the sake of the matter an ironical myth. (Myth, being a conglomerate containing all the human creative capabilities in one block, can be used again and again: we can approach it from a scientific point of view, finding natural forces; we can approach it from an artistic point of view, finding fundamental aesthetical and artistic values; and we can approach it from a philosophical point of view, finding original metaphysical thought that still holds true and is still applicable--even to modern situations. Socrates, in trying to get man's thinking rid of myth, used as one of his means the opportunity of mythical procedure to prove points he wished to make and to prove the metaphysical implications that are always contained in myth.) When man was made by Zeus--to make it a Greek myth--Zeus made a little joke with him and asked, "What do you want to be?", and man answered, "Who are you?" Then Zeus replied: "Oh! you want to be a questioning being." When this man was dismissed, Apollon came in and said to Zeus; "What have you done! You have given him the power to question everything--even the Gods." And then Zeus told him: "You don't understand. If he wants to be a questioning being, and if he isn't a God, he will find out that he will always be the only absolutely questioning being on earth--and he will then find out that he got that ability only because he is more and more questionable himself. If he wants to be a questioning being, he will also have to run the risk of being more and more questionable." The basis of the human condition, to put it in popular American form, is that one cannot have his cake and eat it too. Everything we have and gain has to be accounted and paid for by a certain lack of another ability.

When I asked you to read Pascal, I have in mind not only to show you the first example of a man whose abilities were so mired up (in the modern sense) and in such a way so it could become clear, but also because of his discussion of the contradiction of man--who is in a position of both grandeur and misery. Pascal started the first inquiry into this line about this being who has grandeur and misery. His analysis of grandeur is faulty and of misery shallow, but his value consists in the fact of having put this dialectical relation of grandeur and misery forward. By this ironic myth I have tried to show that grandeur and misery condition each other. If one of them (misery) were not there or if the other (grandeur) were not there, we would not be beings. We would be a physical phenomenon instead of a metaphysical being. The essence of being metaphysical means that our grandeur is paid for by our misery and our misery is repaid by our grandeur. If we have the right interchange, we can become--not be--for we are beings of becoming. This is a contradiction in itself seemingly. How can something that is become? How are we related to being, becoming, and not being? This we will go into later, but now we take man only as a questioning being, paying for it by being the most questionable being in existence.

Questioning means always to be after something and it supposes that man is never satisfied. This very ability of always being after something is paid for by never being satisfied (grandeur and misery on a more shallow line). Thus this ability of man to question means always being able to be after something, but never being fully satisfied. But how can one be after something? This supposes putting one's self in distinction to other things and being aware of this distinction; this supposes self-consciousness--not consciousness of our "self," but just being aware that we are and nothing more, and that we are in ourselves divided from everything else. We are a center--out of which we often draw the conclusion that we are the center of the world, which we are not, but we are a centered being and being aware of being centered, we get an idea of being a whole, of being a thing contained in itself. We get the idea that all our dependencies in nature are only our dependencies upon communication, that they are not absolute, and that we are free to handle those things. By that we are able to become questioning beings, taking everything into question including ourselves.

So we have to ask: What kind of questions do we ask? and are there distinctions? And we have found there might be distinctions. If a child (and all children prove that the human being is a questioning being!) asks a question, he can ask: How is that? What is that? Or why is that (which implies also what for is that)? And then there is a question so hidden that it has not yet been discovered because it is never asked directly but is put in the form of an answer. That we find in the one child who seems never to ask questions but always has an answer ready--and an answer of a peculiar kind: a story, an absolutely free invention. This child will never ask why, what or how, but will start to explain to the parent what happens there and will tell a fairy tale or something close to it. Here a question is also put forward; a question is put at once with the ready-made answer that follows immediately. If we analyze the answer, we might find the question.

The answer is an artistic answer, an answer making--not giving--an explanation, abolishing the problem and refusing to recognize the problem at all. This means to be hit by the problem in such a shocking way that the usual reaction (which is really a counter-action) cannot be gotten

at, but instead an immediate reaction takes place as a kind of short-circuit. This child cannot bear the problem, so he tries to abolish it by saying, as the philistine says (only the philistine does it consciously and lyingly so): "There is no real problem." The child and the artist react in the same manner, though not in the same way, by unifying at once the thing and its essence, its appearance and its meaning; and by the means of this free invention, they put the problem out of business. In creative activity this can only be a work of art. The artist is a being who is more deeply wounded and more deeply hit than any other being, but at the same time, he is at once healed. His life experience goes deeper, but is never realized and taken to the full. This strange dialectics of artistic creativeness reveals also a question and it is the same question which to a philosopher would be Why?--because it is only that question which makes the event a real problem by facing the possibility of a non-solution. The question of what and how not to take that risk; we think one must be able to find out what is this and how is it.

Most children (who are questioning and not reluctant) start with why, but are usually satisfied with the how and the what. Daddy only has a terrible time with that cursed child who will never stop asking why, the child who questions after the meaning, who asks the philosophical question at the center of all questions: Why? This means to pursue a philosophical purpose. Children also can be educated to do this; and it should be (and is) a very necessary means of education if a father has answered how and what and the child for too long has been satisfied, for the father to tell him: "Are you not aware that the question of why has never been answered?" To answer how and what is only a means that might lead us to answer the question of why better. How and what do not pertain to the meaning (they pertain only to the sense; they give explanations), but if by trying to get at the how and the what we are led on to ask after the why (which means to ask after telos again), then they can give us a better approach for finding out why things are and we might get better results. So again, even in educational matters, the same need applies that we find in our overall situation. All these things are related to the different capabilities of the human mind--which all require the same method of being placed into a functional context where they can really cooperate and can be able to build bridges to each other and to other fields.

This leads us once again to ask: How can man who thinks of himself as a whole become a whole?--because he is only the possibility of one. He gets this feeling of being a whole from being a center; he knows himself to be centered and experiences in his own activities that he can permanently relate things to himself--but that means only the sketch of a whole, that means only that he can become a whole. To become more and more of a whole he must first find out about his real creative possibilities--and then design that kind of a system of order of those possibilities that I am after (and which in my opinion is the philosophical task of our time). The nihilistic situation is just a situation where for the first time man is absolutely confused, where all his capabilities seem to fly apart.

Man was under the delusion up to 1600 that he was a whole--and to a certain degree he was in that things here connected (though in the wrong way of a conglomerate rather than a system)--and that feeling of being a whole was given to him by religion. Now we would not suppose that a peasant of the Middle Ages was more of a whole, and as to capabilities had more than we have, but he was not problematic. He did not have much to account for, and

religion could always put him back into the center of his existence, giving him the feeling that he was a whole. He had his place as a whole human being, or at least he lived and felt that way--which was one great essential thing that religion always did for human beings. As soon as that was gone, we no longer had that happy feeling of ourselves as a whole and we were in for the problematics of the "self." Today, people in religion, if they are truly religious (though it must be said that it is almost impossible to be so today), still have that feeling of being a whole--which means they feel better and in that sense they are in a state of grace.

As soon as we wanted to find out the truth about that good feeling, it fell apart. We asked one question too many--we asked Zeus: "Who are You?" For the first time we asked that one question too many and as soon as we did, we not only dropped that question instead of insisting upon it, but we dropped with it the question that we should always have put first, and never did--the question: And who are we? It seems strange that as soon as we put forth the question to God: Who are you? (which Kant did), that in the same breath we put forward the question: Who is man? And this means, of course, that when we dropped the question: Who are you? In the same breath we also dropped the question: Who are we? We did not take the consequences of being a questioning being--trying to decide, as we should have, all questions out of this central question: Who are we? and to relate all questions to it. Instead we asked everything else in the world--all the ghosts possible in the world--if they could explain who we are.

This relationship between these two questions shows, metaphysically speaking, a most intimate relationship between the essence of the human being and the essence of a supposed God. If we look at it historically, we will see that almost all the answers we have gotten about ourselves up to 1800 came from questions about God. Never really having been able up to then to put the absolute question to ourselves and to God, we were always putting questions to God about His possibilities and His qualities, trying to find out what He might be like; and almost all the answers we gave ourselves were answers that said nothing about God, but a lot about ourselves. If we take those answers into account as a mirroring of our own experiences, we will find out that almost always the valuable part of those answers that could help us get to what we were came from questions about God. After we dropped the question of Who are you? to God and with it the question to ourselves: Who are we? we found that in not questioning after God any more, we were unable to question after ourselves any more--not even as to what we were. We only got answers then as to what we might not be and we tried to find out about ourselves by identifying ourselves with the most different things from being.

Here are strange connections and they prove one thing at least: we got part of the answers we wanted philosophically out of religious thinking, which has always been so nearly connected with philosophical thinking, and after we broke the connection between religious and philosophical thinking, we got no answers about this one question at all. Does this mean that philosophy is not possible without religion? Here many possibilities open up. After the idea of God as a person was destroyed by Hegel, with that we lost any sense of being a personality ourselves. That again should only be an accident?!! Isn't there a very close connection? When this original question (the original mythical question) is applied to God, there is a continuous line of experiences of answers on which religious thinking proceeds. It runs parallel (though it is

absolutely different) to philosophical thinking, and the correspondence between the two is overwhelming. It is one of the great wonders of the human mind (and where it can best start to wonder about itself) that those wonderful correspondences happen in our very creative activity. So we will try to locate them again in other lines of thinking and try to find out how each line of thinking might be related to the other and what they might be able or not able to do.

Lecture VI

We have seen that on very different levels the same phenomenon we have been talking about makes itself felt in the state of science, philosophy, religion, art, erotical life and political life. In all the main fields of human endeavor we see a confusion, a mixing up of all those fields, and the same phenomenon that happens in the higher fields when the central position of religion is lost takes place in the human individual himself after the meaning of personality is lost. So now in the field of personal occupations—with all of us belonging one way or another to one of the creative interests of man—those same symptoms prevail—which explains why among modern intellectuals arises the trend to go back to religion. Having been raised only scientifically, so to speak, in this age of belief in science, they have found one by one there was no meaning given by science that could apply meaning to their own lives. Artists too—being attacked for being artists, in this age where society does not understand any more the necessity for the creation of art—find their way back to religion.

This going back to religion shows an instinctive awareness that religion has been thrown out of the center and that since then life has lost meaning, but it is really a deceiving experience all these people undergo because they think~ they can go back to religion and get all the benefits. The question, unfortunately, is not so simple because it is a question of who goes back and how he goes back and whether there is real religious intent. The position that if man needs God, he should go back to religion must be questioned because if he does go back to religion, he brings with him all his scientific training and he will never find what he is looking for or what it means. We must first go back to philosophy to find out what going back to religion means. In the mythical form the ideas of religion were related to all the other metaphysical implications of man, so if one was born into religion he could get out of it metaphysical values. But if one has once doubted, the situation becomes quite different. He must then take the full responsibility upon himself for what he is doing when he goes back to religion. If one has been born into a religion, his parents have taken that responsibility, but if one decides to go back to religion, he must realize that as a personal decision, to go back to religion means to take the responsibility of giving up a certain part of one's freedom—and not an unimportant part.

When we talked about religion and about Kant's break with religion, we saw that with Kant we refused to make the sacrifice of reason that religion always demands. The religious man must say: "Certain dogmas I agree to believe and I will not reason about." And from these dogmas are derived certain propositions he is supposed to believe in--propositions he cannot decide about but has just to follow without question. If he has been born into religion and his parents have, so to speak, taken that responsibility for him of the sacrifice of a certain amount of reason and a certain amount of freedom, then he is still in a creative line. But deciding to go back

means that he has to know exactly what sacrifices of reason he has to make--he has to decide now.

Religions have become very loosely built societies and make it easy to go back to them, but if we look at a few examples--and the more responsible ones--of those who have gone back, we see that it is not quite such a simple proposition. If we look for instance at W.H. Auden's article in "Partisan Review" of a few years back, we see that although he tells us it is easy to go back to religion and that there are only a few abstract points easy to agree to, it really turns out that there are many more things he had to agree to. Auden accepted and had to accept certain propositions derived from dogma--and I wonder how he did it. One can become a joiner of such a thing, but to believe it makes one religious, is quite a different matter.

Religious feeling is believing in one specific God. The Christian God, Jehovah, and the Moslem God are three definite conceptions of God and to believe in any one of them means to take all the dogmas that have accumulated around them. If rabbis, priests and others come together to agree on certain points in order to try to make some kind of religion, then it can only be based on a vague idea of God, not a living God--and if one is religious, one believes in a living God for otherwise it is a pseudo-philosophical proposition. A philosopher can say "I believe God exists.", but he does not say what this God wants from humanity. This God presents no obligations to man, He makes no amends and that is why we say the philosophers' God is not a living God and is not religion. Religion is to believe in a living God in the ways of the church and the priests (or in mystical experience as the Medieval mystics), and it means believing in all the dogmas. That can be called the phenomenon of a living God, but not the way of those people who want to get together to build a new religion because so many beliefs have become bothersome. Too many theologians are willing to get together with theologians of different beliefs to see on what points they can agree. This is fine as a political performance, but it has nothing to do with religion or with a theological proposition.

Just how hard a theological proposition really can be is shown in the story of a Catholic priest who comes to a rabbi in a small American town that is half Jewish and half Catholic. He tells the rabbi: "I want to talk to you about a very serious business. The custom has come about, as you know, that the people here celebrate each other's holidays, and there are just too many. The people never get any work done, and they are poor and need to work. Now what I propose is this: Let's see if we cannot combine some of our holidays so the people will have more time to work. You have Chanucka and we have Christmas. Couldn't we fix one day for both?" The rabbi thought it over and said, "Chanucka has to stay!" "Well," said the priest, "we have Easter and you have Pesach. how about combining them?" The rabbi answered, "Pesach has to stay!" "Well," the priest tried again, "You have a certain fall festival and we have a certain fall festival. How about combining them?" The rabbi answered, "Sukkoth has to stay!" "Well," said the priest, "I see that you are a very difficult man to compromise with. What would you suggest?" "Jesus Christ has to go!" replied the rabbi.

This is not merely a joke. It shows that to be a religious man means to stay within the framework of a certain set of dogmas; otherwise, the God believed in can only be the God of the philosophers, merely theistic, an idea of God. Being religious means really to live with a living God and to be in the service of this God and to abide by what that service has been made to be

by tradition. All the rest is merely idle talk. What this man who wants to go back to religion really wants to do is to go back to religion to get a few metaphysical ideas that he has missed so much in his scientific life. He finds the mythical stories have a much deeper content than he ever supposed. He finds the scriptures are much more than just stories. Then he comes to the philosophers of the church. He finds proofs of God that cannot be refuted (since he has not come to Kant yet)--and it is no wonder, for these positions of the theologians were the result of deep and profound thinkers like Aquinas, not to mention all the other theological thinkers of the Middle Ages.

But the trouble is that it just is not that easy. If one wants to go back, one must first ask: What is religion and religious belief? and what does it mean really to convert?--and these answers can be found out only by philosophy. Philosophy can tell him that it means a kind of intellectual martyrdom for years to convince oneself of dogmatic propositions if one has not taken them for granted since childhood. Conversion or reconversion in the Christian tradition means going through the same experiences that the Bible tells us Saul went through to become Paul--and that is exactly what it means. If one does not take it so seriously, he only makes a psychological experiment with himself and cannot be taken seriously by anyone who is aware philosophically of what such a metaphysical decision can mean. This man is playing with the danger of death: namely, of his mind. If one takes religion slightly, he will take everything else slightly and will become just a shallow mind. Modern man just does not have that way. The other way is hard enough--to study philosophy and to try to find out first what capabilities man has and what he can do with them and how to relate experiences of life to them--but at least no danger of a lie is involved in that way. In going back to religion there is the danger of someone talking himself into something which can come after him and break his neck.

We have to find out philosophically what religion is for man and how it is possible for him to make religions--and here for the purpose of this course we can only suppose that man is the one who makes religions. Revelation we consider here only and can consider only as a product of the human mind itself that in thinking about God suddenly gets an enlightenment about God. This is metaphysically possible, but the possibility of revelation as it is usually thought of we must cut out here; we must deny the possibility of God's talking to man. That does not mean that we do--or can--rule out the possibility that this might still be the way God communicates with man's free working mind once man is in full freedom and in full consciousness of responsibility and freedom, but we have to say that while we cannot rule out that possibility, neither can we ever say we know. As long as man works self-determiningly--making decisions and avoiding telling us philosophers that God tells him how to think--we can only say that we cannot know. But the minute man takes for granted in his thinking that he is led by God, we can know one thing: he will make errors. It just seems not to be given to man to know where his thinking and ideas come from or who enables him to think: that means faith we would leave open and ready for discussion but as philosophers we cannot accept that God came and gave man the ten commandments, for instance, and that everything is just to be taken for granted.

Following laws that this God has given would have nothing to do with the human mind except that it be intelligent enough to hear God when He speaks. Religion in this sense is not creative--all the creation has already been done. It is merely a matter of adjusting to new

situations of life, which means that it cannot be called creative but can only be considered to be a matter of reflective intelligence. To be creative means to produce something that would not be there if man had not made it--a new work of art or a new solution found to a life problem by the sheer invention of that solution. A new work of art certainly would not be there if the artist had not made it--and how could a new solution to a life problem be proposed without man's taking a new position out of his own mind and out of free decision?

This means something quite different from making a proposition based on a given theological proposition for then it becomes merely a matter of adjusting this new proposition to the given one--and though it can be a highly intelligent activity, it cannot be considered to be a creative one. (In science too we go from certain sets of given propositions to conclusions and creation is only involved when an entirely new methodological approach is made.) So we see that creation is never brought into theology when it is merely interpretive, but on the other hand, this is also why logical thinking can never be achieved to such a high degree as in theology. In fact, one is so bound to an iron set of laws that to find possible adjustments and transitions is almost creative of the human being itself--helping the human mind to grow--and it can almost be said that an element of creation is involved insofar as intelligence goes. After all, these things are all related to each other and distinguished from each other by degrees and there is meaning contained in all of it.

Now the original mythical conception of religion was as well a specific kind of creation as art, philosophy and science (which also is a creative activity of man--though Heidegger in his bitterness has denied any creativity to science at all)--along with two others which have never been considered creative fields: erotics and politics (which we really cannot go into here because it would make too large a scope). All of these human creative abilities together form system (and though it is not known as a system the phenomenon is always there) where all the creative activities are related and interrelated in such a way that in each specific field of creativity there takes place an interchange with all the other creative activities of man; all of them are interrelated in that definite sense that while every creative activity has its own central method of creativity, all the others come in--but as minor factors only, as helps only, and they must remain so.

What can happen if this balance is not kept we can see, for example, in the religious field: if religion tries also to be the backbone of science, then the burning of a Galileo is the conclusion. Metaphysically speaking, this means that science, as a specific creative ability of man, has been subjected as a secondary affair to the primary method of another field, religion. Kepler on the other hand in proceeding to discover the curves of astral bodies in a strictly scientific way used as his main method the scientific method, but he also took a certain religious proposition into his work--the religious idea of the harmony of the astral spheres--which helped him to stimulate his scientific research. This was possible because he was careful enough not to make this religious theory his proof for his own theory (which he proved mathematically). So here the consideration of a religious proposition did no harm to him. The harmful way is the way of Galileo where the church claimed it knew best and superseded the scientific method with its own method, the scientific way with its way. This might have meant that scientific thought could have been hindered for the next hundred years--and the fact that the times were such that the church could

only propose to burn Galileo does not change the basic harmfulness of such an overstepping of limits by one field of creative human activity into another.

This question of a system of human creative activities is a most important one for us. Not only must we keep in mind the permanent interrelation of all these creative activities--trying to find out the limits of each and what each one can and cannot do--but we must also be sure when we look back at those millenniums of the conglomerate of creative possibilities (which is going apart more and more now) that we do not approach it in the modern scientific and "progressive" way (the pseudo-scientific way and the pseudo-metaphysical positivistic way) of just saying how dumb the human mind has been. We must realize that if we had not had that conglomerate brought about by religion, we would never have been aware of the interrelation of the human creative activities because in a way the interrelation came about within religion. It is sheer nonsense to say we would have been better off without religion in the past--and all scientific approaches to this end with one proposition: to exclude freedom. That is the reason why we have to take myth so seriously (considering myth--the beginning of all human creativity--as a block of creativity) and why we have to go back to wonder at all that has been involved in myth.

All this has been an experiment to show how things are related and can be related rightly or wrongly. Now let's start with the means of the different lines of thinking, the tools we use, and account for how we can build them. We have in art, metaphorical thinking; in philosophy, comprehensive thinking; in science, analytical and symbolic thinking; and then we have two fields, politics and erotica, where we handle human beings--and there we have the tool of understanding. This is why I first agreed to distinguish between understanding and knowledge. In science I said that we are after knowledge; then I said that all metaphysical things are better approached by understanding. Now this is not entirely true since metaphysical things must not always be living, but in politics and in erotics--never before considered as creative fields (and it has to be found out how creative and absolutely equal they are to other creative activities)--they are, of course. In life understanding takes place and from there we have to translate that into philosophy and to find out how philosophy uses understanding. No creative act can be achieved either in politics or in erotics without the agreement of other free persons. As soon as they are raped in any way or tyrannized or terrorized, no real creative act is possible. If either politics or erotics are approached in a scientific way, they end in a terroristic way--and there is no going away from that consequence. So to be able to bring about politics or erotics in freedom requires the tool of understanding, by which we can come to agreement.

Politics as a concerted action in agreement and mutual identification can bring about a creative action and to do this we need the ability of understanding. One method of thinking is understanding, as far as thinking is a creative activity--and by thinking I do not mean merely the reflective activity of the human intellect. Man also thinks with his mind--and by mind I mean to include also what Pascal calls the heart: not feeling, but the moral and ethical capacity which checks upon the mere intellectual capability. Originally just as all the creative capabilities were taken as a conglomerate all united, so was thinking considered in that sense, but now we distinguish different kinds of thinking: thinking bound to knowledge which can be established, used by science; thinking bound to understanding needed in politics and erotics; the thinking required in art, which works by the tool of the metaphor; and the thinking required in philosophy,

comprehensive, speculative thinking which not only needs all the other kinds of thinking but creates out of its very kernel all the other kinds of thinking. By comprehensive thinking (not to be confused with Jaspers' term, given in the English text as "the Comprehensive." Jaspers' real term cannot be translated. It actually means that which grasps around; it is also a psychological term and, as Jaspers intends it, a new term for being itself.) I mean thinking that includes everything and is always concerned about the whole; thinking that is out for meaning and is concerned with meaning; thinking that is the real kernel, the real center, of our creative abilities.

Even in the new sense this thinking, which I call comprehensive thinking, is related to philosophy in the old sense where philosophy asked only one question--the question as to the meaning of being--and was concerned with being as a whole. This was the old concept of philosophy up to Kant and it was not taken up again--or only in the wrong way. Within the old concept--with its concept of a comprehensive whole--man too was considered to be contained within that whole, to be a comprehensive being. that was supposed to be knowable from the outside. We could know about him from the whole--either from God or from a known cosmos which contained in every part meaning in itself--though neither the whole nor man were ever supposed to be completely knowable in the sense modern metaphysics assumed. My question starts from the middle--not supposing that we know the whole, but only supposing that the human being feels himself to be a whole, that he has had an experience with a thing that he could describe as a whole: namely, he himself. Being used to this feeling of being a whole by the inner experience of being a being that has a center and the ability to relate everything to himself, and having the feeling of being an integrating being with the capacity of integrating everything that could be integrated into himself, he transferred his idea of the whole to the outside and mirrored the experience he had inside to the outside.

All mythical thinking up to Kant relied upon the one fact of human beings being able to reflect upon the whole world their inner experience of what a whole might be and their capability of being a whole and to think of everything as being a whole, a one. And as long as man lived within the old concept of thinking, either cosmological or theological, he had this feeling of the world being a whole, but today we see masses of occurrences and there is not even proof of their being interrelated. This idea of the whole has never been accounted for. I have tried to give an account for it and to answer the question: Where did we get the idea of the whole from? We see that there is a certain metaphysical reality which makes it possible and that we ourselves are that reality which acts under the presumption that man is a whole, that everything belongs to him and is centered about him and can make a whole.

Now there is a basic symbol and a secret truth that comes out of this idea of the whole and this all being one. Out of that idea man made his fundamental tool for all scientific research: the number one—which is the main symbol. Without the idea of the number one it would never have been possible for scientific development to start at all. The number one supposes a unity, one thing. Now things in themselves are not one--they can be split into an infinity of ones. We can always again make one more and one more and one more out of it (though there might really be last atoms--not as we see them capable of being divided again, but last particles of matter that no human being could split). But proving the infinity of the small--by always adding the number one (the smaller one) has only proved to set the number one in infinity; it does not prove infinity

itself. Our ability to infinitely calculate does not prove infinity either. We have only the ability to create the symbol for all the possible relationships of things in different situations. We can only invent a symbol which seems to apply because the relation seems to be infinite. The symbol is directly derived from the metaphysical idea of the whole for which we have to give an account. Man's idea of the whole comes from this feeling of his that he is a possible whole, a one. Now from the middle inward (as from the middle outward we can account for the idea of the whole) we have to go on to another possibility: the possibility of finding out what being is.

Now as to art: here we have built a tool which is very hard to get at--which I call the metaphor. I do not mean by this what is usually meant: a symbol. The metaphor and the symbol are equalized today and used for the same meaning. What I mean by the metaphor would be something that stands also in itself--which a symbol (as a picture, for example, of something which stands for something but has no meaning in itself) does not do. This, of course, happens sometimes in art too when art becomes allegorical, or in modern art where in surrealism metaphors are really symbols, which in themselves mean nothing. If a natural watch is used, as Dali does, with the watch bent over a table, this as a metaphor means nothing but a symbol. It is there to induce a thought of time bending, breaking, being lost and it is a non-artistic means because a symbol is used. As soon as art needs an interpretation or needs translation for its understanding, it means that symbols have been used--though this can be done if otherwise it is a work of art. Dürer had a perfect right to use certain allegories in his graphic art and to require us to interpret them, but only under the condition that the symbol used was also a metaphor that in itself was form--form essential to the picture--so if someone did not care to find out the symbolic meaning it still would have meaning in itself. Form is such a wonder that we have many fetishes of long-forgotten religions that originally had symbolic meaning also, probably of a deity, but we do not even care what it might have been because those symbols are also metaphors. They are inherent form and as such convey meaning to everyone. Knowledge is not a necessity of art; it depends only upon this kind of metaphorical creation.

Human beings have not only experience but they have also the experience of their experience. They are able to relate experiences, and experiences of different kinds, to each other by a means usually called feeling: that is, they can relate different experiences when they have had the same inner experience--or to put it psychologically, when they have had the same set of feeling reactions. If that has taken place--and the human being most able to do so is the artist--it is not going on subconsciously, though it is not going on consciously either. The artist is half conscious of it; he reacts to a certain experience the same way as to another experience and in association those experiences relate themselves to his mentality and suddenly there is the same feeling and with it shoots in all remembrances of other experiences and he suddenly finds what we call an art phenomenon: a form that gives the inherent feeling of all those experiences he had in that set of experiences, and it is so concentrated--this basic form--that it can assemble around it other forms that relate to it. Everything becomes interrelated and becomes one whole and crystalized around one basic form: the metaphor, which stands in itself building all these things into one basic human experience. The metaphorical thinking used in art is also the source of myth. After ceasing to believe in myth, the only mythical activity we have left is art. We now take art as a specific metaphorical reality related to man, but we do not take it as specific reality as myth was taken.

Comprehensive thinking (out of which all thinking comes), as you see now, has certain things in common with the number one. You can see how the idea of the whole was made by our possibility to think comprehensively and how out of that we made and created the symbol and the metaphor also--which has the possibility to take into its own meaning a set of different meanings and to unite them. This procedure of integrating has also developed out of the tool of comprehensive thinking. Philosophy thinks in speculative concepts that have tried to integrate for so long that the meaning of being and the integration of being seem to be one.

Comprehensive thinking builds the tools of thought of all the other creative capabilities of man with only parts of each of the others parallel to it, nourishing and nourished by the parts. This is why Plato could use myth ironically. He used the metaphor consciously in order to help the concept in question, relating metaphorical thinking to the concept in order to make it clearer. He also used symbols in pure philosophy, and although he was quite mistaken about science (believing that numbers were original ideas, mythical entities, the very essence of ideas), he used numbers in order to make the concepts clearer as he also used metaphors.

We now have to drop politics and erotics here because they would enlarge the inquiry too much. We will use art and science mainly and take in religion occasionally in order to see if religious thinking is something in itself that can be brought into its pure form. But mainly we will try to see how speculative thinking is related to metaphorical thinking.

If philosophy should be the only possibility of our time to get the balance of the human mind back, and if philosophy should also be a necessity for everybody to set himself straight in order to get the possibility to relate all capabilities in him personally in the right way so that he has a chance to get on the way of being a whole human being--if all that is so and should be so, then everybody in this course should try to think over what he himself has always felt to be his main capability in a creative way and then go on to ask first merely a psychological question by the means of inner questioning? How did I personally become interested in philosophy at all--let alone in the question of how and why should man philosophize? What originally caused my own interest in philosophy? where did I get an interest to look into it at all? This objective question is very important (whether you might be ready to tell me about it or not) and I ask and insist that you think about it because it might mean that you would be able to get your personal approach and find the point where you might best get into philosophy--because we also have to raise the question of how to study philosophy best. We have to find out where everybody can start best; we have to find out who would be his philosopher to start with in order to get the best results for what he is looking for in his own particular field. For those engaged in a definite creative line this answer would not be too painful, but it would be general; so they must also ask: When was the specific moment when I was most interested in a philosophical answer? For those not engaged in a particular activity it will be more difficult, but they should ask:--When has there been an experience which caused me to raise the question I asked when I was a child? Why? When wasn't I satisfied with how and what? when did I ask: why did that have to happen to me? I put this in a most primitive way, but even so it is already a philosophical question. Now when I speak of your telling me about your answers--and certainly everyone is entitled to refuse to give an answer--please do not think that I am interested in psychological revelations of your personality. A philosopher is not a confessor. I only ask that everyone thinks about the answer to

this question, and if he does, I am perfectly satisfied. But if the answers are such that they can be given, please do this by all means.

Lecture VII

We hear a great deal these days about peace of mind and when it reaches the point where an American rabbi--and not even a second or third-rate one at that--writes a shallow book on peace of mind that becomes a bestseller, it would seem that it is time to ask a few questions--both of the real religious thinker and the philosopher. But if we assume for the moment that peace of mind might now be the answer of religion, don't we then have to ask: Doesn't the peace of mind of religion preclude the mind of peace of philosophy? In peace of mind it is something to be given; in a mind of peace it is something to be achieved: to set the mind on a creative line of thinking where it is in a state for peace. This is not the satisfaction of making one's peace with God, but it may possibly be a better way of serving God--if God exists. So these are two absolutely different points of view.

The religious approach proceeds by statements with nothing else in their content but tyrannical means--means which can be tyrannical to achieve our goodness. If for a moment we do not consider them to be revelation, then it means that the statements of religious thinking, put forth as statements to tell us how to be good, contain the pretension that they know and know better than we how to act good. This is the character of a statement and a religious statement, as a statement, has a quality in common with a scientific statement. The scientific statement states a so-called objective truth: this is so and so, and if you will repeat the experiment, it will show you that it is so. If some character or part of the scientific statement is applied to human affairs and pretends to know what is necessary, then we can only draw the conclusion that we have to do so and so--as the religious statement also implies. But there is a difference. The scientific statement when applied to human affairs, where it cannot be applied, is absolutely tyrannical--more than tyrannical: it is totalitarian. In it is involved a categorical imperative which runs: You must do that because this is an objective truth; in such and such a historical situation (to use one example) you can only do this; therefore, you must because if you don't, you are just a dope. This "you must" is a totalitarian imperative.

The religious imperative also seems to have a "you must." It makes a statement that God has revealed that you shall act such and such--Here are the ten commandments (and they are commands)! But is a categorical imperative that is a "you must" really involved here? Is it a proposition of the absolute destruction of the freedom of the human mind as a scientific statement is? It is a categorical imperative of "you shall." And what is implied by "you shall"? For one thing, it contains a certain amount of freedom: you can be a sinner--which is a very different proposition from being stupid. Human beings are only afraid of one thing: being a dope--and it is the most frightening thing in the world. To be a sinner may mean eventually to go to hell, but for one thing hell is far away and for another a certain pride is involved in being a sinner. A sinner is defying God--the highest power in the world (as long as He is a personal God with justice)--and to take the part of the Devil makes a man interesting. The figure of Satan in "Paradise Lost" is the most interesting of all the characters; "Paradise Regained" is boring. The characters there

are not as interesting as Lucifer, who out of his own strength of will defies God. Your soul may be lost in eternity, but if you are ready to suffer that, it is still a big chance. To be a dope just means to be abolished from the memory of man. So the statement of the scientist is totalitarian. It means that if you do not do what you must do, you will just be out for good. You will be forgotten and nothing--and they have shown us just how well a man can be forgotten in the concentration camps or when a man disappears in a totalitarian country. The usual answer to any inquiry about him is: "Whom are you talking about? Such a man never existed." This is what Hannah Arendt calls "the hole of oblivion."

How terrible the threat of oblivion is was once shown in the Hebrew religion. They tried once to make such a threat--that a man could be blotted out of the book of the living--and this was a much more terrible proposition than the Christian hell--eternal pain or not. The soul must be able to endure the pain or it would die--it might even get used to it or even enjoy it. But to be blotted out of the book of the living!--that was a much bigger threat. Even so, this threat of the Hebrews was not a totalitarian threat; it was still not the misapplied threat of science of "the hole of oblivion," of being a dope, of being nothing. In the Hebrew sense it meant only to be blotted out in the living performance of theological history. It meant that you had not done anything for carrying out the great task of humanity that had been given to man by God? to unite humanity under one divine faith and one law. You had refused to carry on that one great task and therefore you had no right to be included with those who lived on through their children. You just did not belong. This was also the same threat the Greeks had. It was better for Achilles to accept the proposition to become a hero and to die young--though the Greeks loved life dearly. (They loved it more than the Hebrews loved life, and the Hebrews loved life more than the Christians. There was a saying during the war, "Let's hope he's a Jewish doctor."--which meant: Let's not take a Christian doctor who believes in the immortality of the soul.) The Greeks loved life because they did not believe in going on in eternity in this unfolding book of the living. The Greeks clung to life much harder because they all had to go to Hades--which was a most terrifying proposition. Achilles knew he would say later in Hades, "I would rather be a poor man's servant, and alive, than be a hero and in Hades." But still he made the decision to die young as a hero because to the Greeks glory was their life. To go into tradition, to be sung about--that was their hope and idea of eternity. The Greek threat would have been: you will not go into glory. The drunken companion of Odysseus who fell off a roof was condemned not to live on in glory but only to go to Hades.

But while religious thinking is only tyrannical and not totalitarian, leaving a small spot of freedom, and while it only puts forth a proposition of "you shall" rather than "you must", you do not have the creative decision in religion to say: "I think that this is still more good and this I will try to make." This decision is only possible in philosophy--which goes on an entirely non-tyrannical proposition. Philosophy--free philosophy--makes propositions, not statements and looks for agreement and cooperation in bringing about this specific good or avoiding that specific bad without pretending to know what is good or bad. It only asks, What is more meaningful? and then says: "I think I propose the more meaningful, and if you agree that it is more meaningful and if you agree with the part of the proposition that is a statement (that the situation seems to be thus and thus), then let's proceed to try to establish what I propose and you agree to." Philosophy asks: Do you agree? In a philosophical proposition one must be able

to discern the two parts: the part that is a statement, which must be checked objectively (the part that says: These are the elements of the situation speaking for that evaluation of the situation.) and the part that is the proposition. This means that philosophy has never existed in this sense because no philosopher has ever put forth propositions in this sense--including the nihilistic ones, and they last of all because they tried to handle scientific statements philosophically (like Hegel) saying in effect: "I am in possession of the absolute truth without the revelation of God." But revelation only claimed to be the essential truth--there was still space left where people could act creatively. The pseudo-philosophers and pseudo-scientists have excluded that entirely. Everything is known and must now only be learned. There is the "you must."

Philosophy started with the Greeks and developed by trying to establish an independent line of thinking. But if it became possible, as it did during the Middle Ages, for example, to call philosophy the handmaiden of theology, we have to ask: how has that even been possible? Old philosophy had to take in other methods of thinking: metaphorical thinking (art), symbolic thinking (science), and religious thinking (which proceeds according to revealed truth). And though independent philosophy (which is not the same as free or pure philosophy) tried to remain apart from theological thinking, it never really made distinctions between philosophical thinking and religious thinking. Philosophy asks for the meaning of being; it asks: What is being? The religious man asks about being insofar as he asks: What is good? Beginning with the Greeks, philosophers tried to establish what the meaning of being was, but they never could because of the term "being" which was also a mythical term. They never could make out what they meant because they thought that they knew--and how? By revelation, by a belief with which they started: a belief in the cosmos. The cosmos was what they thought of when they asked: What is being? They had, so to speak, a prejudiced mind. They took over a religious proposition--though it was not a theological proposition because the Greeks did not have a theology. They did not have such a God as the Jews and Christians. With such a God-Creator one could try to find out what being was by realizing God's will--and it was possible to base the whole science of theology on that presumption. Men had only with the Hebrews to study the texts, or with the Christians to study the development of the church, and they were on the way to discovering the meaning of being because God had made it. The Greek way could never become theological because there was no God-Creator, but it was cosmological. There was a cosmos with the divinities and Gods contained within it, and possible transcendence was made within the world. To man, who was also within the cosmos, the Gods were beings to whom man could transcend, to whom he could go to increase his abilities (the Gods were immortal, for example), but the original proposition was that the original being of everything was in this cosmos and this cosmos had always been there. This was the assumption of all philosophy, and all philosophy up to 1800 developed along the lines of this cosmological concept. When philosophers were talking about being, they were sure they knew what they were talking about. They thought that they had to be scientists in the way of observing the cosmos (as the religious men had to observe God, so to speak), that they had to observe the goings on in the cosmos and from that to relate each event to every other event, making a system, and to say with that system: "The full truth is here. We must have the truth here because we have analyzed being--a thing that is known since the cosmos can be studied by observation."

With Kant (and the breakdown of the cosmological and theological approach) the possibility of free philosophy started, but what we got instead was totalitarian philosophy. Not that Marx was a Bolshevik or Nietzsche on Hegel were Nazis, but metaphysically they took the idea that they knew being was the universe--and now a universe not including God or transcendent powers. That meant there was no longer a difference between philosophy and science, and the consequence was that this pseudo-philosophy had to dissolve into science because it used the same procedures as science used. Hegel created logic as a science. He thought it was metaphysics but it was a pseudo-metaphysics that made it possible to make logic a science. Symbolic logic is the science of scientific methods--but the people who do that do not call themselves scientists; they call themselves philosophers (which started with Dewey). They forget that they have nothing to do with metaphysics. But that they could call themselves philosophers, and did, was because philosophers like Hegel were only pretenders. So the scientists could take over philosophy and could claim it for themselves, and rightly so.

This is why philosophy has ceased to be--except for the existential philosophy, which seems to be concerned with the metaphysical. But it has one great weakness: it proceeds on scientific methods along psychological lines and the existentialists' real results have been taken over by the psychologists, checked scientifically, and have fallen under that field of science. Freud was able to take over Nietzsche's concept of sublimation which with Nietzsche was still metaphysical, but since it was existential (relating to inner human experience), psychology could take it over, check it, and use it--and rightly so, because philosophy had narrowed itself down to one part of the physical (here the inner process of man's inner experience which is really physical). As soon as something physical is taken to be metaphysical, it will fall prey to science because science can rightly say: "We can do that better." The services philosophy has rendered to science are tremendous, but it is being sucked up by science. On the one side there is psychology (there only remain certain existential propositions not gotten by psychology--and very few propositions at that) and on the other side, symbolic logic. It seems that we have finished this development of science out of the very body of philosophy, that philosophy has done what it could do, and has given up its task to the sciences. But this is not true. Philosophy has only abandoned its task and it is a task that cannot be replaced. The moment after Kant, when the pseudo-philosophers started to think in pseudo-scientific lines, the back of philosophy was broken and philosophy started to fall prey to the scientist. Philosophy had its moment to come into its own with Kant and lost it.

Once before philosophy had made a try to come into its very own--and that was with Socrates. Though we do not know enough about it, as far as we can find out historically and from seeing the contradictions in Plato where the thought of Socrates does not seem to fit the thought of Plato, we find out that Socrates seemed not to be concerned with the cosmos or being. He seemed to be concerned only with the phenomenon of the human being, with the philosophy of men only, and he did not pretend to have a possibility to say anything about what being might be. He was a thinker who tried to proceed from the thing he knew best--and that was Socrates himself insofar as he was a human being. He then tried to proceed to other human beings and to find other asserted proofs that way. But the way of Socrates was left entirely until Kant made the same approach--though in a different way. Kant was critical about God and the cosmos, and tried to find out how a philosopher could go on without making an assumption of the cosmos.

Kant showed how we run into antinomies permanently as soon as we start with a concept of the whole, and that we also run into contradictions as soon as we start with God, so he tried for the first time to return to the small platform of Socrates:--Let's first ask and try to find out: how is the human mind? What can man do? What is reason? What are the limits of reason? How does man reason? He tried there to find a line for free philosophy apart from the cosmos and theology. Then immediately after Kant the cosmological approach and the theological approach were secularized and synthesized by Hegel and we proceeded in the nihilistic way. With that philosophy went down to the bottom and ceased to be.

Now we make a new approach again to philosophy, not only to show that philosophy is a human creative ability with its own source, methods, and tasks which cannot be replaced by any other human capability of thinking, but that it is also the center of all other creative abilities of thinking. We want to show that religious, artistic, scientific and political thinking all derive from philosophical thinking and that without it they will not be able to come into their own; that without this capability of philosophy to become pure philosophy, they cannot become pure art, pure science, or pure politics, and that even religion will never become pure religion--whatever that might be (It might be that religion will be able to do without mythical thinking and get a living idea of God.)--or can never come into its own without philosophy. But right now we are only concerned with getting certain fundamental indications of all these different capabilities of man's thinking (and thinking is doing--not only the beginning, but the very procedure of doing itself) on all these different lines. We are concerned with distinguishing these lines in order to answer our question, which in this course is: What is philosophy? Can pure philosophy exist? and if so, how and why? and if it does exist, why must man philosophize?

Jaspers in his book ("Way to Wisdom") tries to show that philosophy still has a genuine right of existence and tries to show this in the inner existence of man--that philosophy should be and can be something that formerly religion has been: something to live by. But replacing God (who is the only possible being man could live by) by a sleight-of-hand with philosophy is something that can only be done in a situation of despair. Philosophically, we have to reject it, and have to say: "This is one of the greatest documents in our situation of human need and despair and that you want to help us (which he does by distinguishing what science is--and this is the most valuable part of the book) we fully acknowledge, but other than the contribution about science we have to say: 'We cannot take it--because isn't it consolation?' If we want consolation in our despair, let's go back to religion, but don't give us a substitute. We cannot take the God of philosophy as a living God because this would be a substitute. Our souls can only be satisfied with butter; do not give us oleomargarine."

Camus tries the same thing in the atheistic way. He tries to show us that we can get out of the nihilistic situation by replacing religion with a kind of brotherhood of man. He sells a new thing, so to speak: pure ethics developed out of a state of rebellion. But then we have to say: "If you want to offer Christian brotherhood again, please offer it; but don't give it another name." If it is true, however, that we can only get out of this situation of human despair, this meaninglessness, this nothingness, this explosion of our very capabilities by pretending to believe in God and a religious proposition, then let's take the God of our fathers. Let the Jew go back to his God and the Christian back to his God. Let's all go back, but let's not take propositions of philosophers

who are in despair and who say, "Here is another thing as good as Christian brotherhood.", and when we look, we see it is the same; or propositions that try to replace a living God with an idea of God.

Jaspers says that philosophy has the task now to save us, but we do not want to be saved--and if we do, we will trust God to do it. The philosopher should not try--even as softly and gently as Jaspers does by saying that philosophy can only give us assurance of our own inner being. Such humility as this we cannot accept--because the philosopher can say, and can show that it is so, that we have to philosophize because it is the only way of freedom. Philosophy itself is committed to its very performance and everyone has also to commit himself to it to get the strength of his mind together. If philosophy is only a kind of consolation tolerated by science, it still is not out of the role of a hand-maiden--though it might have advanced into the nursery as a nurse-maid. Pure philosophy puts forward a very committing proposition; it says: "Without me you can never be free and can never really transcend yourself. You will fall prey to any scientific statement put forward. You will lose your freedom entirely or you will go back to religion and get a little part of freedom. I, philosophy, am the only capability of yourself that can make you free." That is the claim that free philosophy puts forward and it says along with it that everybody has to work and to live philosophically if he wants to live the life of a free human being--in fact, if he wants to become a human being at all because only a free being is a human being. So we have the possibility of mere existence, ruled by inhuman forces, or existence with a certain possibility of inner life in religion, or we have the possibility of changing our existence constantly toward and finally into a full, free human life by philosophy. That is the choice that philosophy, when it comes into its own, puts to man.

Jaspers' book helps very much. It shows all the elements of confusion in the situation that the human mind finds itself in, and it tries to find a solution in the most noble way; and if Jaspers has not come to my position, it might well be because he is such a sweet human being. Being a liberal to the bone, he would never think there could be such a thing as an absolute necessity of commitment to freedom--that as to freedom there is no choice, that as to freedom there is no freedom. We have the freedom to reject freedom, but the price is that we lose ourselves completely in the nihilistic situation and no one aware of the price would be willing to pay it. So even this choice is not really there. We are forced into freedom by the very situation of our life and it is a question of life or death. The only choice so far as man is concerned is that he can choose death--and in that sense, he is free as well in regard to freedom--but he has to be aware of it. But such a choice as between good and evil (as in religion) or between beauty and ugliness (as in art) is not left to man here because the choice between life and death is not a real choice as soon as he becomes aware of it. He can give an absolute protest against freedom, but he must know that with this he condemns himself to mental death and all humanity to death. If he does know this and makes that choice, he is a demon; he is someone who acts compulsively without it having any meaning and more than that: he is acting consciously against meaning.

In the nihilistic situation in totalitarianism we have acted more or less consciously against meaning because totalitarianism has to do with the will to meaninglessness and that means the will to death. Metaphysical death means absolute meaninglessness. We can decide for absolute

meaninglessness but that means to decide against life and this choice cannot be given to everyone to the full. Why? Suppose you choose the nihilistic trend. Can I now give that choice to you really? No, because you are in that same moment intent upon becoming a murderer and will become a murderer, and I, knowing that I have made the other choice (the choice for life by my own choice for freedom), can never accept murder; I cannot by my very acceptance of freedom in essence--because by the choice for life, I have excluded myself from ever being able to choose murder. This decision made without God is quite different from the religious proposition, which makes no assumption of my own creative choice, because as soon as I consciously make that choice I have to exclude every opposite of freedom--and that means murder. So I can only give you that choice theoretically because if I know that you have made the other choice (a real conscious choice in freedom against freedom and by that a choice against life and for murder), then I must be absolutely opposed to you. And with this comes the possibility of an absolute division between human beings--a division between those who decide for the line of meaningfulness and the others who have decided to follow the falling curve of given accidents into absolute meaninglessness. Between man and demon no understanding is possible. Here are the races of Cain and Abel and we can see here what the myth might really mean and how deep it might really go--having reached in free human thought this very possibility of human life. Man, having smelled by the power of myth, unclearly but very deeply, that such a possibility is within man, has now established it.

If we know how to think on pure, critical philosophic lines, we will find out that the myths are even deeper than we thought before, and this is what binds them to philosophy. Philosophy has a very curious ability: it always binds the past to the future because quality counts. This living development is never found in science--where we reject as unimportant steps that have outlived their usefulness, so to speak (the discovery of Galileo, for example, is only interesting historically now)--but a new philosophical discovery makes a certain element of mythical philosophical thinking even deeper and more valuable. It adds new qualities and shows us that the past too becomes deeper--as the myth of Cain and Abel has a deeper meaning for us now or as it seemed when Kant got his idea of transcendence, making it appear that the ideas of Plato had been misinterpreted up to then. This is true of art too. If Cezanne had not painted, we would never have been able to enjoy El Greco so much. He was enhanced in value by Cezanne because there were elements in El Greco that could only be discovered after they had grown in Cezanne and taken on a new shape--then they suddenly blossomed out before our eyes. But Cezanne had to invent a higher state of that embryo all by himself before we saw the same embryonic element that was already there in El Greco. There seems to be a strange continuity of development of the human mind. All those propositions seem to have been there in a mythical state, but not in a way we could consciously develop. Everything seems to have always been there in myth and grasped--though not in a clear way. But this also means that the man who lived in the time of early myth was able to grasp the same essence we are able to grasp--which is very good because he need not then regret that he lived a thousand or so years ago instead of now.

Now we have to find out what the difference between philosophy and religion really is. Philosophy seems to have destroyed religion absolutely after the performance of Kant. It has been proved, it seems, that man can either be a philosopher or a religious man--and so eternal enmity seems to have been set between the two. But this was not Kant's intention--on the contrary, Kant wanted to prepare the jump. he wanted us to become aware that we cannot know anything about God, that we cannot even know whether He exists or not (though we have to always keep the possibility of the existence of God in mind as a limitation of human reason), but he also thought there might be another realm which transcends reason: we might be transcendent beings and might be able in full consciousness to transcend our reason, to transgress, so to speak, into the unknown. Kant meant that we can only do this by belief: "I want to find out what can be known and what cannot be known by man in order to make place for belief." He wanted to make place for belief, for the unknown realm (which means there would be an opportunity for us to start believing because it is an unknown realm) and in order to do this, he wanted to teach the limits of reason.

But this is a very humiliating thing--this limit of man's reason. Besides, we do not have to just take this limitation--we can try the other possible thing and transcend our own reason and believe against our reason. Men have the power to do this and it is a very seducing proposition. This proposition was made already when the first church fathers were still very uneducated men and up against the Greek philosophers who, of course, were very educated men. They could only help themselves by saying reason was a whore (as Luther later said: "Reason is a whore who condemns you to hell."). Tertullian thought that belief could only be gained against reason and said: "Christ has been born into the world, has been crucified and has been resurrected. I believe because it is silly." This is a strange formulation of belief against reason--"because it is silly"—and Tertullian meant: I believe because it is silly because reason is a very little thing of man that can never lead him to faith and it can never make him happy.

The philosopher's quest after truth contains one risk: he might become unhappy. The quest of religion after bliss, goodness and happiness means that the religious man runs the risk of being a liar. This is the antinomy of the two approaches. The philosopher runs the risk of unhappiness, caring for truth and relying on his own freedom if he can realize it by reason (which can now be done after Kant). But in this quest for freedom of the philosopher the religious man sees the hellish pride of man--man who thinks he can do it by himself by the means of his reason as his highest force--and the religious man says, "If you do it, you will be condemned to hell--or if not that, at least you will run the risk of unhappiness. You will never have peace of mind." The philosopher replies, "As for hell, I don't even believe in it, and to hell with peace of mind. If I can only achieve out of freedom and by acting in free decision to bring out a mind that achieves peace, I can die having been unhappy all my life." The religious man then tells him, "Then you want to be a hero.", and the philosopher answers, "Maybe, but I don't want to be a saint as you do." And so the argument stands. Religion can make one man happy but without self-confidence perhaps, and philosophy gives the other self-confidence but makes him unhappy perhaps.

With two such different positions there must be two different starting points and two different methods for these two kinds of thinking--religious and philosophical thinking. It has been

doubted by philosophers after Kant that there was such a thing as genuine religious thinking and it was thought that it was merely a misunderstanding of philosophical thinking, that it was only to take something for granted and to go on deducing from that. That much is true (this proceeding from a basic assumption), but there is also a different starting point, a certain creativeness of its own to religious thinking--which could well mean that if man misses it entirely and throws it out, it might be a reason to make him unnecessarily unhappy. Philosophy has to be concerned about this because it involves an act of freedom. If I do something against myself I have to account for it. If I take the risk of unhappiness, that's fine; but if I, as a philosopher, neglect one of the genuine approaches of human thinking, that could mean that I dismember myself of a very necessary creative capability. We could say to the philosopher here: "Don't talk too much about your right to be unhappy without religion because without religious thinking you might cripple yourself." So we must ask: Is there such a genuine approach to God that is necessary for man and that he should pursue? We have seen that since Kant proved we cannot know whether God exists or whether He does not exist that we must keep the question of the possibility of the existence of God always in mind and account for it; otherwise the philosophic work will be marred for it means we then make an unspoken statement of the non-existence of God. Most philosophical thinkers do not take the question into account and this is a very big fault in philosophical thinking. The philosopher who tries to keep out of the question does not say, as the atheist does, "I do not believe that God exists.", but if in his philosophical work he does not take the question into account it means that he takes the position of the atheist whether he wants to or not (he might even believe in God). And here the riddle of religious thinking lies.

In philosophical thinking, if we want to proceed really philosophically, we have to take into account all the other lines of thinking—religious as well as scientific thinking, artistic thinking, etc. --and by the same token, if we want to find out about the other lines of thinking, we have to find out what philosophical thinking is too. Now if we proceed with the negative statement of Kant that we cannot know whether God exists or not, we arrive at a positive statement that has never been made in philosophy: the statement that God is always possible and remains possible and therefore we have always to keep that possibility in mind. And if the existence of God remains possible--and that is the irrefutable conclusion from this position of Kant--then this positive statement implied in the negative statement of Kant means (and we are speaking metaphysically now) that the deepest reason for man's believing in God for so many thousands of years is that even if man had tried consciously to get rid of the idea of God (which, of course, he did not) and had proceeded then as far as we have now since Kant, he still could not have gotten the idea of God out of his mind. If man cannot--and we know that now (we know that there is the eternal possibility of the existence of God)--then philosophy is bound to look constantly into this line of thinking that has tried to find (and then discovered) one concept of God after another until it finally boiled down to one being who created the world. This concept of the God-Creator is one concept we cannot overcome.

Man has always tried to make conceptions of God and since philosophy cannot refute the abstract idea of God, this binds us to look at this trend of research, so to speak, which has gone on (to the philosopher's way of thinking) merely in the imagination by building up one concept of God after another in free space without anything to go on. What kind of thinking of man makes

possible such an absolute imagination? Even the artistic imagination is not absolute. Although it transforms things by being given images and making them into things of ourselves--which is one of the highest abilities of man--we cannot call that absolute imagination. Absolute imagination is the ability to imagine something without any hint--and there seems to be such an ability of man, such a quality of thinking in empty space, in very nothingness for otherwise there could be no religious thinking. This is the hardest thing to crack--to come to this hidden ability of man. We have either to prove that it is self-deception and merely reflective thinking--in which case we then could say that religious thinking does not concern us and we have nothing to learn from religious thinking so long as we still keep the idea of God in mind--or we have to take it into account and have to try to find out if it has a certain creativeness of its own. If religious thinking is a genuine creative ability of man, then we have to find out whether religious thinking is like all other thinking--a derivate of comprehensive thinking (which means we would then have the perfect idea of a system of human creative thinking--a system where all the creative abilities of the human mind always relate back to the center of all those trends of creative thinking? comprehensive thinking)--or whether religious thinking might not be the real center (as it was until 1800) and comprehensive thinking an impossibility without religious thinking.

Philosophically, we doubt that religious thinking is the center; we think that philosophy has always been the center and religious thinking was mistaken for that, but we must ask: How could that be? There must be a quality in religious thinking so important for man that until 1800 he always placed it in the center. We think that philosophical thinking really is the root, that out of it all the other kinds of thinking develop, that it checks, and enriches and in turn is checked and enriched by the other kinds of thinking, but there is a strange thing about religious thinking: it is not only the most refined kind of human thinking but the most daring one--the one that takes the risk almost always to transcend, trying to perceive and penetrate into the very unknown itself. It has a certain power of its own that shows the will of the human being and the very courage of the human mind itself at its highest. So while religious thinking may not be the center of human thought (as it was considered for so long), it still might be the most strange, daring and risky adventure of human thinking--and this it certainly is.

We still, however, have to find out if religious thinking delivers any results to the human mind and have to ask: What does it do for freedom and truth? What does it do for philosophy? But first of all, perhaps, even without wanting to, it does something for human courage. This would be a most welcome performance for human beings who have to establish freedom, who have to prove it existentially by establishing freedom for themselves and by themselves and who can only prove freedom by becoming free, by acting free and by establishing it. Comprehensive thinking is in part a proposition: namely, free. If the proposition is agreed to, if it is accepted by many men who decide to take and to establish those mores of freedom really in human life, then freedom has again been proved and not before. We give subjective (not objective) proof by doing: that means we create freedom. It is given to us to create it and to make it (and then freedom is there creatively) or to reject it and not to make it (and then freedom will not be there). Scientifically it can only be proved both ways afterwards. If we would organize the whole world into a totalitarian state where no one could try himself to establish the fact of freedom, then the scientist could say, "Freedom does not exist." If we have established it to a certain degree, science would have to say, "There is freedom." But it cannot be proved as existing or not

existing because it is done by us; it is a metaphysical thing: if it is not done by us it does not exist; it is a transcendent being created by us--not a given thing.

In order to try to find the answers to some of our questions, let's now look into the question of the comprehensive--which I do not take in Jaspers' way. In the old way, without knowing it, human beings always started with a conception of the whole (the cosmos); this whole could be an organic living being, a unity, called being itself. This meant that this whole contained in itself being organically, transcendent beings that transcended human beings (Gods were also contained in the cosmos) and human beings, of course. So in a way the highest forces of the cosmos were the Gods, then man, then other living beings; they all formed a whole--the whole of being (this was the Greek idea). The same whole was conceived of in theology, but God was outside the whole--He created it. God was the highest being to whom man transcended, which led him out of the world. He either transcended to just outside the world (the Hebraic idea) or he transcended out of the world into another higher world which was the Christian hereafter. (The concept of a hereafter, which is really a Christian concept, only became a part of Jewish thinking later and is not recognised as completely valid for Jewish thought.) But both the cosmological and the theological approach have the same concept of the whole that can be known. This whole would be comprehensive and this is the meaning of comprehensive. Philosophy, which was mythical up to 1800, was concerned with the concept of the whole--until Kant proved that we live in the world, never outside of it. He showed us that we cannot say that we know anything essential about it and we try in vain if we try to deduce ideas, laws, etc., from a concept we cannot know. The same is true of God: we cannot draw any conclusions from that concept either. We cannot take the whole (either as God or the cosmos) as a philosophical argument any more.

I make a different approach and ask: How could we get the idea of the comprehensive and the whole at all? Kant showed us that we cannot get a point of view outside of the world--which means we are condemned to look at the world (and ourselves too) from within and to go from point to point and to forget about the whole (which we know now might not even be a whole)--and since then we have been in a sense, as Heidegger says, "thrown into the world." But in philosophy if a statement has been made, even though it now seems to be erroneous, we have to go back to ask: What made the statement possible? So we must consider: What made it possible to have an abstract idea of the whole? Was it imagination or did it relate to a reality? It relates to a reality because man is that whole. Man conceives of himself permanently by inner experience as a whole and he always has this in mind. He has consciousness of being in time but he is always conscious too of being the same in time. He never loses his consciousness of being himself. The little boy he was, he knows he still is; he knows that little boy is still the man he is. Man feels himself to be more of an entity in time the longer he lives. He adds the time that he lives through to his very existence in time. He is a continuous being. Human beings are also, or can be, what they are or lesser than what they have been designed to be because human beings are beings of becoming, but they are also in their becoming, beings of this continuity in time. They get the feeling of being an entity, a whole, closed-in itself to which everything can be related. And in space also they are beings that are consistent. Even as to man's bodily appearance in space there remains a certain consistency in spite of the fact that science has discovered that every seven years all the cells in his body have been replaced. In spite of this

fact the form of his body, aging or not, is always consistent--and he is well aware of this consistency. This consistency in space can be even enlarged. Man can assemble things in his consciousness--and this is made possible only by his being a whole, a certain centered being with spirit as well as corporeal circumference in time and space which makes a whole, a being who can die but one who also when alive cannot help thinking of himself as a whole or being a whole. Man got the idea of conceiving of The All to be a whole by thinking of The All after his own likeness (and he was entitled to think of a whole because of that strange entity he is) and he did the utmost in imagination by having the freshness to conceive of The All in that way.

So man thought there was a comprehensive whole in which he was comprehended. We see now that this is not true, but we must ask: What is the common denominator that made this possible? In philosophy if we want to go to the root of the question, we have to ask not for the substance but for the verb, so we must ask what it means to comprehend--that is our question. We comprehend of ourselves as being comprehensive, being a whole, and we proceed in a way of comprehending. We know that in a certain way we are a whole--and we are because we are becoming a whole. We are builders of wholes--and not only in imagination. Thinking ourselves to be a whole we try to take all our experiences, deeds, and knowledge, etc., and to relate them into one comprehensive whole, always enlarging and always trying to make ourselves this whole--where every experience we have had by being related to ourselves, to others, and to the center becomes more and more meaningful. This is our possibility: to be after the meaning of being and to find it not just by speculating about it but also by adding to the meaning by making meaning, by designing those relationships in the whole that make it more meaningful. We are the conditioned-conditioners, the created-creators; we are dependent and independent, transforming the things we depend upon into things that depend upon us; we are builders of wholes and entities; and we are capable both of finding out the possible meaning in given events and of adding meaning wished for to the meaning that we perceive. We attempt to transform given meaning into meaning wished for by the very center of our creativeness. This ability of being comprehensive and becoming more and more comprehensive is the pure philosophical activity of man--the center and the source of the very freedom of his life and his activities. From this center out we have to develop other lines and activities of creative thinking and to see how they can relate to and derive from the center of comprehensive thinking and how we can use them for the very enrichment of this center.

We will look first into scientific thinking, symbolic thinking as to objective matter, the given, the physical. What are we doing to the physical by scientific thinking? We create symbols and by means of the symbols, we get hold of chains of occurrences. We butt into them and transform things given into things for us, into things we use. Things that have been merely in and for themselves we transform into things for us.

In art there are occurrences and experiences--which for the sake of convenience we will call here things. In art we transform all those things into beings, into things of us, as if we had made them, as if we had made them out of the very substance of our soul. A stone or tree of Cezanne's means that he has transformed things into the substance of human inwardness. The experience of the artist has created that stone and it is a part of him now, transformed into a thing of him; it is entirely humanized--not in the anthropomorphic sense, but really humanized. It

has the very essence of inner human experience in it and that is why all those things, transformed into things of the artist as a human being, are also transformed into things of us as human beings. As beholders, participation, not communication, takes place; nothing is communicated--much more than that is done. We are taken into the participation of a human experience of metaphysical significance; we participate in it in an artistic way--which means that since this is an experience in participation in a very deep and entirely humanized experience, as such an artistic experience (of the beholder too) cannot be an aesthetic experience (which means merely to enjoy certain relations of forms and falls into the field of art appreciation--it certainly is not understanding of art) that can be grasped scientifically.

An artistic experience can only be grasped metaphysically-arousing associations and carrying back by those associations into experiences of our own that we have had, enriching by this our experiences of the past, making that former love experience of ours richer, making our own experiences backwardly deeper and therefore enriching our readiness for our next experience in that particular field. We will find that we will be better lovers, our free activities will have grown, and--to give a specific example--if it is a picture of Cezanne's, we will find (whether we realize it or not) that even our view of the world will have changed. This is artistic experience--all things being transformed into things of the artist, then into things of us by participation and thereby becoming the means of inter-human understanding and inter-human enriching of man's experience. This is what is really going on and what is really done by art which proceeds with the tool of the metaphor.

We also want to look briefly into two fields of creative thinking that rely on understanding, though differently so: politics and erotics. In politics it is a matter of common agreement; understanding is formulated in the political field. In erotics it is an understanding of a more immediate kind--as in love where you can understand this other person in his essence. This is the most immediate performance. Less immediate is in the case of friends where you slowly come to understanding. Then there is the relationship with comrades, as in war, with trust. Then there are casual acquaintances. And then in the political field it is in the form of common agreement but moving also by creating those things by understanding.

Now in these two fields, erotica and politics, things are involved too in the sense that we have to call human beings here things, but only abstractly so--which does not mean that we take people as things (as we have done in reality--which is something quite different). Here we take them only as objects. We change them into things or beings with us--or against us, as can happen in politics, which is the negative form of transforming them into things with us. Understanding is necessary but transformation also takes place.

Comprehensive thinking relates to things, matters and ourselves and it wants to set the possibility of the whole, of creating the whole. All those relations can only be set by transcending ourselves--first by including ourselves in the comprehensive whole. There is not just myself, there is the world and I am transforming everything, including myself, and taking the responsibility for transforming all those things, including myself, into things with possible meaning, into beings. It is possible to give up myself for a purpose or to disconsider myself, to make myself out of my own freedom a means for a higher purpose: that means I transcend myself. But I cannot make anyone else do the same. I am only entitled to propose to anyone

else that he transcend himself for the same purpose because it aims at life itself, at a deeper and higher, better and richer meaning. I can propose to other people what I myself am ready to do. That a philosopher can and must do. As soon as that transcendence has taken place and everyone has come to a certain set of definite principles as to what life would be to be more life, and as soon as I have a nucleus of such in myself, then I can know what for I change things: that in science I change things into things for me; that in politics and love I change things into things with me; and that in art I change things into things of me. All are related to the same principle and purpose that enters my mind: the possibility of creation itself, to enrich life by making it more life. Having rejected the demonical possibility of man, I have come then by and by through all my other possibilities--and by relating them until I find that the very source has been my possibility and my wish to give something to life after receiving existence (though from where I do not know)--to the point where my inner creativeness is the ability to design those lines of richer, deeper and higher meaning to which I want to strive and which I want to transmit to others to strive for, or to be shown a better proposition, and then we all come to an agreement as to what is best. This is the way we proceed in acting out philosophical thinking and this is the outcome of the comprehensive in acting out thinking.

There is only one inner command--a command that Kant misformulated. Kant's categorical imperative was still conceived out of an imagined whole, but since we do not have that, the "you shall" can never be accepted. What we do have in us is a constant possibility of the highest kind, not given in an imperative, but as a "you can": you can do that; you can create life. The fact that the "you can" is there in full freedom gives us the possibility of going into that source of the creative performance of man and it gives us the possibility of human greatness. If you know that "you can," then the more you will have to become aware of how "you can." And if you are aware that "you can," you will know why to study philosophy--which shows you that "you can." If you are aware of that, then you become curious about how "you can"; you will have to try how. Then you will become aware of how to study philosophy because it is the same thing. Now we are within the kernel itself. This is called an introductory course in philosophy and it is in the sense that it throws you into the very thing itself and is identical with the thing itself: why you have to work philosophically because of this "you can," which gives you the possibility to go into the very center of man's creativeness, and how to philosophize by finding out how you can go about this creative action in life, being concerned about life itself. So how could one not philosophize!

When we philosophize we become concerned with giving. Before this we are always prepared for receiving. We are born with the idea that we have something coming to us and what happens to this idea depends upon how we are reared--especially if we are not reared in religion. Although even religion does not mean to give, but to give up, it provides at least a guarantee against falling into the vulgarity we are all born with instinctively--getting used to asking for more and more, taking life for granted. Only if we have given birth to ourselves, so to speak (which is why philosophy is there--if only for this insight), will we get any real life except the experience of an instant in time that we are using up. We cannot feel life until we know that we can give it--and then, and only then, will we have it. This rebirth is not mystical but a performance of straight thinking: that means thinking about our very possibilities and the possibilities and capabilities of everyone, thinking about being itself; thinking about all this with

an understanding of the human being as a specific being, as the only whole we know of, and taking this whole that we can best know of into account, trying to find out how we can make it a real whole.

To find what our different capabilities are and what different methods we have to handle those capabilities in order to make them work is our way to really get into life itself. We have been inquiring into all these different capabilities and methods and have gained some idea of what philosophical, artistic and scientific thinking might be and what kind of thinking is used in politics and erotics—but we still do not know what religious thinking might be. We have found that seemingly our highest possibility is to transcend ourselves for the sake of the world we would think better, the life we would think richer, which we would want to give. This is our central ability. Nietzsche, unable to overcome the nihilistic situation because he could not make a new approach to being, dived into the deepest despair. Finding that perhaps there was no possible approach and having lost the idea of the comprehensive whole (knowing that it could not exist), he said the most noble words of man: "At least we can do one thing: that which life had seemed to have promised to us—let's give that promise to life." never before has there been such a man—a man who so entirely renounced everything he could ask for and yet who could still gather the courage to say: Let us be true ourselves to our own promises. This is the last refuge when man is lost and this is the only noble answer given to the nihilistic situation. This answer granted to me the way to line. that metaphysical reality out of which we had grown the whole in which we lived for thousands of years. We know that we cannot live in the real sense if we do not come to the very source of creativity and get more ready to transcend ourselves and to make the world transcendent by trying to infuse the meaning into the world that we find to be meaning in ourselves and among ourselves. That is real life—but once again, we still have to ask: What is religious thinking?

Religious thinking—or what we will call for the moment religious thinking but is really a kind of thinking that helped to bring religious thinking about—prevails in Nietzsche for instance: If it is so that life has nothing to give to us in spite of all the promises made to us by life, we can still try to give something to life; it can still be good. To be able to say that means to be in possession of an unbelievable inner courage and it is the same courage that Jaspers has in his book when he talks about the idea of God—not knowing—that he is in the same position that Nietzsche was in. Jaspers loves the example of Jeremiah (which he interprets wrongly) where Jeremiah comes to the vision that God might not save Israel, that God might destroy the world and man with it, and yet he still can say, "Praise be to God because God is." Jeremiah was a believer and he could renounce every hope for himself and humanity and still say, "Let us serve God." Jeremiah's courage was great, and Nietzsche's even greater because he did not even have God, but both—Nietzsche as well as Jeremiah—were religious thinkers; both went back to the source in man of a possibility of absolute trust in spite of everything that might speak against it, to that source that is the very core of the indestructible strength of this metaphysical transcendent being who seems to have been there only to live in hope (because religion was built on hope) and then lost it. But with the possibilities given to us by free philosophy we will not have to live in hope now—or in despair because we have lost hope—because our inner surety can be established by this "you can" which gives us the possibility to know what we can do. We won't

need higher help or have to ask for more things to be given. We won't have to ask for more or to live in hope--which is what religion has meant.

We have to realize what unbelievable courage it took for those few prophets and Jesus of Nazareth (Jesus--who cried out, "Father! why have you forsaken me?" and yet knowing that he was forsaken, went ahead and did what he felt he had to do) who dared to live without hope--and yet what about the courage of non-believers, men tortured to death in concentration camps who did not confess. They were forgotten men; they could not be heroes; they could not go into any traditions because no one could know about them; they were not believers so they did not even have God--yet they stood fast. How? Where did that tremendous courage come from? They gained their force of resistance by the sudden realization of this "you can"-- you can for what you think can be true; you--man--can be true; you can say, "This is how I think life should be--without this denial, if I should confess, to be used by others to break other backbones." They did it without any possibility of reward, absolutely alone and without anything except what they could do and wanted to do because they thought it was the truth. This courage we see in them, in Nietzsche, in Jeremiah. Only in utter despair when all religion is lost is there a possibility of pure transcendence, transcendence based upon transcendence for the sake of transcendence itself and for no other purpose--Jeremiah, for example, to the God he could understand no longer but still having the possibility of pure and absolute trust and transcendence in spite of everything.

This is not religious thinking but mystical thinking--and not mystical thinking in the form we have seen in the Jews or the medieval mystics. As long as any hope is left (and there was always the hope to reunite their souls with God--a reward was expected) a psychological performance can be shown to be at the basis of it. The thing is done to be happy, to gain peace of mind--even to feel marvelous. This can all be a psychological performance and can be doubted as to its real creative energy. But here with this thinking (Jeremiah, Nietzsche, the unknown non-believers who stood fast) there is no hope, no reward is expected; it is done with despair, utter despair. It is real mystical thinking: that means man can do this because there is an unknown--end because it is mystical thinking, it is only unknown. That the unknown is God would be religious thinking, but we are talking for the moment now about a pure phenomenon that helped bring about religious thinking: the pure mystical experience of man and his inner strength to transcend completely, to disregard any satisfaction for himself for the sake of transcendence. That there is an unknown spot, an unknown part of the world, with man transcending to this unknown and putting his trust into that and doing so absolutely, means philosophically speaking to recognize, to realize, and to live to the full and utter depths the fact that man is a limited being and might not know the last things and that because of this he is able in the last moment to transcend into what is not known and by that regain the creative courage of his life. This is mystical thinking and experience and it is very rare.

We have said that the religious thinker is concerned with goodness first, truth second, but philosophically speaking what goodness might be we would have to find out by trying to find out what it really is—which means truth first. So the approach to goodness first cannot be accepted by free men because it implies a certain sacrifice of freedom. A philosopher cannot accept this, but this phenomenon of religious thinking must lead us to what helped to bring it about. A

Catholic priest, if driven into a corner, will agree to everything about the church, but then he will finally say: "But the church is only that as it is a worldly being. It is nothing but a symbol--the symbol of the inner church." And the inner church is only the saints--no Pope really counts. By and by more and more of the church is rejuvenated by the saints who live on. In talking about this idea of the saints we see that it is the very idea we find in the Abrahamic story of Sodom and Gomorrah--if there were ten just men in Sodom, the city could not be destroyed. There was an old Hebrew belief that everyone might be fakers, the greatest people might be imposters, and all might be lost but for the thirty-six quiet ones in the country, the hidden righteous men whom no one knew and this was why God did not destroy Israel. This is also the same idea as the saints in the church and has come out of having seen men like Jeremiah, people who can set against absolute despair, absolute transcendence. There is a dim awareness in all religions of one overwhelming power given to certain men in extreme situations--which in India is where the belief of Buddha came from. Out of a long tradition of Hindu sayings that certain men become so wise that they might be able to make the Gods do something, Buddha came to the idea of abolishing the Gods altogether for holiness itself, for absolute purity.

All of these things are realities of the human mind and are indications not only of the strength of the human mind that can trust when everything is against it--which is a sign given for a seemingly indestructible quality of the human being (and this indestructible quality is one of the reasons why the idea of the immortality of man could have been conceived of at all)--but also of the indestructibility of the human will to transcend. That trust, when everything speaks against it, and that will to transcend are the core of mystical creativeness and we have to take this into account as a very hidden but absolutely creative possibility of man because while we may not be able to account for it, we can prove it to be there and while it may be hidden, it is not obscure--it is quite clear and can be observed. (For example: if one has had the misfortune to think he is dying, he will certainly experience that flash; he will suddenly feel that strength coming up in him.) So while modern scientists want to disallow this possibility of man because it is a hot iron for any scientist who wants to know everything (or for any philosopher too who wants to pretend to know), nevertheless we have it, we are it (even though we do not know what it is), and we have to take it into account; otherwise we would be fakers by taking it for granted that this is an illusion--and this we cannot do. We, as philosophers or as philosophical men and women, have to keep in contact with genuine religious people and their experiences have to be considered by us; otherwise we cut out one of our abilities--and this we do not want to do, not only because it might needlessly cripple us, but also because we pretend to be after truth.

Lecture IX

We have talked about the possible relationship between the different creative possibilities of man--not only as we think that relationship to be possible now (as a system of creative activities of man built around the center of free philosophical thinking) but also as it existed up to 1800 held together as a conglomerate around the center of a mythical concept. We have talked about the position of man in the world as long as that mythical concept in whatever form (religious, philosophical, or scientific) held, giving him the feeling of being a comprehensive being contained within a comprehensive whole and leaving him a certain small space of freedom (the

choice between good and evil) --but never really giving him the chance to be concerned with the fact that he might not be determined at all.

Now I want to talk about what happened to man's position in the world when all this was gone, and want to make you aware of the tremendous change that really took place with Kant--because it takes a long time (sometimes as long as a hundred years) to realize the implications of such a thing. That man's position in the world has been changed cannot be doubted--giving him for the first time the possibility to discover just how free he might be able to make himself and to see just to what extent he might or might not be determined. But along with this also there is the fear that comes from man's realizing that he is no longer in the womb of myth, religion or whatever it might have been, and that there is no guarantee of sureness any more. Kierkegaard expressed this new situation of man in the world by saying that man is in a situation where he faces nothingness. Actually this is not the basic fear of man, as Kierkegaard supposed--though the effect seems to be that. It is rather that man faces an infinity of possibilities where he does not know what to choose. But even he in the very beginning is still given to a certain degree that fundamental assurance that has always been given to man on awakening (either by religion, or the cosmos, or his parents): the assurance of his being rightly there in the world. The real difference is that this assurance does not hold--as it did in the past before Kant. As soon as he grows up (if he is one of the best of them--with a mind to work with), he becomes aware of having before him a confused infinity of possibilities--which amounts to staring into the nothingness of Kierkegaard. So it is a small wonder that things have taken such a way.

This course and the criticism of the nihilistic situation is not done in order to make people feel doomed, but it does have to be done in order to make people aware of the situation and also aware of all the implications of the deed of Kant. After Kant, men tried to establish themselves as free men--and in America a certain freedom was established and guaranteed by the Constitution, but in all other countries in the West the battles of freedom were in vain. But it must also be said that even what has been done here in America, while due to the formal fact that this freedom has been anchored in the Constitution, still is not guaranteed against being overcome by the nihilistic movement (and this is a danger which certainly does exist since American society, as well as European society, is nihilistic). Up to now a watch has been kept over our freedom by the American republic (rather than by American democracy, as is often supposed), but if that republic is broken, then democracy will turn out here as in other places: a mass movement by majority vote that will finally abolish our freedom. There is no "ism" or movement that does not finally in the end lead into slavery because in the nihilistic situation we are driven in our very search for another womb to believe in one overall comprehensive being after another that has become merely a deification and mystification of super-human forces--forces that are not transhuman (as God was) but inhuman and which by this very inhuman quality make man anti-human and demonic. In the very process of conforming to them, he loses his qualities as a human being--which means first of all freedom.

So there is no way back into an overall comprehensive being where we can be assured of ourselves. If religion seems to be the answer--and then I would recommend that we go back to the Abrahamic religion, because that is the highest concept--it must be remembered that if we

would have to do that, it would mean to confess that full freedom is not possible for man. It would mean also that we would have to give up philosophy altogether because in that case philosophy taken in its purity would not be possible for man and it would only lead to one substitute concept of God after another, one worse and more dangerous and demoniacal than the last. We have the choice either to prove that freedom is possible and under what conditions and with what responsibilities or to confess that philosophy has failed and that philosophy could only be effective before it made the claim with Kant that it could show that man could live in freedom and for truth without a higher power. We have either to show that man can live in freedom like that or we have to confess that philosophy had to fail and that we have to go back to religion. But unfortunately, if that is the case, we would. I do not even know how to do that because religion now is mainly a psychological performance. Once the belief of youth is severed, to go back to belief is almost impossible. There is still the possibility to go back to faith, but we do not know if man can live by faith.

Is there a way to prevent the pseudo-metaphysical approach that claims to know an over-all being that determines us completely? Is there a means to destroy this? Is philosophy, as pure philosophy, an absolute ideology killer? If not, it would be better to confess that it relies on religion. But that would mean that philosophy could not be free or independent and if philosophy cannot be free or independent, man cannot be so. Thus a negative or a positive conclusion has to be made because our age has shown that what has been called philosophy since 1800 is actually pseudo- or anti-philosophical, it's very opposite, moving according to theories (theories of nature, history, etc.) we already took for granted and lived by. Two great totalitarian states have arisen from those theories in the guise of philosophy--which in turn brought those theories down to their most vulgar level: to certain race or class fetishes.

Philosophy up to 1800 was unconsciously uncritical--bolstered up by religious belief or belief in the cosmos and its assumptions were always taken for granted--but this new so-called philosophy was consciously uncritical. With Kant no philosophy could be unconsciously uncritical any more as soon as he showed that neither God nor the cosmos could be used as an argument and that every assumption must be accounted for--which meant that no philosopher was ever entitled any more to take the assumption of God or the cosmos in any form for granted, and that to do so (or to say that he knew) was betrayal. Yet Hegel and Marx pretended to know the cosmos and what the laws of history and nature were, how we absolutely determined by them, and how and why we must do what was determined by them--giving us a substitute for freedom. When they tried to tell us that the more insight we had into necessity, the freer we would be (which is a most ridiculous proposition) it was not freedom they offered but slavery called freedom--the absolute lie. They did not even account for how they could bring freedom and necessity together.

Now when the religious Jew speaks of obedience (and obedience to God is the mainstay of the Hebrew religion), he means that a religious man must be obedient to God for the simple reason that the only way to righteousness and the only way to live human life so that it can be understood is through obedience because only God knows what is just. If you would say to him, "But you are a slave.", he would answer: "Yes! a slave of God--or rather a conscious servant of God and I am glad to be one because I do not see how man can keep his humanity without it."

But no religious Jew has ever said that the joy of living was just that obedience--the joy was given by Jehovah for a righteous life. Obedience was not supposed to be joy but labor, pain and suffering, as Job was ready to suffer, and no one was ever crazy enough to say that obedience was the joyful thing. But the pseudo-theologian, pseudo-metaphysician, and pseudo-scientist all rolled into one in the ideologist ready asks that we--being slaves and consciously so (doing only what necessity requires), being absolute automatons--should enjoy this absolute obedience. He tells us that this is the joy of life and if we do not conform, we cannot enjoy ourselves. This is how they--the ideologist, the modern expert, the pseudo-metaphysician, the pseudo-scientist (all made possible by the claims of nihilistic philosophers who claimed to be positivistic philosophers)--have succeeded to make conformism (which is demonic as well as anti-conformism is) almost a fanatical performance--just by the proposition that the more the intellect works us into slavery, the more our joy should be--and this is how they have succeeded to make the human mind crazy enough to believe it.

Kant already conceived of man as having more freedom than the philosophers before him and already thought that freedom might be deeper and broader than only the choice between good and evil (it might be the choice of making good or evil), but he was still of the opinion that man could not do that without a higher command. This he expressed first by saying that man could not move reasonably in freedom if he did not believe deistically in the existence of a higher being because if he did not, he would have no possibility to exert the freedom he had. Man could exercise his freedom by command from a higher power--but now Kant wanted to make a compromise. He did not think it could be a direct command, so he established his categorical imperative: man has a so-called inner voice, an inner command (which Kant really made out of conscience), which implanted in the most abstract form is the "you shall." The commandments of all religion were taken into one general commandment--the general idea of the command in man himself that keeps in touch with God.

Kant's prophecy about reason and belief seems to have been a wise one because as soon as the pseudo-philosophers of the 19th Century (who were nevertheless still great thinkers, though they betrayed philosophy) came along, they tried--they skipped belief, as it had been known up to then, and as soon as they did, what Kant said seemed to become true. Freedom could not be practiced at all and it seemed almost the fulfillment of Kant's prophecy. But must it have been so? Was there not perhaps another reason other than the one of losing belief? Was that really the motive for the fact that we failed to grasp freedom? Was it not perhaps that philosophy having gained the possibility of coming into its own, of becoming pure philosophy (up to 1800 philosophy lived in an impure state mixed up with other capabilities and capacities of man--although with the Greeks it claimed--without saying so--to be concerned first with freedom, which meant to be concerned with truth first and goodness second) turned instead into its very opposite by not discarding belief at all but rather substituting the old belief in God, which after all gave man the guarantee of a certain restricted freedom, with its own anti-philosophical claim of belief under the mask of science, which gave man no guarantee at all. If we want to try to establish philosophy on its own and thus man on his own--for philosophy coming into its own means nothing but man coming into his own--we have to destroy belief. We can make no use of belief at all; we must proceed on pure reason. And if we cannot establish freedom on the ground of pure reason, then it means we have confessed that we cannot establish it at all.

So what I have to say about philosophy up to Kant also includes Kant in that sense and the later philosophers even more so. They have always been the interpreters and the experts of higher powers and in this respect no real difference between the philosopher or the priest or the theologian or the pseudo-scientist can be found. They have all ruled men by pretending to be only translators to man of higher commands received--which means that the question of authority, taken in its very fundament is involved here. They have all moved according to the principle of authority; they have all tried to establish their authority first as authoritarian persons--either as the ones chosen by God to transmit God's commandments or as the initiated ones who by their inherent nature, by birth or genius or certain special talents, have to know and do know better. This means in modern terms the experts who can tell us what to do, who can claim that in any situation they are the ones who can make up our minds. We ourselves are not able to make up our minds without the chosen or initiated ones who have secret knowledge in quality different from ours--either by being the chosen ones or because they are geniuses of some kind, etc. The claim of authority is always there.

The only ones in all the history of human beings who can be discharged of that accusation are the artists--but only up to the 19th Century and then they too claimed to be geniuses, initiated beings different in quality from other human beings. This was the first attempt of artists to think of themselves as authorities and until then, they had never done so. They might have claimed--but in humility--that the muses themselves had taught them to see (as Homer did), but they did not say that Apollon had taught them or that they were initiated by a higher power. The artists gave what they created for the free use of human beings and there was no claim of mastership except within the work itself. No commitment was attached and men could take it or leave it. In the 19th Century the artist also became an expert and became conscious of himself--wanting to inherit from the priest absolute authority and to arrogate it to himself. The modern nihilistic ideologist was the example for the artist to raise similar claims for himself, but with one difference: he never raised them with force; he just expressed them in arrogant behavior. The artist has never said, "If you don't look at my pictures, you will just be a dope over whom history will move." or "If you don't look at my pictures you will just be a failure." They have not said "you must"; they have only said, "You will miss a great experience." But the delusion of grandeur was one of the sicknesses that moved into the artists too.

Let's now consider experts--experts of all kinds past and present. Plato said that the model state, "the republic" (and thus humanity itself), would never become perfect until kings would be philosophers or philosophers would be kings. Not all philosophers have raised that claim, but all have moved along that line. Only Plato had the courage to say what they all meant: to be the wise men. Authority was crystallized in types: the wise man, the hero, the saint and the genius. In all history that we know those types were the ideal types of humanity--not arch-types but ideal types in the sense of Max Weber: types which were points of directions in the development of man and every man. Every man had an idea of the most perfect accomplishment when he became either a sage, saint, hero or genius. These ideal types--and all are types of experts--exclude only the ideal that a free man can set for himself: to conceive of the truth that there is no proposition man can set to himself that is as tough as the proposition for everyone to become a man or woman--and for this he needs no expert. Man is a being of becoming, a being that can become human, a being that is only a sketch at first of a person. Man is a being that by

inner transcendence can set the aim to become a person, to become a personality. This possibility that every man has of self-transcendence (a transcendence of the very self he is enclosed in in order to become a man) is a very tough proposition--but the proposition to become a man is still tougher yet. Bound up with this is also the fact that he cannot become a person unless he tries--exerting all his forces of creativeness--to transform the world given into a world made more and more meaningful. At that price-- and only at that price--can he become a man.

But to think that man has to become something more than himself, that he has to transcend his very quality as man (becoming a hero, a saint, a sage or a genius--becoming an expert) means to have a wrong and very dangerous concept of transcendence. "To transcend one's self" in this sense--which is quite a different proposition from the self-transcendence I have been proposing (to become more and more of a man or woman, more and more of a human being with more and more qualities of man)--means the destruction, or the beginning of it, of human qualities themselves. Such a concept of transcendence has always had this threat of the destruction of human qualities because it means to objectify one's self--which is the first step to demonization--but as long as the framework and brake held that had always been put on those wise men, heroes, saints, and geniuses by the belief in the existence of God, this threat never really came through. As long as there was that brake (the belief in God), they could not become entirely objectified, and thus entirely demonical, because there was always God to be responsible to--He set a limit. But the moment that God was gone, it meant that at the same moment the process of objectification could become (and did become) unlimited and thus demonical. To abolish in one's self every quality of a human being for the sake of being something more than man seems to be a very high price to pay--but no price seems to be too high to achieve those ideals that have become ideas.

An ideal, though it might never be reached, gives direction to a recognized over-all concept of goodness, but an ideal changes into an idea (which is an unlimited ideal of performance) the moment it is approached by a process of dehumanization in order to reach or come near that ideal--becoming with this an idea for which a man, in order to become identical with it, can be ready to sacrifice everything to become an expert. This is why we have to do away with these ideal types once and for all. Whatever directional value they had became immediately with the loss of religion and its center an infinite proposition of ideas, taking out of men every kind of humanity. And along with these ideal types, we have also to abolish the authority (the expert) altogether now because he has become a mortal danger for man's freedom and existence as man. Even the old guarantee of the authority holding himself responsible to a higher authority no longer is enough--for the simple reason that the higher authority itself has become a mortal danger.

Formerly, when an authority recognized a higher authority above him to which he held himself accountable it meant that a certain remainder of humanity was always guaranteed in that authority because the higher authority was God--and God as a personal concept. But the moment the concept of God is gone, it means that even if the authority is conscientious (and let's assume for the moment that he is conscientious) and tries to hold himself accountable, he holds himself accountable to a higher authority that is a non-human, a-human force (history,

society, nature); he holds himself accountable to a higher force that is an idea--society taken as a higher force or history taken merely as an idea. Now while there is a certain reality to an idea, it can always be interpreted differently every day: that means the authority cannot be considered to be strictly accountable to his higher authority in the sense one was accountable to God because he is an interpreter of a higher force--which God never was--and whatever its realities might be. Furthermore, when the authority was accountable to God, whatever he did (and there were times when some of them tried very hard indeed) he could never get an inhuman proposition; but our new authority, even if he wanted to, could not get advice back from a non-human, a-human force that would contain a human proposition. It is always an inhuman answer that can only take a matter of fact into account--an answer that is supposed to be for the human being who on the other hand is a matter of intention. So we have to say to the authorities? "If you want to rule us as an authority, then go back to religion--where at least, if you become a tyrant and a master, you are restricted. Otherwise we will have to abolish you as an authority and show you that we can do without authorities."

But what do we replace the authorities with?--for man has not shown himself to be particularly able to get along without them. For example: we have claimed to do everything for the sake of production, but unfortunately, this just is not true. We have only done things for the sake of consumption and have only the aim of consumption. Production for production's sake--like the Gothic cathedrals, for example--has always been done in the past by its having been enforced by the ruling class and at the cost of our blood sometimes. The moment there was no authority to enforce that highest human performance upon us, we did not do it. So the argument of the opposition--that you haven't shown very much what you could do with your freedom--is true, but on the other hand, the length of time since 1600 has not been very long either and there is no reason to despair if we have failed a few times. We might try again to establish freedom by the only capability that can (because it is the only one that understands what freedom is): philosophy--free philosophy and not pseudo-philosophy. But first we must criticize what has been done in the meantime and we must tell these experts: "Either you hold yourselves accountable to God or we must abolish you because you intend to be our absolute masters and we know it."

Authority seems to have been needed for the most part of our history--and the one time we tried to do without it, we seem to have failed. We have only shown that we can create absolute authority instead--totalitarians who cannot even be held responsible to given texts. We cannot hold Stalin responsible to the given text of Marx or the pseudo-scientist completely responsible to his text, whatever it is, but the authority who is accountable to God can be held responsible to his text. And no matter how hard he might try, he will never get around the fact of justice, righteousness or goodness in a religious text; he can never abolish them. If he tries to find arguments against the eternal principles of mankind, he will find that he cannot--and that is how the brake works if the expert holds himself accountable to God. But the expert who deals with pseudo-scientific texts (though they have pure scientific values too) will always be able to squirm out of them and to exclude those principles absolutely for the simple reason those texts are not based on those principles. You will say that Marx wanted freedom and justice--which he most certainly did. So what do I mean when I say that he did not establish those things as principles? and if not, what did he establish then? He established ideas--claiming to know what

freedom was, what justice was--which means that we can then make the proposition that we are entitled to handle our enemies or our friends with absolute injustice because we are striving for the realization of the absolute ideal of justice, which will come out of that in the end.

If we conceive of justice as a principle, we do not claim that. Justice claimed as a principle in the Jewish and Christian religions (mostly in the Jewish) meant that only God knew what justice really was. Men, as much as they were able, had to act justly, but they could never claim to know what justice was and they were never able to say: "Let's cut out justice for a while to bring it about later." Justice taken as a principle--though without religion--in free philosophy also means that we know that we cannot know the whole of justice, that we do not know what it is absolutely. We only know that we can move according to that principle in all our actions. While justice is something we do not know, it is also something we can establish; we can claim partial action: we can act today in a way that seems to be more just than our action yesterday--and this is creative. This eternal thing, justice, is not an idea we can grasp to the full and for its sake do injustice; we rather have to try to establish more of it in every single situation put before us, in every decision we have to make. Justice cannot be postponed; we have to try to establish more and more of it here and now--and this means to conceive of justice as a principle and not an idea.

There can never be such a thing as full justice, only fuller justice; it is comparative only, not absolute. Full justice could only be spoken of in the Jewish and Christian religions--and then it meant that it was only by God Himself, the only one who knew what it was, that full justice could be established. Marx secularized this and applied it without God--without God being the living center--and this is the greatest harm that can be done to human beings: to say that freedom and justice can be known to the full and can be established once and for all, that an absolute state of freedom and justice can be established. If that is possible and people believe that it is so, they will be ready to kill almost everyone who dares to doubt it. They won't count the corpses in order to reach that goal. This is a craziness of human beings to think themselves able to establish the absolute on earth, and if they are driven by such an idea, they become entirely demonized, not shrinking back from anything to achieve that goal, that utopia--ane. that is just the meaning of utopia. There are only scientific utopias and when pseudoscience becomes pseudo-metaphysics, it too becomes utopian.

In religion there are no utopias. We do not claim to know when God will establish heaven on earth; this will be brought about by God and we can do nothing for it. But utopia is a dream to establish absolute goodness, justice, freedom on earth--an absolute unmovable by the decision of human beings. The very meaninglessness of this claim is contained in the positivistic form of the nihilistic movement--with no one ever asking the question: What would life be if we had that? Does it not really mean that at that moment the very system of principles (beauty, justice, truth, freedom) would fall down and with it freedom itself would fall down? The very fact that freedom exists for man at all depends upon the fact that justice, freedom, truth, beauty can never exist as such--for if they did, we would become automatons of realized ideals that had ceased to be principles and no freedom at all would be possible. Lean would no longer be able to claim that he establishes freedom or that he establishes justice--and among other things it would be the most boring life one could conceive of.

What they managed to do when they conceived of the idea of utopia was to take the Christian heaven down to earth. In the Mohammedan heaven, at least, errors can be committed, but the Christian heaven is always the most boring proposition--as we see in Dante. Dante's "Inferno" is interesting, but what about his "Paradiso"? That eternal singing of the angels must really get on one's nerves. Dante, of course, was not trying to make the concept ridiculous, but to make a preliminary concept of an entirely other world so different that it could not really be described and he tried to the utmost to make in that sense a meaningless description of heaven. But utopians have succeeded to invent a world that looks like the Christian heaven with beauty, justice, goodness known to their fullest qualities. It would mean that we could only sing, but could not even invent songs any more. We would have left life behind us.

There seems to be one essential precondition for the man who conceives of a utopia and for the man who accepts the idea: both must have lost their common sense--certainly the man who makes a utopia must get rid of his common sense for it is only by doing so that he can make a utopia at all. When the nihilistic philosophers rejected entirely the critical and comprehensive ability of man, they succeeded in abolishing it so completely that even its common root, common sense, was abolished--making it easier and easier for man to fall prey to the most ridiculous propositions. And when the pseudo-philosopher succeeded in making common sense suspect, he also succeeded in making it just that much easier for man to fall into the trap of accepting authority unquestioningly.

Now certainly there are areas where man has to delegate authority in greater or lesser degrees and one area that demands the most authority is science. But that does not mean that the scientific expert, as he seems to think, should be given absolute authority. It is quite true that I must trust my doctor to a certain degree, but I still have to accept a certain amount of responsibility for these things--and the more responsibility the greater the danger of absolute authority seems to be. A doctor might tell me that I have to lose a leg or I might die without ever hitting upon the idea that I might rather die, but so long as I have that choice at least, I have a safeguard. But the time might come if a state gets hold of medicine and socializes it (I don't want to argue here against socialized medicine, but only to point out certain dangers that are possible.) that an expert can tell me that I have to be operated on. If a situation should come about where I am no longer able to argue (as I can here in the United States), where I am not even supposed to know how a medicine works, then I must protest that I am supposed to know how it works. For if one does not accept responsibility for these things, the time can or might come when a man can find himself in a totalitarian hospital systematically being poisoned to death without being able to help himself.

In Germany there was a system of files kept as part of their program of socialized medicine. The patient had to tell the doctor, who was no longer required to keep this information confidential, the family history in regard to tuberculosis, and this information then went into the state file. In the Nuremberg trials it was discovered that there was an order of Hitler's specifying that after all the Jews and the Poles had been exterminated and Germany was back to peace, the next thing to be done would be to sterilize or exterminate all the people who had parents or grandparents with a history of tuberculosis --and the files were already there waiting. Here we see what could have been the result of socialized medicine in this crazy utopia where the experts could

exchange via files and without restrictions their information and their opinions about you, the patient. Here the rule of the expert could have become in the end the rule of annihilation because every point of restraint where the expert could have been checked was gone.

Now, once again, please do not misunderstand me. My attempt to show what can happen to socialized medicine in a totalitarian state certainly does not mean that I am against socialized medicine in itself, but in an age and situation of man marked by the ghost of paper, where the filing system becomes independent of man, in an age and situation where the demonic is very much alive before us and where it might change any day into our death sentence through those movements we have engaged in with the experts, we must also be aware of certain dangers that can be involved and make all possible checks against them. To put the expert back into his framework where he can be useful again without such danger to us means not only to distinguish every creative human ability each from the other but also to distinguish what the possible limits of each creative human ability might be--putting them into working order so that no short-circuit can happen, so that no absolute expert (like Hitler) can use all the knowledge of the experts against us.

So philosophy in its pure form is a life and death matter for human beings today. It is the only thing to help us not to fall prey to those utopian performances in which we are already involved; and since philosophy is the only central human ability to which all the others are related, and the only one which can explain all the others in their essence as well as their limits, it is also the only creative human ability that can put limits to them and thereby avoid the nihilistic utopian movements. This means first (since we are already in them and since the mechanics of those utopias are ideologies) a philosophical criticism of politics because that is our only means to stop their immediacy--end it is only with philosophy that a criticism of politics can be done. Politics has never been considered a creative possibility of man, but it is most essential that an inquiry be made into this--not only because a criticism of politics must be our starting point of restraint against those nihilistic movements but also because we need criticisms of all those creative abilities of man in order to bring them into their own and into a certain order so that they cannot mix us up. Only the fullness and orderliness of our capabilities can make the fullness and orderliness of man himself. So once again, from this aspect of world history, we seem to see that philosophy must be worked at by man because this is the condition for man to become a free man. If philosophy is done by everybody, with everybody trying to become a philosophical man able to criticize everything that happens, and if everything is done according to man's main purpose of freedom and wholeness, then he can at least protect himself and come to self-determination.

Lecture X

To mark the absolute turn-about in the philosophical thinking of man and to bring out the difference between our having been ruled by experts up to 1800 (and even more so and in a worse manner since then) and the possibility to come to pure philosophy, which is the life-and-death matter of free men, we want to first look into the statement of Plato that the philosopher has to be king and his position that a real human community could not be created

or would not be possible without philosophers being kings or kings being philosophers. He tried to make a utopia (which was the first and most harmless form of a utopia) where philosophers would be the ruling class and all other classes subdued to them and he thought that by this he could bring about a community of iron stability. This "republic" of his is a caricature of all striving for the absolute power of the mind over the mind of men. And if we want to go along with Jefferson ("We are enemies of any tyranny over the mind of man."), then we have to consider the worst tyranny that can be established to be the tyranny established by the mind of man itself when that mind pretends to be absolute, when it pretends to know itself and to know that the eternal ideas (justice, freedom, beauty, wisdom, the good and love) to their full are. If we pretend to know that, then we will feel entitled to enforce those absolute truths upon ourselves and upon other men and out of that idea such a caricature as Plato's becomes possible.

Kant by showing; the limits of human reason opened up the possibility to reject higher authority--God or the cosmos--but he tried to place two guarantees, which he hoped would be iron-clad, to help man from going over the borderline: his categorical imperative (where he put the command of authority always uttered by God or philosophy into a more abstract "you shall" which was a concept of absolute duty and was designed to be a guarantee for men who were trying to establish themselves as absolutely free so they would not go over the line) and his position that in order for man to be able to function reasonably he had to make place for belief in God, immortality and freedom. When we rejected authority absolutely, as we apparently did in the French and American Revolutions, we established certain truths as undoubtable, but upon a closer inquiry into especially the American Revolution we see that these so-called self-evident truths and inalienable rights were founded very much upon the same thing as the guarantees that Kant tried to provide--and we see also that these guarantees are not very iron-clad. If we do not believe in God--or at least in a theistic concept of God--we will find that we do not have such a "you shall" and we will also find ourselves in doubt as to how men can be born free and equal. Men can be considered to be born free only because they are the children of god (which holds true even if it is just a theistic concept of God), but once the belief in God is gone, the supposition falls down and without it we enter into the nihilistic age where everyone tries to find out for himself.

We started out to abolish authority--to abolish the principle of authority that made Plato's statement (which is the essence of the authority principle) possible that philosophers should be kings and kings should be philosophers, and the authority that would have made it possible to make the same statement about priests (religious thinkers could also have established such a "republic"--and did after Moses). But this principle of authority that we abolished by our so-called democracies was replaced immediately with another authority--and one which turned out to be much worse and certainly much more lethal than the former one. We brought ourselves under authority or authorities which were no longer transcendent but within the world, authorities which were ideas; we brought ourselves under the authority of ideas.

The United States was conceived of as a free republic, but it contains also that absolute thing of a mass democracy (we are that too), which the Constitution calls "the rule of the people." The authority there is the people within certain boundaries given by the Constitution and, as it is conceived of, is not absolute authority, but if it ever really comes through it can lead to

totalitarianism. What can happen if the people have absolute authority we can see in the Weimar Republic. Hitler in the last election almost got the majority of the German people (his swindle amounted only to about 3 to 5 per cent). If we assume he had that majority, it would mean that the abolishing of freedom was done by the authority of a majority of the German people. So democracy as a political idea is not at all what the American Constitution means in guaranteeing the rights of the minority. This is a wonderful idea, but it is based upon the principles of a republic, not a democracy. A republic is made up of free constituents and as long as one constituent disagrees, his right to disagree has to be preserved; a democracy, on the other hand, means that as soon as a majority vote is received, the will of the majority has to be carried out because the people's authority has replaced God's authority. This is not a concept but an idea that started with the idea of a super-human entity--the people--who would receive the authority after the authority of God, the king, nobility and the priests was gone; the people would now be the authority. If this were carried through here in the United States, it might lead to such an event as almost happened in Germany where the people by mass democracy can overthrow their freedom.

But the real principle of authority involved here, insofar as the United States is a republic, is a result in just the fact that authority, though we do not know where it is derived from, is not contained in the people but in a voluntary human agreement and declaration of will of free persons: the Constitution. And that means, since authority is not contained in the people but in the Constitution, that if 80 per cent of the people would decide to make Mr. McCarthy the Hitler of America and to abolish the Constitution and establish a totalitarian state, they would be the breakers of the Constitution and the remaining 20 per cent would be entitled to raise machine guns against them because the majority would be rebellious against the free republic. So the voice of the people is by no means the new substitute for the voice of God here--but the consequences could become those of a democracy socially with the same trends as in other states in the world without a guarantee such as ours because our guarantee, the Constitution, could become tomorrow only a piece of paper. As a free declaration of human will, the Constitution can hold only so long as that declaration of will is understood--and to make that declaration of will really understood would mean to create an ideal republic (which here is only outlined).

To make an ideal republic we would first have to find out on what authority it is based if not on the authority of the people or of God either, and to ask: What could that authority possibly be? on what could it possibly be based? It would be based on trust--on the trust of human persons always to want to be really and absolutely free--but since this trust might not be justified because it is only a trust, it would mean that everyone who wanted to live up to it would have to make himself someone who could be trusted in that respect. It would mean that in order to become a reliable constituent of a free republic, he would have to try to become a real, whole free person--if only so he could be trusted and be a man who could really hold up such a daring constitution which put such a trust in him. The American Constitution, metaphysically speaking, (was the most daring thing politically ever undertaken by men in an attempt to try to establish a community of real free men, and it was undertaken with the knowledge that most men are not free men because they do not know what it is and only with the hope that it might develop.

This courage in the trust of the human will to freedom is the metaphysical basis of the Constitution and it seems almost a foolish trust considering what human beings are moved by politically in our time. The will to freedom that is absolute and arbitrary and which seems to be the basis of America and the other will manifested in the Constitution to build a free republic of free men based upon trust and voluntary agreement have always stood against each other and we are still in that predicament. Here both things come together and this free republic outlined in the Constitution is still alive by a mere chance of history--the chance that this country has not been under the compulsion to build up a foreign policy, the existence of plenty, and of infinite social opportunities. If this once stops, the guarantee might be abolished by a mass movement which does not know what all this means. It was the greatest design we ever made to be politically free--but it was merely a design and to hold it up means to really understand what is involved. It is an ideal set--to accomplish a free republic of free men--and it cannot be entirely accomplished because it is an eternal task.

Once again this brings us back to the question of why every man must become a philosophical man, and here in relation to politics it becomes a reversal of the Platonic formula--instead of philosophers being kings or kings being philosophers, we have the proposition: every man a philosophical man. If he is not and is not always striving for that and to be free and to be trustworthy, the guarantee is otherwise not given. He has to make himself sure against any temptation to fall prey to any authority whatsoever; he has to make himself sure against the authority of a king, nobility, priests or God--and most of all against those substitute authorities in the nihilistic age which are much more dangerous and which try to tell us how to live and what to do by a higher authority that has become inhuman because God is gone. And this he can only do by becoming a philosophical man:--that means to be able to criticize any proposition made to him and to ask: What authority is speaking here? is it an authority or not?--and finally finding the authority in himself.

Can man be an authority? Can everybody be an authority? From where could he have gotten that idea of authority at all? From where could he have that abstract idea of authority? We must also ask along with this, because it is related to this question of authority: how could man have conceived of the idea of god at all? What was originally meant in Abraham's concept of God? And what gave God the claim of absolute authority? Abraham's original concept of God was that of the God-Creator, the Creator who was the beginner, the Creator who created the creation. This immediately brings in the question of authority because what does creation make the creator of what he creates? The supreme authority of it, of course. This is what sustains the claim of absolute authority and what originally entitled the Creator to claim that authority in the first place--He was the author of it. But since we assume here that the idea of God was conceived by man, we still must go back to ask: What made it possible for man to conceive of a God-Creator? What metaphysical reality in man's own life made it possible for him to get the idea of a beginner, a creator? And what metaphysical reality made it possible for him to get this idea of authority that is related to creation? It was possible for man to conceive of the idea of a creator because of his own human experience that he himself was an author, that he could originate things. Just that gave him the idea of authority and provided the real foundation for it.

When reflecting on an idea in a methodological line, we always try to find out how that idea was given to man and from where; we try to find out how man was able to make it and how it was possible for him to have such an idea at all. A believer would say this whole discussion is senseless, that man's ability of authorship is only possible because God gave it to him, but if we do not use God as an argument, as we cannot, then it would seem that man could not conceive of the idea of authority without the hidden but original idea of his own authorship and from that he derives his idea of authority. We find that while this also provides the foundation for the claim of the absolute authority of God, man himself can never claim absolute authority and that such a thing as absolute authority is impossible because man is a being of becoming. He can become a man or a woman, he can become a more and more creative creature who is capable of more and more authorship--but he is not that; he can only become that.

But this is the hardest proposition that man can put to himself--to make himself a man or woman, to make himself a real, whole free person--and to say that the hardest task is to develop the I or the self, which all modern philosophies are concerned with, is sheer nonsense. This is all within the self-experience of man (I know that I exist as an I because you exist as an I); the real task is how to make that I or self into a he or she, into a human being of certain quality. As long as I am concerned about how to become myself (which is a psychological matter), I can never become anything. Unless I attack the metaphysical problem and solve that, I am not even entitled to talk about myself. Other people will tell me what I might be; I will find out what kind of a human being I am becoming from other people.

And here we get rid of psychological philosophy--not psychology itself, which as a science has to be concerned with the individual and not the person (and it is easier to find out about the individual when he is sick)--which tried to make out of the I and the self, out of the individual (as it was tried from Kierkegaard to Sartre) an existential philosophy that made it a metaphysical task for an individual to become himself--which is the most nihilistic proposition that can be put forth. One cannot become something when he can never know what it is--and if one tries to, it means to go into an infinite demonic process of self-ruin. If man tackles the real metaphysical task, he discovers that only by not wanting to become himself, only by disregarding this and trying instead to become more and more of the quality of man, and living up to that quality in the highest degree possible, can he become himself. That is his metaphysical task--and the paradox of human development. To try "to become one's self" means for man to enter into an endless labyrinth full of mirrors in which he seems to be that or that or that. He engages in a mental process of self-reflection where all substance gets destroyed. It is the very process of self-destruction itself and as such a substance destroyer.

A psychological proposition taken as a metaphysical task--or rather taken as a pseudo-metaphysical one--is one of the most dangerous propositions of our age and if it becomes the cement of a kind of philosophical and theological reasoning (which has nothing to do with philosophy or theology) one result is modern theological writing which throws in theological and philosophical prepositions cemented together by psychological propositions. This is found in all the so-called theological writing from Barth to Maritain, including Jewish theologians like Buber. In all of them we see the same method of mixing up three different methods and lines of thinking--religious, scientific and philosophical--which here we are trying to

keep pure. This is an age where any combination can be made—even artistic thinking with the use of beautiful figures of speech and metaphors (and which artistically might be very sensitive too) can be thrown into the *mélange*—to produce a book which is, as the Americans say, "very stimulating," but never constructive. Nothing can be proved—we can only feel fine until we need the next book to make us feel better. These writers never seem to ask why human beings are so wonderful—which they are—but even if they did, they could never prove it by a method of combined thinking glued together by psychological errors.

There is only one way to freedom and that is the way of pure philosophy because philosophical thinking is the only human thinking concerned with freedom and truth, and to become a philosophical man is the only way to become a free man. When we reject authority, we have to accept authorship—the authorship of everyone and common. As soon as we respect ourselves mutually and have become those authors, taking responsibility for it in a community based upon a constitution built upon mutual agreement, then we can take a kind of relative authority within that state we have built, and we can delegate relative authority to our representatives—an authority which is controlled by a never-ceasing authorship of authority by ourselves. Metaphysically speaking, if man creates a government to which free men try to govern themselves, it could never be regarded as an absolute authority. If it were, it would have to be abolished because it would run against this constitution we are talking about. By establishing the metaphysical foundations for a constitution and by showing what it would mean to establish a free state not based on a higher authority like God but on the authorship of free men, we would have a safeguard that unfortunately we do not have in the American Constitution—which was designed to be such a constitution but was never metaphysically established.

We see then that a free state supposes that everyone is a free man, and since everyone can only become so by pure philosophy, could we then not reverse the formula of Plato that philosophers have to be kings and kings have to be philosophers to the proposition: everyone has to be a philosopher—and a king. This second condition—"and a king"—we have to add because we have found that a philosopher can never claim any kind of authority (or to be any kind of an expert or authority) whatsoever—and, of course, a certain amount of delegated authority under the conditions we have proposed is necessary.

In science and art, for example, a certain authority has to be agreed upon (which derives also from authorship) and both rely upon certain skills (although they have to be accounted for) that require a certain basic respect. Philosophy on the other hand not only has to give up any claim to authority, but also any claim to respect because of skill—and philosophy requires perhaps the richest skill of all. Nevertheless, the philosopher can never claim respect for his skill, and has to reject it again and again at every new step he makes. In skill there is only a certain mechanical guarantee for the performance itself and since philosophical skill involves logic, it is particularly dangerous. Philosophical skill can become, and without the beholder or student being able to realize it, pure fake if it is exerted as a mere skill. In enabling the philosopher to proceed on merely logical lines, it makes it possible for him to reason against reason; it makes him able to turn around every statement of the other person in his very mouth by mere dialectical skill—splitting up terms and falsifying them by the mere process of reasoning itself. Therefore, it is a most dangerous skill and one that has always to be controlled as to its very performance—or

it makes a man an empty faker or betrayer who loses his ability to convince and gains instead a tremendous ability to talk people into anything.

Reason itself by the skill it has developed (the skill of reasoning itself) can turn into reasoning against reason--which is an inherent danger of philosophical skill and has been used by all the positivistic nihilistic thinkers of our age. It can be used by philosophers of pure intentions, and has been used by philosophers of pure intentions, who thought that by the discovery of that quality within the performance of philosophical skill itself, substance could never be lost. But the more men got into that line of reasoning, the deeper they were caught. That was all the result of Hegel, who discovered it and started it with his mistake that the mere gift of reason was the highest gift of man.

Of all the schools of philosophical thought--the Medieval (scholastic), the Jewish (Talmudic), etc.--the Jesuit and Hegelian schools are the greatest schools of the skill of thinking created on earth and anyone who has to acquire the highest possible skill of reasoning--that is, anyone who is going into productive philosophy to become a philosopher who tries to make new discoveries of possible new ways of life--can do so in those two schools: the Jesuit and the Hegelian. But if he does not become aware of the fact that in the very process engaged in substance can finally be lost, he will get lost himself and become an involuntary faker who interprets on into infinity. The real metaphysical thinker, the free philosopher, finds himself mostly in a situation where he considers himself lucky if he can separate a handful of hair into a few bunches, let alone split one hair into seven parts--which has been a charge so often made against philosophers. But there is a truth in this charge nevertheless. A philosopher can engage in an infinity of reasoning for the sake of the matter of the skill of reasoning itself and simple people have felt that--although unfortunately they also have mistaken infinity of reasoning, which can be the result if philosophy is mishandled, for philosophy itself.

So the philosopher must always guard against letting his skill lead him into that infinity of reasoning which in the end can become a kind of political demagoguery with endless arguing and only the concern to be right. If a man wants to be right at any price and has a good pair of lungs and a tireless tongue, then it only depends on how long he keeps on reasoning. Such a man no longer is evaluating the statement or taking into account the fact that a contradiction does not necessarily show the statement wrong, but only that an opinion has not been conveyed exactly. He is not concerned with that, but only with showing that the contradiction makes the statement untrue--which means he merely is performing an empty skill. This is just the danger inherent in this highest skill that human thinking can acquire, and therefore, the philosopher has to forfeit any claim of authority and has to say: "I am the one who always wants to be checked on according to content so I will not fall into the error I am most likely to fall into--the error of a more logical performance without regard for content where I can go on reasoning endlessly. That means I can make no claim of authority, but must stick only to the claim of authorship--and to that only so far as I can show that I can author some thought valuable to you, only so long as I can show performances according, to substance and not an empty skill."

And with this we come back to Socrates. He was the first to conceive of the idea that the only possible way to author truth might be in a dialogue with another thinking person and he meant

by that a philosopher could be sure he was really seeking after truth only so long as he was after substance--and he could be sure he was after substance only so long as he could control it by going along with another thinking person: that is, as long as the other person understood, the philosopher could be sure he was talking about substance and that it was a matter of convincing and not just talking someone into something. Socrates always attempted when he tried to bring out the thoughts of his pupils--their own thoughts, which is the sense of the term "midwife" used by Socrates--also to show them what substance really meant: "Now let's see what you have born here. Let's see if it is not merely a wind-egg." And then Socrates would proceed to dissolve the whole thing to show that it was empty, a mere logical statement that did not pertain to any matter of thought. He was the first to discover this trap--without knowing about the real dialectics (logical dialectics) which can bring the philosopher and the so-called philosophizing man into a circular movement of pure reasoning itself which can lead nowhere but into pure reasoning and is again a demonic process.

The original choice of man is either to become a man or to become demonic; man can become a human being or man can become a demon--that is his real choice. And of all men the one who is in the greatest danger to fall into the trap of demonic reasoning is the creative philosopher--just that man who moves in the very center of creative thinking which enables a man to become a creative human being or a demon. (There is no question of the diabolical here with all its indications of the terrific pride of man who can sin against God and risk eternal damnation; there is no question of the still human qualities involved in the diabolical.). That means the creative philosopher has to be the one who is most aware of the danger and that he is the one who has to pay the price of always leaving himself absolutely open. He is not entitled to play his cards in this hand; he has to play them open on the table--otherwise he himself cannot be sure. Therefore, he last of all can claim authority--and yet up to 1800 the philosopher claimed the highest kind of authority. It is small wonder then that he has become, though involuntarily so, the creator of the nihilistic trend of modern philosophy with its reasoning against reason--where (after Kant) philosophy itself for the first time fell completely into that trap and became a performance of infinite reasoning.

So here the ends meet again. That holds true for the possibilities and dangers of a single human mind also holds true for the human mind represented in the central part by philosophy (which too fell into that trap). But if the dangers are there for philosophy, the possibilities are there too--which means specifically for philosophy the possibility to come to a concept of pure philosophy and the possibility to find out at last what philosophy really is. Jaspers tells us that the philosopher is characterized by the very definition he gives of philosophy. And here Jaspers is right and not right. There have been so many definitions because of so many attempts to give a definition when philosophy was struggling to come into its own, but the moment philosophy was freed from the other creative abilities of man (freed in the sense of the conglomerate and the intermixture that existed up to 1800) a definition became more and more possible and it became more and more possible to perceive of philosophy in its pure form. That means that the attempt of Kant is still the point of absolute revolution and departure in philosophy. For the first time with Kant philosophy tried to find out what it was and for the first time became critical of itself--no longer taking itself for granted but raising instead the question: What is philosophy?

Kant felt that we did not yet know what metaphysics was and that we could not yet account for its foundations (and he tried—but did not succeed—to give those foundations)—but he did more with his criticism: he destroyed heavenly authority. It is quite true that by destroying heavenly authority he made it possible for those who fell back into authority to claim it even more so and to become even bigger (and much more dangerous) authorities; but it is equally true that without Kant no further steps in critical philosophy would have been possible either. So since Kant, on the one hand we had had, especially with the positivistic philosophers, steps in sheer reasoning where mere ideas have been taken as authority, but on the other hand with pure philosophy (which also became possible with Kant) we now have the possibility to go to the very source of the idea of authority itself (which we have found was authorship) and to find that authority cannot be absolute. Real philosophy leads only to the relative authorship of free human beings—who by being creative and by being related to each other gain the possibility of a relative authorship of authority providing they do not want to change it by this into absolute authority to be used as a power over other human beings. The only absolute remaining then is the absolute of human intention in human beings with a transcendental relationship to the Absolute (that unknown Absolute that is eternal, not infinite, and which we must always keep in mind just because it is unknown and can never be known to the full—not only because the limits of human reason are reached just there but also to insure man's possibility of transcendence).

The conclusion from there on is this "must" that I have already established: Man must philosophize; he must philosophize, or so I think, because it is only with free philosophy that man can gain the sense of his freedom--and without this man cannot be man; man must philosophize because without free philosophy he cannot make sure of himself, thereby becoming a human being, becoming more creative and more reliable for other human beings--and without man's being reliable to absolute purposes, he cannot build a community but will fall into anarchy; man must philosophize because philosophy is the beginning of life (as distinguished from existence) with the transformation of given existence into a real life related to the Absolute--and only by a relation to the Absolute can it become life.

The Absolute has been conceived of as God, but the crucial question is not so much a question as to how the Absolute is conceived of as a question of whether man's relation to the Absolute is there--for only then does man have the possibility of transforming existence into life, of becoming men, of becoming a free whole person with the capability of transforming the given into something with meaning. Since man's former relation to God, metaphysically speaking, was a relation to the Absolute, man had that possibility in religion (though in a rather restricted way), but the minute God was gone he put into His place a false absolute: society, nature, history. Now to fix such an idea, to make it absolute authority means--since the Absolute as eternal is timeless and a false absolute with (its absolute authority is only infinite--to replace a concept of eternity with just an idea in time and it means to break absolutely man's relation to the Absolute and with it his possibility to transform existence into life and his possibility of transcendence. He no longer has to overcome himself, but only to subjugate hi-self to a higher authority--which means an absolute loss of freedom.

Now that religion is gone, man has only the possibility of going in one of two directions: either in the one of becoming more and more of a human being or in the other one of becoming

demonical. The demonical lies in the way of an infinite direction in time because every infinite movement will always turn out to be circular (and thus dereonical) --which means for man the way of infinite reasoning and the possibility of man to destroy himself as a human being. The first basic task of philosophy and the philosopher is just to make man aware of this danger and to help him avoid falling into that trap by waking him metaphysically aware when such a trap opens: that means to make him able to become aware whenever the line of an absolute idea is being proposed that can only lead to an infinite movement of slavery. The second task of philosophy is to lead man on to the only other way that is possible for him now: the way where he can develop substance of his own, where he can become more and more free--always in relation to the possibility of the Absolute and eternity. To keep man in this relation—as far as it can be done--is the positive task of philosophy.

So once again the "must" I put forward is there: man must philosophize because without philosophy--unless he goes back to religion (which is a very tough proposition indeed, as we have seen) where he has a relation to the Absolute and at least a restricted relationship to freedom--he is in danger of losing the creative ideas and principles that can make him a free man. Only by becoming a philosophical man can he establish and keep a relation to the one thing that can help him to become more and more of a human being: that unknown Absolute that becomes more and more known with each new step man gains toward it, but never knowable to the full; that unknown Absolute that man must never cease to think of as an absolute toward which he can always move—giving him the possibility to become more and more creative and the possibility to establish more and more all those eternal principles (freedom, truth, justice, beauty)—but can never get entirely hold of.

Lecture XI*

**(Note: The following is an excerpt taken from class discussion since the entire lecture period was spent in discussion.)*

One of the great difficulties for the philosopher in formulating a concept--and especially in certain languages that do not seem to be as well designed for philosophical concepts as others (for example, two of the best languages for philosophy are Greek and German)--is to find words that can be redesigned to carry a certain meaning or distinction he wants to make. To indicate a qualitative difference in the meaning of power, for example, there is one word we could use to make the distinction: might. Might could be used to mean power only intended to be creative, inherent in which is the fact that it will not be misused. Might also can mean "I might do that."--implying possibility and also the capability of a human being to do something. Might also can be used--in a sense combining both meanings here--to describe God: The All-Mighty. So we seem to have a word in hand that can really carry the meaning implied when we say power can be used as a means for might, but when power is used as an end in itself, we have fallen out of might.

A word can be loaded with many meanings: first, as a symbol which stands for that thing; second as a metaphor--which mean that a word in the form of its letters has also to be pictorial

in a way (take the word “chair” for example: the curve has been imitated metaphorically to give an image of the thing and to give meaning to be received sensuously--as a poet can use it); and third, the intention, which goes together with the other meanings of the word, that this thing shall be such and such (understanding) . All this goes into the creation of a single word. As myth was a conglomerate which tried to get all implications at once into one thought, one picture, so it also happened in language.

When we go about philosophically to dissolve myth, the task is to bring out of the conglomerate a working planetary system, so to speak, of all the human creative abilities of men that went into the myth and one of the means we have for this is the redesigning of concepts—and thus of words. To redesign a concept means also to put a different meaning into a word and to agree upon it for a better understanding of that word. This shows then that we are thinking directly as to the matter at hand and not as to the word. In the long development of language, bound to our living in myth and religion, we used to think that the word itself was holy, not merely the carrier of meaning—but words must be our servants not our masters. That means for the philosopher, when he sometimes is almost at a loss to find an available word to carry a certain meaning in philosophy, that he is able to create a combined word or to take a word with little meaning and by filling it with meaning redesign it.

Heidegger in trying to overcome the nihilistic predicament found himself in a situation of trying to show a certain position that the nihilists had not taken into account. To help him do this, he tried two ways: he dived back into Medieval German, fumbling around to find a word to fit his meaning, and he also took upon himself the task of re-discovering archaic Greek meaning. His rediscovery of the original “physis” (of both the pre-Socratic and the post-Socratic meanings) gave me the possibility to use “physics” for the distinction I make as to the physical and metaphysical. Heidegger uses it merely for something emerging into existence, coming just now—using it for a mystical event. To find a word to carry the meaning of the mystical event he was after, having experienced that it happens in existence, he had to go back to archaic Greek for a word to carry his meaning—and I follow in his footsteps here.

Sometimes a thinker comes into such a situation, having only substance in mind, when he does not want to be irritated by words that carry other implications with them—because by using a particular word he can be brought into another line of inquiry by the word itself. Words are also able to conduct our thoughts and if they could not, tradition could never be established. Take the Jewish people—what a wonder that a people could endure in a similar direction for over 3000 years. It is one of the greatest historical phenomena and one that we now have the possibility to look into and to find out how it was possible. One very great clue to this is the fact that the Jewish people have also been a people who established absolute faith in the word and created a tradition of interpreting the word. To be able to conduct thought by words, and by that to be able to create tradition by handing over to the following generation almost the exact meaning of those thoughts crystallized in those words, is man’s most powerful means of education. We start first by aping words, and then by following tradition, listening to what is told to us. Before we can learn to redesign meaning, we have first to take over meaning—which would not be possible without the power of words to transmit meaning and tradition. The word is just so powerful because it always has implications of meaning that can be interpreted indefinitely—and there is

certainly nothing wrong with this, but there is always the danger that they all will become empty words eventually if we stop the process of designing words in the philosophical sense.

Since Kant we have done just this—with no basic redesigning of words being done until lately. When this happens tradition then becomes usage and the word gets more and more empty of meaning until just the symbol is left (then something like semantics becomes necessary and a new science is created). But while words cannot convey and transmit meaning unless they are being refilled by new meaning gained out of fresh human experiences, they still can rule by transmitting symbolic power as mere symbols, as mere patterns of thought; and since we move according to those patterns of thought, it boils down in the end to mere reflection of thought. The moment we feel we have no obligation to face problems of life and forget to think creatively, it means we think mechanically in mere patterns of thought and behavior. This is the process of the dying of thought of generations who have left the metaphysical and this is the process where thought dies together with language. This is not, as some people seem to think, because we print newspapers and language gets worse everyday—that is only an effect. There simply could not be so much empty writing produced if the language were not in a process of losing meaning and could not be handled mechanically.

To lose, as we have lost, our will to put new meaning into words (because we ourselves can experience and create new meanings) means to forsake the realm of meaning itself—the metaphysical—and it means as far as language is concerned, that language can serve us only to indicate merely physical things, becoming less and less intentional and more and more functional until it becomes so emptied of meaning it can be indicated by mere symbols and what we call clichés. We can—since language is both a means of communication and understanding—communicate our opinion (though not make others understand them) very easily by using symbols that we handle as apparatus and can finally even replace them with mathematical formulas (which has been done by semantics and symbolic logic). This is a valid use of language when used for scientific purposes, but the moment it is used for philosophical purposes it means never to use language or words for any transmitting of meaning or any forming of common will—or in other words never to use language for the purpose of understanding.

To use language only got the purpose of the physical, so to speak, means also to deprive ourselves of one of the most important meanings carried in words: the metaphorical content—which can only be brought to mind by poetry. Certain words through poetry can carry such an association of experiences that they never become entirely empty. Poetry can load a word like “evening” with such metaphorical content that it will even carry over into “Good Evening.” But without poetry and the richness of meaning it can bring, words can become mere clichés and language so empty that initials serve us as words—as in the long line of agencies and organizations designated simply by letters (AAA, AMA, NATO, etc.). The meaning of the words has been emptied out to such a point that they are not even symbols any more—they are almost signals. This is a sad commentary because language is the mainstay of creative thought.

Along this line of inquiry, we cannot help but wonder why certain languages seem to retain more meaning than others. Why, for example, does the French language have the least amount of clichés—in spite of the fact that this language coming directly from the Latin was designed as

the most exacting prose language possible? This is due simply to the fact that the French love their language so much and have taken such good care of it, so to speak. Ever since Richelieu, for instance, at certain intervals a new dictionary of the French language has been put out in which the greatest scholars have tried to go deeper into the meaning of each word; for decades past now in one of their newspapers there has even been a half-weekly column on the purity of the French language where every fault, every vulgar expression has been criticized; the French school system has been designed so that any fault in language is a major fault—and certainly, I could not afford to give in France a lecture in French, such as I do here in English (which I can do because I can think in English). To a Frenchman even for a foreigner to speak the language grammatically is not enough: the pronunciation is most important too. Anyone who tried to give a lecture in French without meeting those requirements simply would be listened to because it would be the same as Chinese to the French. They just cannot stand to have their language spoken incorrectly. It may mean that the Frenchman hates foreigners in respect to that, but it also means that by such feeling for their language, the French have managed to keep the French words from being emptied of meaning to such a degree as the English words, for example. By this discipline they have put brakes on this process of degradation and decay of their language and it shows how much can be done by mere negative criticism by a people who love their language almost above everything else.

But for the purpose of the actual recreation of a language (which is possible) even this slowing down of the process is not enough; the whole process itself of languages becoming more and more mere patterns of thought, more and more emptied of meaning has to be stopped first—and stopped at its source: man himself who creates language and man himself who by losing contact with the metaphysical loses also his capability of creating—and by the means of fresh human experience, recreating—meaning in language. Language as a creation of man can hardly have more than man himself can put into it. Thus we are brought back once again to the central position of philosophy and the "must" I have proposed. Through philosophy—and only through philosophy which is the only creative human performance that can do this—can we start the procedure of redesigning words and changing patterns of thought into meaning by being able to create new meaning in our own lives. Then by and by we would start to speak language as a language and not just empty words.

Lecture XII

We have within the nihilistic situation only a choice of three possible positions: to accept the nihilistic situation, and thus decide against freedom; to go back to religion, and thus accept a restricted freedom; or to become philosophical men and women, and thus make a decision for freedom. If we accept the nihilistic situation (and we accept it consciously or not if we do not take a stand against it by making a decision for the full freedom we think is possible through pure philosophy on at least the restricted freedom of religion) then either we must submit to the categorical imperative of the positivistic nihilist (the "you must") or to the authority of the negative nihilist (which moves according to the pleasure principle and the "do as you please").

In either case we forfeit freedom absolutely, give up the idea of creativity at all, and submit to movements which require of us not to act but to react: that means we give in to the given, we give in to the idea of having our actions decided by the situation, the environment, the laws of nature, the laws of history, the laws of society or what you will, according to the situation we are in; we give in to the idea of forfeiting any chance to change the situation in any way which would transcend the mere movement of the physical (the given); and we give in to the idea of becoming absolutely functional, of losing all possibility of acting freely, of acting intentionally, of acting at all—reacting merely, becoming a function to function along with the function of the movement.

The categorical imperative of the positivistic nihilist (the "you must") adds to this one thing more: not only must we submit to the process but we are asked to believe that our freedom comes from speeding up the process, whatever it might be, by gaining insight into it so that we can serve it even better. This is made quite plain by the "freedom" offered to us in Marx's words: "Freedom is insight into necessity." This is not freedom at all, but an agreement to slavery. We are called upon to function with the functional perfectly, to move with something we have no possibility at all to change but can only speed up by our insight—and we are asked to enjoy that as the situation of our very freedom! What kind of a funny substitute for freedom is this! What we are really offered is the mechanization of the human mind to formal intellect—to an intellect whose functions can be pleased by a so-called growing insight into processes that are going on anyway.

With the other half of the nihilistic imperative (the "do as you please") we have a bad assumption unaccounted for: the assumption that we know what pleases us—which means, of course, that we would have to know ourselves. But unfortunately—as Socrates could have very well told us—this turns out to be the toughest proposition that anyone can make to himself and one that he can only carry through by trying to make himself not into himself, but into a man or woman. For the one who tries only to find himself no continuity or consistency is possible, and he most certainly would not be able to know what he wanted. The trap in the negative nihilistic imperative lies just in the fact that to be able to "do as you please" means that we would have to know what would please us, what our pleasure might be, and since we can never know ourselves—and thus our pleasure—that way, we can only act functionally, reacting to outside stimulants given to us. So the freedom that seemed to be there in the "do as you please" (and Stirner is a good example of this) turns out to be as full of slavery as the "you must."

The first nihilistic, but noble, rebellion against the position of Hegel (which made all this possible) was that of Schopenhauer who saw the implications of Hegel's position and what it would mean. Schopenhauer felt that in that case—in that sorry and terrible situation of man that stripped him of every dignity he had known—that man still had one way open, one freedom and one possibility left: the freedom to go into solitude and to deny to help the situation, and the possibility of the one kind of real creativeness left to man—art. So Schopenhauer took the position: All right, so we will do what the processes require of us, but certainly we do not have to admire them and to throw ourselves entirely into processes that are not according to the dignity of human beings; we do not have to speed them up and perform better and better for them. We can at least deny them to the point of going into solitude and we can at least get pity and art out

of the whole terrible situation. We can be good to other human beings and help them to bear it and we can be interested in art, which is the only thing that can still give us a feeling of human dignity. But the positivistic nihilists prevailed and Schopenhauer's position was overthrown by the one to speed up the movement.

After Kant, having lost the concept of the personality, and with it transcendence and the possibility of creative freedom, the human being has been split into a private being and a public being, into the individual and into the social being of society. Both the individual and society claim sovereignty, both are after power, and since it is a secularized sovereignty (without even the restraint given by God) it means a claim for absolute power, inherent in which is the threat of destruction to every other sovereignty: that means inherent in every claim of secularized sovereignty is the threat of murder—it leads to murder and has to lead to murder because sovereignty can finally only be established by breaking all other claims of sovereignty.

The negative nihilistic imperative (the “do as you please”) is nothing but the claim of sovereignty of the individual which involves the destruction of every other sovereignty. It leads to murder and can only lead to murder out of its very pleasure principle. The positive nihilistic imperative (the “you must”), which is nothing but the claim of society, is set absolutely against the claim of sovereignty of the individual with society claiming to be the representative of those iron laws according to which the individual has to function. This is society's claim for absolute sovereignty (which can most clearly be seen in the form of the socialistic proposition of Marx) and the fact that this claim can eventually lead to a state built upon murder on principle, we unfortunately have had the most terrible proof of in our time. So this is the choice we have: to submit to either of the categorical imperatives of the nihilistic situation—the “you must” or the “do as you please”—both of which end up with the same result of slavery—and eventually murder.

Bound up with the splitting up of the human personality into the individual and society is the destruction of one great possibility of man: the possibility of the human community. The moment society—made up of individuals—is established as an absolute with absolute unity by absolute slavery it means that at that same moment a community—made up of personalities capable of coming to agreement—becomes impossible. A community, even though it might have been brought about under authoritarian laws, always meant that there was an element of freedom guaranteed since it was based partly on the agreement of personalities, and as long as the state, absolute or not, was supposed to get its sovereignty from God (which meant that it was at least restricted) there was a certain sense of community. But the moment society took over with its claim of secularized sovereignty this sense of community, along with its guarantee of a certain freedom, was gone.

America was built out of the very principle of community—a genuine creative principle according to which men could create a community of free citizens, based on a common aim (justice and freedom for everybody)—and it still prevails here to a certain extent. That is why I said that even though the nihilistic proposition exists here now also, we have to set the situation in America apart to a certain degree and concentrate on Europe where the nihilistic situation has developed to the full (as we have seen in Germany and Russia) showing the final victory of the “you must” over the “do as you please,” the victory of society over the individual, and the victory of the

ruling class (which rules absolutely) over the human being and the personality—as well as over the community which is absolutely destroyed in a totalitarian state.

The United States in a way is an island still above the waters of the nihilistic situation that has flooded over all the countries of Europe—protected up to now by the dyke of the American Constitution which contains the concept of the person and community. It is not a question of dumbness, for example, that the German people, having once realized that the consequences of the nihilistic proposition to the full, have not been able by and by to find another way even though that state was destroyed. It was the inevitable consequence of those principles of person and community having been destroyed to the full. To fight against the nihilistic situation when caught within it is almost impossible—since the reality of the situation is related to the philosophical thinking in that situation and to the kind of a fight one can make against it—so the German people can only fight as Heidegger tries to fight: the I against the One. His very formula of the I (man) against the One (which is nothing but society) shows that this dualism is the very nihilistic proposition within man himself. Heidegger tries to criticize all this and Nietzsche's "Will to Power" as nihilistic propositions, but being caught within the German situation himself, he has up to now been unsuccessful. We on the other hand are a little better off—we still have three choices.

The second choice open to use is to go back to religion (which is a certain trend now in the United States). For our purpose here we will use only the most sincere people as examples rather than the kind we can criticize—which unfortunately would be most to the point here. As a reaction to the blind idealistic generation of the thirties—the generation that went in for the "you must"—we now have a generation that goes in for the other half of the nihilistic imperative: the "do as you please." This reaction can very well be shown in the story of a medical student who was the brightest and most promising pupil in his class. When he was asked why he went into medicine, he replied, "Because it promises to be lucrative." And when he was asked, "Doesn't a doctor have any meaning at all for the community?", he said, "I don't think so. I went into medicine because I am like everyone else: I just try to get the best out of it for myself." This cynical attitude (the "do as you please") is the reaction and the answer to the "you must" of the "lost generation." We are thrown from the one extreme claim (I for myself) to the other extreme (you must go in and work for Moscow even if you are in the State Department of the United States; you must sacrifice yourself for the idea painted on the wall of the future which gives you the possibility to lose yourself and to think of yourself as a kind of hero—but a fake hero), and back again with both extremes ending in tremendous boredom—the heroism of the rugged individualist as much so as the so-called heroism of the absolutely committed. So whatever movements call themselves or however social trends look, they can always be judged by the criterion of those two categorical imperatives of nihilism.

In that situation the trend back to religion is very understandable, but most of the people who go back can be criticized with the argument that it is just another trick. I have always tried to ridicule atheists as believers, but nowadays I am almost tempted to defend them. No one nowadays, it seems, dares to say, "I don't believe," because it is nicer to believe in God and it promises more—by being a conformist perhaps he will get a better job. There is already a trend toward a belief that if one is not religious, one is a communist. We have Mr. Chambers now who wants to

fight for God—and it becomes an idea that is put on the same level of communism and is a misuse of a religious purpose for a very dirty purpose. Religion in such a case is not distinguished as to its ethical content. Now God shall be the one who says, “You must.”—You must fight against communism. But God never said, “You must.”; He only said, “You shall.” There is no “must” in the Christian religion.

But what about the example of creative and good intellectuals who have gone back to religion. W.H. Auden, for example, went in for many of these movements and got his fill of them. He finally came to the conclusion, along with many other intellectuals—because all the battles of freedom in the nihilistic situation have ended finally as victories of more and more slavery, and because man has not seemed to be able to get hold of any real principle of freedom—that man should not and could not claim absolute freedom; that since philosophers from the time of Kant have not been able to find full freedom or to establish it, it must not be given to man at all. Auden and other intellectuals have felt, therefore, that only restricted freedom is given to man and have said to us: “Since we have nothing to show for man’s trying to live without God except the nihilistic situation and all its consequences, we had better go back to religion.” They want to accept the restrictive freedom of religion in order to survive the nihilistic situation, and they think by that they can erect a wall of real human resistance to those movements that are sucking us deeper and deeper into the nihilistic predicament. But they do not know what a hard proposition this really is, or what it really means to try in all sincerity to go back once belief is lost.

We have among the existentialist philosophers both those who believe in God and those who do not—Jaspers, for example, believes in God, Camus and Sartre are atheists, and Heidegger (if we still count him as an existentialist, though he disclaims it, or include him to the extent that he has been an existentialist) has tried to behave absolutely philosophically in the sense of neither believing in God nor believing in the non-existence of God, leaving God out entirely. Jaspers takes the position that every philosopher has to account for his position towards God; Heidegger says not. I too do not think that such an accounting is necessary so long as a philosopher does not claim to know whether God does or does not exist and does not use God as an argument, but Jaspers has good reason to take in again the theistic God of Kant. He wants to keep up man’s ability of transcendence to God and he also wants to create a wall against the big flood of nihilism—but he does it by non-philosophical means. Philosophically, this position of Jaspers’ does not hold water because belief must be added to it in order for it to be taken as a means for our behavior. Jaspers takes an in-between position between the second choice of going back to religion and the third choice made possible to us by starting afresh from Kant to find the possibility of establishing human freedom.

With Kant, philosophy has the possibility to become pure philosophy within that system of human creative abilities and once it is established as such, we can then make the third decision open to us: to try again. As a starting point we have only the position Kant left to us—except for one additional advantage (embodied in the Constitution) that we have here in the United States: the very dim awareness of both a metaphysical concept of the free human person and a metaphysical concept of a possible free community of men. More we do not have, so if we decide that we want to try to live as free men—not going back to the half-security of religion or not falling prey to the nihilistic situation—do we not then have to ask: If philosophy is the only

free creative human activity of man that is able to help man to discover his own free creative activities, if philosophy is the only creative human activity that can still try to strive for the establishment of freedom, if philosophy has become identical with the very proposition of man's freedom itself (which it has), does it not mean then that if we want to be free men we have to make a decision for philosophy and (turning the proposition of Plato around) that we have to hold everyone responsible to become a philosophical man, a co-philosopher?

Of all the three decisions open to us, in the beginning the first one, the decision for escape from freedom, seems to be the easiest—though in the end it will prove to be a mortal decision. In making this decision—or even in just sliding into it without consciously making it (which amounts to the same thing)—one does not see that it is a process that starts with absolute conformism and eventually ends in totalitarianism, that by making such a decision one forsakes any possibility for freedom and creativity at all, and that one will be made a mere function to be disposed of in the general process—a process that moves by conscious murder until in the end the very security of life itself is given up.

The second decision, to go back to religion, is already harder and it means to revise nihilistic philosophy in the light of theology—for the Catholic to study Aquinas, for the Jew to study Maimonides or Philo, and for the Protestant to study Kierkegaard and Luther. To go back to religion in all sincerity—and not just as a psychological performance that makes one feel better—is exactly as tough a proposition as that—demanding study, hard study, and for a long time.

The third decision, the philosophical decision, is the hardest one of all. It means to forfeit the possibility of being able to pretend to know (and the resultant feeling of security it gives) and the possibility of making one's self or society the absolute judge, and to live instead by preliminary answers in the Socratic way—only being able to be sure that one is moving in the right direction. Even though we can and have to criticize the nihilistic situation and its consequences, we also have to take into account the valid, negative criticism of sincere nihilistic philosophers—criticism that has shown us that every claim of the “you shall” is related to belief in God (even if it is just a theistic God) and that if we do not want to take God in as an argument, then we cannot recognize the categorical imperative as being inherent in man and as being the source of free ethical creativity of man. We must also see that without God such an assumption as the one that man is born free does not hold true, that philosophically speaking such an assumption can hold true only if the assumption is also made (as it was in the American Constitution) that God is there who created men free and equal—we have no other proof.

To find proof philosophically for man's being able to be free is just our task. We have to find a source in man, a possibility of man to become free—under the condition that everyone else becomes free too—and we think that man has that ability and that possibility to decide whether or not he wants to accept freedom as a principle of his life because otherwise he could never have made the assumption that God made man free—or, as a matter of fact, could never have conceived of the idea of God at all. If we suppose for the sake of philosophical argument that we cannot know whether God exists or not, that we only know that we have had an idea of God, then it follows that we would have been able to have an idea of God only if we had had the ability to make a decision—the original decision required in philosophy: the decision for the idea

of freedom. Once that decision was made, we could then proceed to invent mythical forms to enclose our inner knowledge.

The only source we really have to prove that an original decision is given to man—an original decision of man for freedom (which is also the original decision for reason, justice and finally, metaphysically speaking, life itself)—is the ability of man to transform a given existence into a life that has meaning and indication because it transcends mere existence, and this ability of man to be able to establish truth by searching for it and also living it, wanting it, deciding for it. That means that man is an originator, that he is able to be free and to originate, that he is able to also act, not merely being condemned to react only, that he is able to meet a challenge not merely by a response (as the scientist thinks) but by an answer—and answer which contains a creative counter-proposition to the situation and contains the possibility of taking a position in order to change it, to make it meaningful, to put something new into it that was not there before; and answer that is something created by the mind of man which gives him the ability to transform those chains of occurrences, which move in a circular way always (and circular movement is the way the nihilistic movement moves) into straight lines of human events that get to be meaningful and get somewhere because of action.

To change the functional into the intentional, taking the functional into the service of the intentional, is the metaphysical realm in which man moves and is the real meaning of the metaphysical, but since man remains a metaphysical being whether he wants to or not, he can also if he does not make the original decision for freedom (and thus also for life) transform himself into a mere given thing absolutely directed, moving along with the physical in chains of occurrences: that means that he can decide for the demoniacal—that he can decide against freedom, which also entails a decision against reason, justice, truth, and eventually against life itself. Thus a decision for the demoniacal, which inevitably carries with it an eventual decision against life, means a decision for original crime—the crime against origin (which is the same decision made by any murderer)—and leads to murder, to murder on principle which can be used as a political means. And this brings us to a most curious implication of nihilistic thinking: just as nihilistic thinking always leads to murder, the decision for murder leads inevitably to nihilistic thinking and its characteristic circular movement—which means that both decisions are alike and demonic.

But since it is by the decision of man himself that he can turn himself into anti-man (which is what the decision for the demoniacal means) and not some outside force that brings this about, this in itself contains a striking proof, though negatively so, of man's ability to be self-determining, free, and creative by the decision to be so. Man has the capacity by making the original decision for freedom (and thus for life) to set limits to himself—setting limits to himself on principle (for example: if man decides for freedom and life, he at once with this sets the limit to himself to take no action against freedom and against life—restricting himself at once as to murder). This ability of man to set limits means that he gains with this the first possibility of self-determination—which is the first act of real creative freedom, making out of the I, a he or she, a person who acts creatively in a creative world he has put meaning into.

We have seen that the nihilistic imperatives, the "you must" and the "do as you please" do not hold, philosophically speaking—along with the "you shall" once the belief in God is gone (which

does not mean that this can be used as an argument either to prove or disprove the existence of God)—but nihilistic philosophy by inadvertently finding the source of anti-creativity, the source of human crime, has done us a very great service. Not only has it put us into a situation of life or death where we are forced to ask questions and to take position, but by its critical and negative work, it has enabled us to move on to ask questions that could never have been asked until certain assumptions that had always been taken for granted were exposed. By showing us, for example, that all the “you shalls” of the past, including Kant’s, could not hold once the belief in God was gone, nihilistic philosophy gave us the opportunity then to ask: If that is so, then where did we ever get those ideas from? where did we ever get the idea that God made man free? where did we ever get the idea that freedom, truth, justice, and reason were given to man, that we had them? We were able to get the idea that all those things were given to us because we have always had the possibility to make an original decision for freedom (and thus for truth, justice, reasons and life itself). We only invented a means of masking our inner certainty of this first by myth and then by God and the cosmos.

Now (thanks to Kant and the nihilistic philosophers who followed him) we know that freedom, truth, reason and justice are not given to us, that we do not have them—we can gain more and more of them; we know that we are not born free, born just, born reasonable, that there is nothing in us that we have only to bring out—we can only act more and more free, more and more just, more and more reasonable. That means we first have to make an original decision—a decision for freedom, and thus truth, reason, justice—and by this decision we then have the possibility to find by and by a way of handling freedom, truth, justice and reason as principles, as criteria of living action—giving us the possibility to act more and more so (more and more free, more and more just, more and more reasonable) without ever being so. We are only given a possibility and the idea of a task and we have to make a decision for or against it.

We have instead of a categorical imperative an original impulse—an impulse that is not an unconditioned one but an original one which is an impulse for originating coming out of our awareness of being possible originators. We definitely have the awareness of this possibility of ours which can be formulated as a “you can” (and is not a voice of higher power as the “you shall”). “You can” is what we are aware of—this original impulse of “you can” which can become creative by our making the decision for the Absolute and for what we conceive of as those principles for which we decide.

By deciding for the Absolute not only does the “you can” become creative—giving us the ability to relate everything in the world to the Absolute and thereby transforming the mere given, the physical, into the meaningful—but since this Absolute is also our idea of eternal being, we gain another possibility: to make out of this eternity. We are in the ontological predicament (and of knowing it) that we are not contained entirely in time or in space—for as to time, we have it and as to space we are location points that set space. And if our ontological predicament is just this—to be able to have another relation to time and space—the ontological decision necessary in order to be able to make this other dimension, so to speak, which we call eternity, is the decision to relate everything to the Absolute—which means the ontological decision for freedom and for eternity.

This question of our having to make an original decision--and the fact that it really is a decision--becomes most clear in relation to murder. We—being aware in our very existence of this metaphysical fact of the “you can,” of this original impulse, having it, being it—can make the decision for freedom, truth, justice, reason, and thus for life—which means to make a decision for the Absolute and for the possibility we have to relate everything to the Absolute. But we can also decide against the Absolute, against this possible life built out of the existence of man—and we can decide against this either by original crime, by the crime against origin (which also means a decision against freedom, justice, truth, and reason) or by the decision against freedom, justice, truth, and reason which in turn inevitably leads to murder.

But there is one very funny thing about this decision against the Absolute. We have the possibility either to be creative or anti-creative, de-creative, but since we are relating beings—the most relating things in the world—and cannot help relating things, even in the act of being anti-creative, or denying the Absolute, even in the demoniacal there is the same indication of the action of relating, still an indication, though negatively so, of relation to the Absolute—of a negative relation to the Absolute, denying it but still relating to it. How can this be possible?—to deny the Absolute in one decision and yet still relate to the Absolute. Quite simply by the individual making himself the substitute of the Absolute, by the individual deciding to relate everything in the world to himself and by this making himself the Absolute—which is the root of the demoniacal decision for original crime. When the human individual makes himself into the Absolute, by that action negative creation is induced—which means chaos, where everything is related in a one-way street. Since there is no possibility of relating things in a meaningful way or to other human beings, everything becomes related only to the individual—which means that everything becomes related against meaning, destroying meaning and by that inducing a process of chaos. We are beings capable of the transformation of the physical, but if we try by the wrong way to change a chain of occurrences into a line of events the only change in the circular movement of the given is into a circular movement out of which the center is gone, which goes into the circular movement of the maelstrom, creating more and more destruction—which means we become beings who engage in chaotic movement. If on the other hand, we make the other decision, we become creators of the world, creators of systems of meanings in things, which can be changed into more and more meaningful systems and meaning.

We can relate to the Absolute (to God or the Absolute of the creative principles of the mind of man (only because we are aware of freedom—which means that if we decide against freedom and against the Absolute we still act upon this supposition. This is why this negation is not merely negative, why in fact metaphysically it means the opposite. Nothingness in this case is something: the action of the development of creativeness turned to the destruction of meaning and truth. This is what nothingness really means, metaphysically speaking—and it is created by man. We are made of both because we have the possibility of the “you can,” of the original impulse.

This “you can” is also the reason why we could think of ourselves as immortal souls, trying to give some concreteness to this metaphysical fact; but while we can never find that out, any more than we can find out if God exists since our reason does not reach so far, we can find the

root of all those creative thoughts that we have had about ourselves—and that is the “you can” and the possibility of the fundamental ontological decision, the decision about freedom itself. We are not born free, or true or reasonable—we are only born arbitrary—but we are born not-determined (and the only beings in the world who are born so) with the possibility of being self-determination and becoming more and more free, true, or reasonable; and since we are born so, we can only live by determining ourselves and only by relating ourselves and everything else to the Absolute and so being able to bring about a creative life.

Jaspers in his book talks about the unconditional imperative and we must ask if there is not something which makes such a proposition possible. Jaspers wants to show that if we are in a border situation, according to the unconditioned imperative we can throw our life away without any conditions—but a criminal or nihilist might do this also. Jaspers thinks that here our true being (that “authentic self”) comes through, that original goodness is in us, that we are good, are born good; but this cannot be proved. For the philosophical mind, man can only do good; goodness is not a quality of man but only a possibility to be more and more acquired. We are neither good nor bad but rather conditioned-conditioners capable of making a decision for one thing or another—which means that with the “you can,” the original impulse, we have the possibility, once the decision for freedom on principle is made, to put forth propositions to being, to the world, which amounts to an imperative—but a conditional imperative where the conditions, so to speak, are conditional. That is, we have to know when we risk our life or sacrifice our existence for the sake of freedom, justice, truth, or reason that we do so because we want that life to be so or we don’t want to be—that is the conditional imperative. It is a matter not of sacrifice but of original human passion—the passion of origin which just cannot bear it any more and which has to move because of hatred (hatred founded on decision and principle) against a meaningless event. When a man jumps into the water to save a life, he moves out of hatred against a meaningless event that is going to take place. He has made an original decision for life and the meaning and he does not need to love or to even know the other man—he just acts. This is the perfect solidarity of human beings who have become aware of their creativeness. In most border situations we as human beings act upon impulse, but if we become aware of it, we find that we have acted upon a deep truth: the original decision that we have made and which by and by we have put into ourselves.

We have brought about a deadly situation, the nihilistic situation, and to overcome it we have to bring the very proof of the possibility of human freedom: that means a real concept, a metaphysical reality by which we can move and act always--becoming aware of a fundament in the being of human beings themselves, a fundament that can enable us to resist and overcome the nihilistic situation without the help of religion, postponing the question of God until we have been able to prove whether we are able to meet the situation we have created, until we can see whether the human mind can overcome it out of its own creativeness. I am not historically minded, but I cannot help thinking that the reason why in philosophy we have not found this foundation before has been because the human mind is so lazy that it only finds the means to solve essential issues when it is frightened to death. Kant, having made many preliminary steps to this position, had only to make two steps farther to reject the “you shall”--and yet the whole nihilistic period lies in between. That is because we are never that unconditioned--even as conditioners. If we think one-sidedly as conditioners, it is because we are not able to abstract

enough from the conditions and so depend to a certain degree upon conditions that we have created before. The mind moves forward, yet is always taken back by its own creations. So even half a step forward is very optimistic progress.

But if we have brought about with the nihilistic situation a deadly situation, we have also brought about the possibility of the one thing that is our only help to overcome this situation and which we come to now: the possibility of a system of human creative abilities, a system of cooperation between the creative possibilities of the mind, which can be made out of the confusion that has come about with the blowing up of the conglomerate—a confusion that has come to the point where we do not know any more what art, philosophy, religion, or science might be. We have been held back up to now by the counter-critical thinking that was necessary first (for example: we could not have asked where the real source of the “you shall” was if the position of Kant had not been destroyed by the nihilistic situation). The movement of the human mind is the slowest—and a movement of back and forth with past steps making further steps possible and new steps throwing light back on past ones. If we look back to the old philosophers when a creative step has been made to find a new position, we find they suddenly seem deeper than before—because it is one mind, the human mind, as to its metaphysical creations which always hang and move together.

That is one of the great differences between science and philosophy and a common bond between philosophy and art. In science if we reject a proposition, we can forget it; it is not related but becomes a mere historical fact. In art and philosophy on the other hand it is quite different. In art, for example, it is only since Cezanne, and since we have started to understand him, that we suddenly have understood how great El Greco really was. This, of course, is not quite true, but what is really means is that there were implications in the form-giving of El Greco that were there as germs only, not realized to the full until someone else came along who could develop them in their full significance (which does not mean, however, that Cezanne did not create them all by himself). This was not an occurrence in mere history, but a line of events that always closes together again. If we look at the interpretations of Plato up to Kant and then at the interpretations of Plato after Kant, we find two sets of interpretations that differ in quality. After Kant, Plato was conceived of as a much deeper thinker. It is a backward reflection to things that have been there but have been overlooked—the germs that have always been there but that only came into more fullness of meaning after a Kant or a Cezanne had done their own creative work.

The body of philosophical thought—in mythical form, in the anti-philosophical form of nihilistic thinking, even in the beginning of free philosophy (philosophy freed from bondage to other human capabilities)—remains one body of metaphysical thought of man. And modern art has shown us the same thing. We have become aware of deeper indications of style in the older styles—and whether we know the icons or not, or the meaning of anamorphic art, the works of art are still speaking to us because of an eternal quality of man in everyone of them. This is one of our guarantees for an eternal transcendence of man in the creations of man where he can become sure of his very ability. The other guarantee is philosophy where only quality is decisive, where even an erroneous statement has to be looked at for its quality.

So as to study, philosophy means that by and by—when we have decided to become philosophical men and women (because this is the only thing to do that will bring us into creative freedom)—we will have to look through the main body of philosophical thought. There is no progress in philosophy in the sense that we can ever forget about Plato or Kant, but this does not mean, however, that we have to study philosophy in the sense of history of philosophy (then we would have to undergo real discipline). It means only to get into the matter itself and then to proceed by preference, taking up first the decisive fundamental things (as the early Platonic dialogues). That is the beginning of what we could call “How to Study Philosophy” for people who want to be creative in other fields of life (which means everything that moves metaphysically and according to eternal principles) and who are aware that they can become more so and better if they become philosophical men. For those people the way of studying is a way of preference—the same way you go about art: by taking to the masters that are nearest to you. And so a few attempts to look at some of the great philosophers should be made by anyone of you who makes that decision. Find out who is the one who tells you the most, going leisurely but constantly about it.

If we move according to the original decision and come to believe and to think it is so, we have to take the responsibility for all those things; and if we don't go back to religion, we have to take it just as seriously as religious people take their belief and faith. It would perhaps mean—if we could bring ourselves back to the iron rule of Sunday, so to speak—that not a Sunday would pass without a certain line of philosophical thinking about a certain philosopher (not just reading), and that not a Sunday would pass without a great work of art to meditate upon and take into one's self. If we dare to make the decision to go this way, it might mean to find God at the end after we have done our task in the world, but it means first to undertake the daring enterprise of thinking we should not pray for help because we want freedom for the Absolute and it means that we should agree to take our decision as seriously as religious people take theirs. It means not to think that by taking a few courses and reading a little we have done enough, but to do it continuously, and though we can do it in leisure, to know that we are not able to live without it any more.

Lecture XIII

After having discovered freedom—this freedom possible when no longer restricted by the assumption of God or the cosmos—after having assumed the responsibility that necessarily must accompany this freedom, after having made the decision for life and for transforming the given into the meaningful, changing chains of occurrences into lines of events, we discover a funny things:--having found freedom to the full by moving away from God, once in full freedom we can and do move towards God—or in other words: it is not God who assures us of freedom but freedom that assures us of God. Having gone through the nihilistic situation, we have to decide to start only with what we have—and we find that what we have is surprisingly more than we thought: the possibility of freedom. If we become aware of and start with the quality of man—with his being a metaphysical being, a being who is becoming, a being who can change into becoming—then we start in a line where in the end God will become absolutely probably

out of freedom—not religiously so but with faith, real faith. God as the Creator could finally be the result of philosophy.

First, philosophy was the result of religion, then it criticized and finally abolished religion. After this was done, we found that by creative philosophical thinking, starting from freedom, there follows a philosophical line that moves constantly towards faith. This faith is free faith and is developed out of the life of man himself without taking God in as an argument. As that life, as well as the world that we create, becomes more and more meaningful, as we find more and more that we ourselves have the infinite possibility of creating meaning, of creating a world, life becomes more and more marvelous and with the growing of the marvelous, faith grows. As well as science can reject the marvelous by explaining it away, we can put the marvelous character back in things—changing the world into a natural paradise, giving its marvels back to nature by bringing it back into the context of meaning—and finally realizing that dream of man.

Again the marveling of man will deepen, and the more the procedure is going on the more probable God becomes and the more pure faith will go into it—faith that is not there to see or to ask things of God, but the way of pure faith where only thanks is left. We can make possible this way of thanks—this way of giving thanks for something that was given to us that we could only make more and more marvelous—which is the creative way of philosophical thinking (which is related to all the other creative thinking of man). When all the creative abilities of man are related to that source again, then they will all move in that direction and finally change us from receivers to givers, and with that, faith will unavoidably develop without the need of belief, commandments or ritual—growing out of the experience of the marvel of life.

So the world history of the human mind then has been this one great period which ended by destroying and losing religion and coming into the nihilistic situation, changing ourselves first into men absolutely uncreative and casting ourselves into slavery. But as a result of having been able along with this to abolish the fear that we had of nature, we were able to get a grip on nature. We, who started as the children of nature but always afraid of it, have finally lost fear; but we have also lost a great possibility by taking nature as a thing to be used by us recklessly, which is our situation now. We have fallen out of this first period into the darkness of the nihilistic situation, which has brought us into the spoilage of nature and our lives. But if we take the nihilistic formula, “Nothing is true; everything is permitted,” and turn it around, does it not mean that if we can say nothing is true, it means that we can say what truth is? We judge it by truth, so what is meaning is the truth—the truth that we are is the criterion, the truth that we are is what we used to say was no meaning, but it only means that we are the ones who have meaning. That is how near the nihilistic position is to the position of absolute freedom—just one turn around and we come out of the nihilistic position. So we accept it and say that it means freedom for man. If everything is permitted, it means that we decide what we permit and what is permitted—which means that we can either make a decision for freedom or a decision against freedom (this is our original arbitrariness).

If we make the decision against freedom, it means we make a decision against life and for death; we make the decision to go on spoiling everything, to take no responsibility, to set ourselves as absolute and with that to relate everything to ourselves and to destroy ourselves. If we make the decision for freedom, it means we make a decision for creativeness and for our

ability to make meaning, and—since they are the conditions for creative freedom itself—it means that we also make a decision for that set of principles of human freedom: truth, reason, justice, beauty, love (for all the things that Plato once called eternal ideas). If we decide for freedom, we decide for them—and only by deciding for them can they be established because their existence depends upon us and upon our decision to try to establish them. We the ones who are aware of transcendental truth (and the only ones who can be) and the criterion for our own life is in this free decision for truth—this decision that can make the absolute turning point to where we move towards God out of freedom.

When we supposed—as we did up to Kant—that the cosmos was there, that the eternal ideas were there and that man moved according to those eternal ideas, the task of philosophy could only be to discover how the eternal ideas moved the cosmos and how everything in the cosmos was meaningful—which meant that the basic method of philosophy could only be contemplative. But all that changed the moment we saw with Kant that we could never make such an assumption as the cosmos and that the eternal ideas were only the awareness of the possibility of eternity itself and were only real, only there in the human mind itself and nowhere else. With that philosophy left, and had to leave, the contemplative, becoming instead creative in the active sense—and becoming the only possibility to bring us real freedom and pure faith.

With philosophy—free philosophy, pure philosophy—we can make the decision for freedom and take upon ourselves the responsibility for the creation of a meaningful cosmos; and if we do not make that decision and if we do not succeed in establishing those principles (freedom, truth, reason, justice, love) first more and more in ourselves, then among ourselves, then in a community, if we do not take in chains of occurrences and transform them into lines of events, reorganizing the earth (which in that sense is not given but only given as a possibility) and creating step by step a meaningful cosmos out of all that is given, if we do not do all that, we cannot live in freedom and absolute responsibility (and both are identical)—and we do not gain the possibility of pure faith. Faith would still require a jump, but the jump from knowing and making meaning into faith would become easier and easier because the possibility and finally the probability of God would grow with every step we take away from always moving under conditions we have not made ourselves and with every step we take towards making life more meaningful. The richer life becomes, the more probable becomes the existence of a creator; the more we become aware of our being creative creatures who can use our own creativeness, the more we become aware of the probability of a creator because we know that we are after all only creative creatures and not creators who can create the physical or ourselves.

Jaspers in an existential, psychological way has gotten hold of this a little bit in his insight that man must become aware that he has been given to himself in his freedom. As such, man has been given to himself, and this is the only point where the philosophy of Jaspers is immediately relatable to the point I make—enough so at least to make a contact. Jaspers almost comes into the open here, into freedom itself; otherwise, he goes back and remains within the contemplative—and he goes back to the contemplative with a purpose. Although he is an existentialist and as such took over the nihilistic proposition of false activity, he has avoided the full consequences of this position (and here Jaspers' position towards God has helped him)—the consequences that come from taking a philosophical proposition out of the mere

existence of man and which lead (as in Sartre and the young Heidegger) finally to mere activity for the sake of activity, to activity at any price, to activity not metaphysical or in freedom but merely hysterical, merely psychological—and goes in a way back to Kant and Kant's position that we must believe in God or our reason will not function reasonably, so to speak.

But in avoiding the one consequence of the nihilistic position, he is brought to a point where he cannot make a distinction between becoming and the physical process of change that can never become a process of becoming if we do not interfere. He does feel that we have the possibility of transcendence, but with Jaspers it is not active, it does not mean to move in freedom and to change into becoming. He goes rather to the position of bringing men back to religion in order to install human beings better in the cosmos so they can live on as children of the cosmos and God, showing them that they can live that way and can get inner satisfaction from it, showing them that God must be there (though without ever finding out about it or doing anything about it).

Heidegger too—having become critical of this hysterical activism (or as Sartre says “to engage”), of this nihilistic proposition of activity for the sake of activity—tries to overcome nihilism in the same way as Jaspers: by going back to the contemplative. Heidegger supposes that some kind of over-all being is there in a cosmos that contains man, and though in a much more magical way than even before, his position is really in the Greek sense of cosmos with man contained in it. I dare to predict that this way is not possible because it leads back to the old propositions and cannot establish freedom. Heidegger leaves the term freedom out of his new philosophy; Jaspers does not. Jaspers can use freedom because he takes the position that there is the act of a small freedom of choice left to us: we have the inner freedom of transcendence—which here means the same as the Buddhistic proposition of mere psychological freedom. It might be of use to the individual, but it is of no use to the next fellow and it is of no use for the world. Jaspers does develop a theory of communication where the conveyance of inner freedom to a beloved one becomes possible—but here it stops. From this certainly cannot come the communication that creates a human community. But I think that we must have a proposition of freedom that other men can share, that in the end is of use for the world—a really active creative freedom and not Jaspers' kind of freedom that is only good for the individual.

And now we come to the point where we have to relate this proposition of freedom to the question of death. As long as we believed either in the cosmos (as the Greeks did) or in God (as the Jews and Christians did) we were placed in a position where only the contemplative approach could be made—which meant that the toughest problem to solve was the idea of death. We tried either to overcome it as the Christians did (by the hereafter), or as the Hebrews did (you have the means to overcome the fact you die by being able through your own suffering and death to provide the happiness of your children and so go on in eternity), or as the Greeks did with their theory (the best of all of them) that life itself is a proposition to teach man how to die. In contemplative thinking the position towards death is always one of learning how to die. Jaspers too—returning to the contemplative line—believes that philosophy is there in order to teach men to learn how to die (as the Greeks and Romans thought too) and to the other existentialists, including Sartre and Camus, the question of death is still the decisive question of

philosophy. Camus in fact is quite desperate about it, feeling that it is unjust that we have to die, that it makes us live in absurdity, that it makes everything meaningless, and claims in the Greek way immortality for man. Camus feels that men can only become tragic heroes—living up to the terrible task, strengthening themselves against it.

All this hangs together with contemplative thinking itself. If man has only the contemplative task, then by no means is he able to see why he should die. He could as well be immortal as the Greeks thought of their Gods—living on in the world. But if we look at the question of death and immortality from the point of view of freedom and responsibility—which means among other things from the point of view of a definite task—then they take on an entirely different light. If we start with freedom only) and with the possible creativeness of the human being) and from that look at the images man has created of eternal life, we find that with the exception to a certain degree of the Christian image of the hereafter (which had the intention at least to give the impression of something absolutely different) immortality as mainly wished for has had the immanent connotation of the Greek concept and the Greek gods.

The Greek gods were immortal; they were supposed to be immortal in any sense—immortal within the world not only in spirit but in flesh too. But there is one funny thing about these gods and their immortality—one thing that took Homer himself to make them interesting at all. These so-called eternal beings who are infinite in time lead a strange life: they are supposed to be blessed beings, living in bliss, living in eternity—but they cannot change a thing in the world; they cannot change, destroy or create anything; they are entirely non-creative. They can do nothing but enjoy themselves, so to speak. Life amounts to ambrosia and nectar and little quarrels—and is without meaning. True, their love life is very few, but that too must become a terrible bore because there is nothing creative in it either.

To really understand what this living forever would mean, to be able to measure this dream of humanity that wanted to live in absolute happiness—and forever—is only possible if we see it from the point of view of creativity. To be able to conceive of God as a creator—as the God-Creator was conceived by Abraham—means that He has to be conceived of at the same time as a person who is timeless, really eternal, not just a being endless in time and immanent. The Abrahamic God, the God-Creator, is eternal, but not immortal because the question of death does not come up, but the minute we try to relate the so-called immortal soul to God we are back in immortality in time. Human beings can only conceive of living in time, and when we try to conceive of immortality we end up—as in the Christian heaven—not with the eternal but the infinite. The Christian heaven really means that everyone would be a Greek god—and this makes for the boredom of the Christian heaven.

This brings us to the question of whether the creativeness of creative creatures (we are not talking now about the creativeness of the Creator since God Himself is of an entirely different quality) is not perhaps bound to death? That means: could we be creative creatures without dying? could we be free if we did not die? From that point of view it becomes clear that we could not be; it becomes quite clear that we, as immortal human beings on earth, could not be creative because to non-dying beings no transcendental quality could apply and without transcendence there is no possibility of creativity. To be able to think beyond ourselves—which is what transcendence really means—makes us creative. If we were immortal, if we were not

limited, we could not transcend ourselves—there would be no need for it. We as immortal beings, being perfect, would have to consider ourselves as perfect and would have no possibility of longing after perfection—and without this there could be no possibility of creativity or transcendence and we would be like the Greek gods: only able to enjoy ourselves (whatever that might be) with no possibility of being able to create meaning (what is perfect cannot ask for meaning).

If in the animal world animals would suddenly become immortal, nothing in their metaphysical quality would be changed by this. Since they are not aware of death anyhow, they would just live on forever in their own circular movement within the larger circular movement of nature much as they live now within the movement of nature. But since we not only die but know it, immortality for us would change our very metaphysical quality as human beings. If we would not die and would go on forever in a circular movement, it would change our very quality into conscious animals—conscious of ourselves as animals, enjoying perhaps how we lived, but without the quality of being human—without creativity or transcendence. Creativity and the quality of transcendence are bound to death. Every possibility of creativity that we have is bound to the fact that we have to die—and know it. This by giving us the possibility to have time and not to be in time means to be able to relate time lived by us to something absolute (to the eternal)—and this makes us creative.

So if we conceive of life to be what we can make out of existence, then the very condition of making a life (living in life and not in existence) is that we die. We have seen—since no change in quality is involved—that there is no metaphysical “must” that animals must die; with us there is. If we could ask God for immortality, for eternal life in time, He could say to us: “So, you want to give up freedom, transcendence, creativity and life in order to exist forever—because that is the condition or you must be God.” We suppose God to be absolutely different from both the world and us and only in Him can we dimly conceive of a being to whom death is not the precondition for creativeness (which is one of the deepest reasons why we cannot have an image of God).

So death is something we do not have to love or hate; it is something we have merely to accept because we know that without it, we could not live and could not be human beings. Death is not a sorry fact but the luckiest fact because it enables us to be transcendent and to become ourselves. Therefore, the task for philosophy, as far as the individual is concerned, is not to teach him how to die, but for him with the help of philosophy to learn how to live because he dies: that means how to make a life out of an existence, to transform things and beings into meaning and to bring them into life in that sense—which is the root of man’s creativeness and is only possible because he dies.

So for my meaning—thought it is not in the way he meant—Pascal’s saying, “Man is greater than anything else because he knows that he dies,” is true. Pascal, following Greek and Christian thought, had quite a different purpose in mind (he wanted to show that man could not live without God), but even so this saying is true because the condition for man’s greatness is just that he knows he dies. But it is not, as Pascal thought, his misery—on the contrary: it is his glory. His misery is that he is able to willingly make the decision for—or is able unwillingly to fall into—the demonic and to fall prey to it (though even then he can through metaphysical suffering

be made creative again). His suffering—even though he is bound to physical suffering and to the gradual decline of his body and physical powers—is not due to the fact that he dies. Human misery and man's suffering on this earth are not caused by the fact he dies, but because others—the ones he loves—die. This, however, he can control by becoming aware that the one he loved died because he had to die if he were to live. Death is not the reward for sin or the misery of human beings or the absurd; death is the condition for the greatness of man.

In that sense we see that an entirely different view comes into sight the moment we decide philosophically for freedom, the moment we decide to make freedom. This metaphysical proposition—the only one from which we can start to move creatively—became an inherent part of all philosophy, though never openly so, the moment philosophy tried to distinguish itself from religion and to move not from goodness but from truth first. Eventually, by striving for truth first regardless of what happened to happiness or goodness, philosophy was led to the very border of the proposition of freedom and to the awareness that what it was striving for was the basic proposition of freedom, and from that point philosophy was able finally to free itself entirely from all the old concepts of being and to break through into the concept of freedom itself.

Philosophy was able to find its way by truth to freedom because truth and freedom are identical in the sense that truth can only be established in freedom, along with reason, justice, love, etc. By putting freedom as a main starting concern for human beings we find that all the other creative principles of man—truth, reason, justice, love—come into a new relationship and we find more and more possibilities opening up before us until at last, having established those principles and possibilities more and more in full freedom and responsibility by ourselves, we find still one more possibility: we find that to move in freedom means also to move towards faith—to go a way where we can approach the possibility and finally the probability of the reality of God (God as Creator) by becoming more and more creative ourselves. By enhancing our own possibilities of creation in freedom—and only by this way—we become more and more aware of the probability of God as a Creator of creative creatures.

We can know about God, if He exists, only in one way: we can gain negative knowledge, not in the negative way of negative theology or perhaps not even in a negative way at all but rather in an indirect way—and indirectness that moves by the directness of our own creativeness indicating indirectly the possibility of a Creator. What becomes possible is a kind of free mystical thinking—thinking about the unknown (God). This is gaining real knowledge about God—gaining knowledge of how He might exist, if He exists (never certainty that He exists), and at the same time becoming more and more aware of the ever-growing probability of God. We do not know whether God exists or not, but we do know that if God does exist the old believed relation of human metaphysical creative principles (freedom, truth, reason, justice, beauty, goodness, love) to God (when they were supposed to be eternal ideas and were related to God as qualities of God) must be true—for if God exists, those principles must be to fullness and perfection in God because God is the absolute Creator. So this old relation made in philosophy by Plato is again proved to be true in a deeper way than Plato thought.

We see once again that philosophy in all its forms—from the long period of metaphysics, through the time of turning against itself in the nihilistic situation, to now when a new philosophy seems possible which moves in the other direction, starting from freedom—still builds one body

of creation of the human mind with everything relating each to the other. The slightest thing in philosophy accomplished anew will lighten up a proposition in Kant, Augustine, or Plato and will show that it was already there as a germ of thought—just as my proposition concerning those human creative principles of man throws light back on what was already true in Plato's proposition. There is, it seems, an eternal implication to the human mind and its capability to build one body of creative thought with all the endless relations and interrelations possible, as it has done in myth, philosophy or art, and there is one curious fact that becomes apparent about these creations of the human mind that are so closely related to being. The human mind—being transcendent with an original relation to being—can never be entirely wrong as to being (which in science on the contrary is possible).

In philosophy there has not been a single philosophical proposition (so long as it has quality) that has been entirely wrong—any more than any real work of art can help to a certain degree being beautiful. And just as this is true of philosophy and art, so it is true of religious thinking. There is not a single creative thought in religious thinking not worthwhile to be considered again in the light of each new insight and which will not always reveal again the quality of the human being as to thinking. (We suddenly find from the idea of the trinity, for example, what a deep quality is involved there that can still teach us about our own qualities.) Nothing in metaphysical thinking up to Kant can be absolutely lost or even rejected. We have to step on the shoulders of past thinking and know that it belongs to the fundamentals of human thinking—which means there is a whole body of thought that has to be kept in mind.

We have seen that from now on it is necessary to make the decision to become philosophical human beings—which does not mean that everyone has to know the whole body of philosophical thought, but each of us has to know one thing: we cannot reject anything. And, as a matter of fact, we will find that the more we become philosophical men (or women), the more we will want to know the old thought—which can be done in the way of preference once we have become acquainted a little bit with the three pillars, so to speak, of philosophical thought: Socrates as rendered by Plato, then Plato himself; St. Augustine (who brought together the concept of reason of the Greeks and the concept of time and will of Hebrew-Christian thought); and Kant (representing pure philosophical thought slowly coming into its own). By starting with those three, reading some of their texts always, we will gain the opportunity to come to others too and will know by and by the main positions and main development of human thought and will be able to philosophize with Plato and Kant. We will be able, each of us, to engage in a dialogue (which is the main thing for people who want to become philosophical human beings to learn—just that ability to engage in dialogues). For this Plato is the best beginning. His dialogues, being written as such, give us an opportunity to move on or to join, so to speak, those dialogues—giving us the opportunity to bring in our own experiences and to check on those propositions and thus making it possible for us also to become creative philosophically.

This is a question we will talk more about in the last session, trying to find a few hints on how each of us can relate our own main creative concern in another field—be it art, science, or the concern of human life itself (the housewife can be creative too)—to that center of all creative human capabilities, philosophy, and how we can learn to get out of philosophy a strength and direction in order to come by and by to a position where we feel again like real human beings.

That is what we all have to try to do; we all have to try to keep our minds in a working balance by first gaining an insight into all of our possibilities as human beings—learning to know what those different possibilities and capabilities are—and then through this to regain one most valuable thing we lost along with religion: respect.

With the loss of religion and with its religious respect, we lost respect for everything including human beings and their possibilities and capabilities (and with our loss of respect for human beings we lost, of course, respect for ourselves—and with self-respect, we lost self-confidence)—and just in this question of respect we find the kernel of the nihilistic situation. To regain respect—respect for human beings themselves and their capabilities, respect for ourselves, others and for life itself—is essential for either we regain this respect ourselves by re-establishing it in freedom or we face the other two alternatives: either to go back to religion where we are forced at least to have respect for God or to submit to the nihilistic situation, moving and being moved the way we are supposed to move and be moved—finally by demoniacal movement where we do not need respect (totalitarian powers can make themselves respected by terror). To regain respect—respect itself first and then self-respect—is not just a matter of wanting to once we have lost entirely respect for others and life. There is only one way: the way of philosophy and freedom by decision and responsibility, finding out for ourselves why and what there really is to respect. (To regain, for example, enough respect for art in order to be able to look at a work of art for half an hour without already having an opinion and wanting to write a criticism means to learn to understand what a work of art really is and what art can or cannot do for human beings—which only philosophy can tell us.)

To make ourselves strong against all the dangers of the nihilistic situation, to become critical enough to avoid falling prey to all the ideologies and demoniacal movements that surround us and to destroy the possibility of creating new ones, to avoid that final and inevitable consequence of the nihilistic situation, totalitarianism (with its murder on principle), means to make the decision to move in freedom and responsibility—to go the way of free philosophy—and that is the only way we can do it. Even religion, since it requires a certain closed system of thinking, encloses an ideology itself and in the end can be of no help against totalitarianism.

So once again we are brought back to this decision that finally has to be made by everyone: the individual decision against nihilism and its automatic performances and the decision for freedom. The more consciously it is made, of course, the better and technically this is possible. If each of you would decide to read Plato, Augustine and Kant each Sunday for two or three years—finding only a little time perhaps but steadily week after week—I think that I could guarantee that you will have found that philosophy is a good ideology killer, that it strengthens you not to fall prey to ideas that claim to be absolute, and that you will be able to criticize any closed system of thought presented to you, criticize it and laugh it off—because once you have made the decision for philosophy, and thus for freedom, and have tried even in such a leisurely way as this one I propose to keep in constant touch with it, by having become considerably more of a free person you will also have become increasingly critical of everything that moves against freedom—learning first how to recognize it and then finally how to fight it.

Lecture XIV

We have found that once we give up our desire to prove that we are creative by an ultimate cause (which would mean to go the way of God) and decide to start with what is absolute reality, with what has the idea of truth, the possibility of freedom and is creative, that in the end if we want to transcend our reason after having done nothing but rely on our reason, we are not able to take any other ultimate into account except the ultimate of a God who created us. Of course, it is a jump from reason into the unknown, but the direction of the jump is still reasonable—which a jump into the non-creative gods of the Greeks or the half-creative gods of the Indians cannot be considered. A god like Vishnu who creates worlds out of the substance of his body cannot explain man's creativeness; a God-Creator, who is absolutely different from this world, who has no such substance might.

If we find that we have the quality of creativeness, and in full freedom and responsibility establish it, we still do not know where this quality came from and can never really know—but one thing we can know: where it did not come from (nothing in the world or the given, for instance, can explain the creativeness of man). But as we become more and more creative, establishing more and more freedom, truth, reason, we become more and more aware of the one possibility—and the only one—of one ultimate reason that couldn't explain man's creativeness: a God-Creator. This does not mean that philosophy (pure philosophy) leads back to religion, but it does not mean that by the performance of pure reason, by drawing conclusions only from the one thing we know, that we gain the possibility of faith and the jump into the unknown. Philosophy does not and cannot provide the bridge for this, but is rather the jumping board.

But if we build all this on man's creativity and his ability to establish freedom and truth, what about the nihilist who can come and tell us that we start with belief and not a reasonable truth—because there is the possibility in the nihilistic situation to deny that man has the capability to establish freedom or that he has an idea of truth (though to do so would mean to kill ourselves as human beings). To such a charge we can only say: "Yes, but that can only be maintained when man does not feel alive, when man cannot do any creative work, when man gives himself up entirely and says, 'I cannot do this.'—then he cannot. But we maintain and think we can prove that this is a reasonable fact and not belief. It is quite true that if you only consider, as you do, the abstraction of man, the isolated individual, that you can question his possibility to establish creativeness as a reasonable fact—but what about the one thing that you, as a nihilist, do not take into account: man as man and his possibility to live in common, in communication with other men?"

The key to the whole question is one of communication. If I have always lived as an isolated being, then I being unable to get into communication with you, would not be able to establish my creativeness as a reasonable fact—I would have to believe it (which is why the nihilists, who only take into account the isolated individual, can hardly come to anything but a negative conclusion about man's creative abilities). But this does not prove that I am not creative; it only shows that I cannot do it alone. We are all sketches of man and we all have the same basic qualities of creativity, but we only have them in communication with each other—on the personal level in friendship and love, and with men in general in society and community. By all these

possibilities of communication we re-relate to man and know that we all have the same fundamental qualities. Communication establishes for us these qualities by their being communicated to all of us by each of us. We guarantee them to each other by being human beings in common, in community, in communication. It is not a matter of belief (the nihilists are wrong) because we have one absolute truth—or since the nihilists say that truth is only an idea, let's say for the moment one real fact to go on: the structure of man himself which we can know by each other and by experiences that all of us have that can be communicated to each other and be immediately understood because they are shared in common. This is the fundamental fact of man's metaphysical existence.

But once again we come to the realization that once having established our ability of creativity without the help of belief, we always find that in the end we have only one possibility of an ultimate reason, one possibility to explain this creativeness of ours—a Creator of creative creatures—a possibility we can never prove but which opens the way for a jump into faith of the unknowable God-Creator. There is no other way for man in truth. We can never know whether God exists or not because by reason no proof of God is possible, but we do have the possibility that the existence of God will seem more and more probable. If we know our task (to transform the given into the meaningful) and live that way, it will become harder and harder not to think that this God must be. It never, of course, can be conclusive, but it is absolutely reasonable. What I want to establish is the fact that it is just philosophy—after rejecting all kinds of belief and moving only from one proposition of established and reasonable truth—that leads to the point where God becomes more and more probable. We can never establish the existence of God (it is not given to reason), but we can make it more and more probable—not because we wanted to but just because we did not want to and went instead into pure philosophy. Just by forgetting God as an argument, we have the first possibility to gain a reasonable direction toward Him and one that would not require any belief. We gain the possibility of a reasonable jump into pure faith.

But just as I want to establish this possibility of philosophy, I also want to make it clear just what this possibility does and does not mean: that is, we have in free philosophy to prove that the man who does not make the jump and stays even without pure faith can be as valuable as any other, that the quality of man can be proved to be equal—proved by man himself who can make it equal by developing himself without belief in the jump. Philosophy cannot and does not require the jump into faith, but only opens the way for anyone who wishes to make it, and anyone who does make this jump can be sure of one thing: he does not need to; he is not compelled to. Belief in God is not required to become a better man or a more powerful one, and it cannot be used in order to try to become a man of different quality than other men who do not make the jump or with the hope of getting something from God. This jump into pure faith is made toward God only out of pure thankfulness without requiring anything, and the man who does not make the jump would be as equal. He just refuses to transcend into the ultimate—which does not take away any human qualities (and this he can prove).

So this jump is entirely voluntary and free. Philosophy only requires that this be a reasonable jump—reasonable in the way that the man who wants to make it is aware and continues to be aware of the fact that he can never know God; and reasonable in the way that even though he

knows he can never know whether God exists or not, he also knows that he has no right to jump into anything but the idea of a God-Creator—this one idea of the God of Abraham that has proved to be the only one that anyone can jump into reasonably if he wants to jump.

Free philosophy, which became possible with Kant (though he himself failed to take the final step toward it—still feeling that belief in God was required in order to establish truth and freedom) means philosophy finally coming into its own—finally coming to the point where it is able to show, as I maintain it is, that without belief in God truth and freedom mutually can be established by starting only with such fundamental truth as man can find in himself and can communicate to others who have also found that truth—or in other words it means philosophy finally coming to the point where it can free itself by establishing a position in reason where no belief is required and where it can finally discover that freedom and truth are identical (in the sense that truth cannot be established in man except in freedom and that freedom cannot be established in man except in truth). And with the coming of philosophy into its own, where philosophy can really find out what it is, is gained the possibility for all the other creative abilities of man to come into their own and to find out what they are—which means to give man the possibility really to come into his own, to come to the point where he not only regains the possibility to feel a whole man, a centered man, but really to become one with the help of the one things only free philosophy can give him: clarity of thought.

Philosophy once free of belief and religion establishes itself as the central capability of man to which he can relate and understand all his other capabilities. The artist can give us art but can never explain what art as a human creative ability is; the scientist can make all sorts of scientific discoveries, but still cannot explain what science is; religion cannot explain what mystical creativeness is; and so it is with politics and erotics too. Only philosophy, once philosophy itself is understood, can make it possible for us to understand all our other creative abilities and to build them into a constellation of related and inter-related capabilities of man that by making us whole men, can also make us creative in the sense that we can start to relate things in life to the Absolute—to freedom and truth and where we can start to make a real cosmos by transforming the given into the meaningful where we only dreamed of one before. This is the identity and the part played by that whole system of creative capabilities that through free philosophy gives us the possibility of becoming the whole men we can become, the possibility of becoming the creative men we can become.

Free philosophy—and only free philosophy—gives us the possibility to finally come out of that terrible state of confusion into which we were thrown by the blowing up of the old system of things and the nihilistic situation which followed—a state of confusion so complete we reached a point where we lost all sense of the wholeness of the human person and all sense of relation and inter-relation of our creative abilities. We even forgot what philosophy once was; we could not explain art, religion, or even science. All the human creative abilities of man moved one against the other, blowing each other up until man lost any feeling at all of the wholeness of his mind (let alone the clarity of mind that free philosophy alone can establish). As long as religion prevailed and left us in that conglomerate where everything might have been mixed up but was at least related and centered by religion, we could be approximately whole men—or at least feel to be centered men where everything that happened to us and came into our experience related

itself—to religion to be sure, but still it was a relation, though a wrong one, that could give us a wholeness of mind and a relation and inter-relation of our creative abilities that we lost the moment we lost religion.

All this was further complicated by tremendous advances in scientific knowledge—and to such a point that 20 years after Hegel it was literally impossible already to assemble, as he did, in one human mind the whole known knowledge of the world, to be a universal mind as to knowledge. In other words, the age of specialists started—and with it the real danger: the age of experts. Specialists are not our danger—we have to have them—but when men try to be experts, when they try to know better and not to know more, they make of themselves a monster that is only expert in destroying the whole of man's personality. "I have seen today moving over the bridge the reversed cripples: a great ear, a tremendous ear, and a little bit of a man attached; a huge eye, a tremendous eye with a little bit of a man attached." (--Nietzsche in "Thus Spake Zarathustra")—those are the experts.

Specialists we have to have because education no longer can be universal, but the real trouble is not the fact that we no longer can be universal as to knowledge, but the role we have allowed the experts to play in our lives. As to universal knowledge, we can do ever better than that if we see to it that philosophy comes into its own: we can acquire the creative structure of that knowledge as it is acquired by man (making it possible to learn how and where to control the specialists if need be); we can by the help of free philosophy along with a dynamic education make it possible to re-establish our inner mental balance (if it is, as so often these days it is, out of balance) and to become whole human beings in our mental structure (to understand art and always take it into our life; to understand what science is for man and thereby to avoid falling prey to the belief in science while still being able to enjoy its benefits; to understand what mystical creativeness is and what it can do for man and by that not throwing the baby out with the bath when we give up belief in God; to understand what politics is and what creative political action means; to understand what creativeness in our personal lives means); we can learn that it is not a matter of universal knowledge but of being good in our own selected field, of knowing where we start in that field, and by understanding how it is related to everything else, be able to establish our own inner balance in a moment.

So it is not because we have to have or have to become specialists, but because we have allowed ourselves to become and to fall prey to the experts. If we refuse either to become experts or to be told what to do by those who claim to know better, we have the possibility to establish a greater creative activity of man than ever before—and to show just this possibility has been the main purpose of this course. This course was designed not only to show why philosophy is a matter of life and death or why decisions have to be made—the decision for freedom, the decision for truth, and the decision for philosophy (which are the only ones which will bring us out of the nihilistic situation)—but also to show the tremendous possibilities that are open to us once we have made those decisions and to show what we, as men, are really capable of establishing on our own without the help of belief either in God or the cosmos.

It is not so important to go into the more intricate technicalities of why and what happened through all those long millenniums leading up to the situation we now find ourselves in if we gain at least an idea of the development of the human mind through the millenniums it moved and

developed on wrong assumptions until at last the wrong assumptions were pulled out from under the human mind and the structures it had built—first by Kant and then by the genuinely creative negative work of sincere nihilist philosopher following Kant. If we gain at least an insight into that, we will also gain the impression that the human mind and the metaphysical being that man is are the most astonishing and marvelous things in the world—which will give some confidence back to man—to man who claimed he wanted to be creative without being told by religion or the metaphysicians what to do, who wanted to refuse the “you shall” and ended up by taking a much worse alternative: the “you must” of modern metaphysics. This in my opinion is the real introduction to philosophy: to show man that once he has made the original decision—the decision for freedom, truth, and philosophy—he has the possibility to refuse not only the “you shall” of the past, but the “you must” of our times and to establish instead the “you can.”

We have tried in this course to try to find out what philosophy as a creative human activity is, what comprehensive thinking is, and how comprehensive thinking brings us into relation to ourselves and to the world and into relation with the Absolute—making it possible for each of us to become more and more of a whole person. We have seen that we cannot consider man to have been born free or equal or good or just, but only with the possibility to become more and more so by establishing more and more freedom, more and more truth, more and more justice. We have always heard a great deal of talk about human nature, about this or that quality that is or is not in the nature of man. The concept of human nature as something given and defined originally derived from the belief in God or from the assumption of a given and meaningful cosmos. Within that framework—though it made a real concept of freedom almost impossible—there was at least a certain restraint and guarantee, but once that framework was gone, it was possible for nihilism to take over the concept of human nature and to try to define it out of mere natural or social terms—which is a most dangerous thing from the point of view of freedom. But there is, and can be, no such thing as “human nature.” Human nature would have to be a defined thing—but it cannot be a defined thing when nothing in the given can ever explain a human being.

Human beings transcend the physical, the given (otherwise freedom would be denied)—and men have always had an inkling of this in spite of the fact they believed in human nature. They always considered it as something that man should try to overcome. Kant too believed in human nature, but he tried to overcome it with his concept of the transcendental I and was very well aware of the fact that a moral deed would only be moral if it were not done for a reward. Plato, as well as Jesus and the original Christians, already believed that we could do acts that required no reward—a concept certainly in disagreement with the philosophy that believes in human nature. Deeds that are done without hope of reward can be done by man and have always been done by man—but it is not in his nature to do it; it is in his capability to do so by decision and will. It is a capability—just as freedom is a capability—not a potentiality that must already be there and can only be brought out. Nothing unexpected can ever come out of a potentiality if we know the potentiality—yet only the most unexpected can come out of human beings, which is the real meaning of capability. Inventiveness, the action of inventing, and capability are what is given to human beings—not a nature given and defined that can be known and predicted.

We have seen that we have three choices open to us: to accept the “you must” of the nihilistic situation, to go back to the “you shall” of religion, or to try to establish what they wanted to find out in the 19th Century during the Enlightenment: if we in full freedom could make human beings out of ourselves, and if we, of our own free will and by establishing more and more freedom, truth and good, could establish a human community. But do we really have three choices? The first choice—the “you must” of the nihilistic situation—is no real choice at all since it means in the end to make a choice against life for death, and unless we want to admit the failure and inability of man to establish freedom on his own and go back to religion, does it not really mean that we are left with no choice at all, but with the will and can. I have proposed to you: man must philosophize. To go back to religion would mean to go back to father, to go back to restricted freedom and, of course, a certain guarantee against the absolute destruction of man. Certainly it would be better to do this than to live as exponents of so-called higher powers that are not divine but turn out to be a ruling layer of society, but it means a certain resignation and it means to confess that we were not able to establish the human dignity of man and the real respect of men for each other after we left God—and that we think we will never be able to do so. Going back to religion would have to contain that statement of absolute defeat—that we tried to establish freedom only to fall prey to demonical movements, that we tried to leave the “you shall” of religion only to accept the “you must,” and that we think it is impossible for man to do otherwise.

Free philosophy, however, professes not to admit total defeat and proposes not to go back but to go forward—to try once again out of pure reason and out of a real existential decision for freedom and truth to establish freedom and truth. But this does mean, contrary to Jaspers’ opinion, that philosophy requires an absolute commitment of man—a commitment to creative truth and creative freedom and to the purpose of bringing them into existence every minute of one’s life—and it means to understand that one cannot fall prey to all those propositions of the future that sound so easy and prove so fatal (if you do so and so and give up your freedom now, it will be established forever in a hundred years), but has to realize that the relation of time to eternity is always only achieved in the present (a little bit more of justice here and now, a little bit more of love here and now, a little bit more of truth or freedom here and now—and tomorrow and always).

The relation to eternity is never in the past or the future; it is always here and now, and whatever we wish to establish has to be established here and now and again and again and again. To establish the creative principles of man’s life is always a proposition of the present—and must always remain so. The people following us will have to establish truth and freedom also. We have to realize that we can never establish paradise on earth—and that to do so would mean that human beings could not be human beings any more, that they could not be creative. We, as human beings, establish eternity by carrying on this struggle, by transforming things into what we want to establish by our absolute longings. And we have to realize that in the matter of establishing principles we long for—freedom, truth, justice, reason, love, beauty—the way is also the goal. As soon as we think of justice as an idea to be established once and for all—and one in whose name sacrifices of justice can be made in order to establish final justice someday—it becomes impossible. Justice as an absolute is unattainable, but justice as a principle is capable of infinite growth. Principles—which can be made infinite by man—are not

things, but in a way are as we are: something that is becoming, an element of eternity that man can follow and establish according to his ability.

Since we are beings of becoming, since we are not reactive beings only but also active beings, since we are non-determined beings whether we refuse creativeness or not, since we are relating beings who have to relate (and if not to the Absolute and to the world and to other human beings in a meaningful way, relate then to the wrong Absolute, taking the demonic and utterly destructive way of relating everything only to ourselves), we have either the choice to become more and more of a man or woman, a human being—or to become a monster. We have only the choice to become a free man or a demon or monster since man has not the choice to become an animal. If we try to become animals, we become beasts of prey with intelligence, tigers with the will to go after each other—which is not a beast but a monster.

This possibility—the possibility of human beings to become monstrosities—has always existed, of course, but it has been left to our time to prove the possibility of the organization by force, terror and propaganda of whole masses of demonized man, of monstrosities into a whole totalitarian society. And it shows just how great man's fall has been—because that is man's fall: to deny his higher creative possibilities and to use them for absolute destruction, relating them only to himself. We are creative because we can relate things in a meaningful way (to ourselves, to each other, to the world, and to the Absolute) and because we can transform by this the given into the meaningful; but if we make a decision against the meaningful, against creativeness, against life, we do not just suddenly stop relating things or being creative; we become something much more dangerous: we become anti-creative, de-creative and by making the wrong relations utterly destructive. So we have either the wonderful possibility before us to become free men or the terrible possibility to become demonic—depending upon the original decision we make: the decision for freedom, truth and philosophy and thus for life, or the decision against freedom, truth and philosophy and thus for death.