

To the rite of the Sacred Love

To the brotherly memory of P.M. Virio

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THE INNER MAN

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I. Psychology, Yoga and Spiritual Science

Contemporary man appears to be more resolutely and self-consciously assertive. In every field, evident and diverse are the forms of a mentality based on activism and willpower, alongside a vanishing world of feelings and contemplation. Man appears to be growing stronger and more self-assured. He has to ask himself, however, whether such strength and self-confidence are limited to his more superficial consciousness. It could be that man is so identified with appearances that, while drawing strength and self-confidence from them, the reality of his inner being is so worn out that he endeavors to ignore it, even as appearances¹ force him to periodically witness his own failure.

Psychoanalysis and analytic psychology have felt² the dual nature of conscience in many ways, but the very interpretation of man's inner life appears to be a product of such inner discord—when one looks at it not only from a psychological, but also from a spiritual vantage point. Psychoanalytical remedies and the like give patients an illusion of improvement, a temporary one at that, by introducing unusual imagery in one's conscience. By doing so, conscience finds a temporary reprieve from its ills, only to relapse later.

To acknowledge the function of a real science of the soul means to understand how spiritual science regards physiological and psychic life as manifestation forms of the psyche, while postulating supersensible principles from which psyche itself issues forth, i.e., a purely metaphysical element without which it would cease to exist. Modern psychology lacks this experimental foundation. It can't even upgrade its level by extending its agnostic methods to the realm of spiritual quest: it manages, indeed, to corral within its own limits those doctrines that it fails to understand. Analytical psychology has indeed merely exchanged the form of a shared materialistic limit with psychoanalysis: a limit that remains intact as a mode of knowledge bound to its physical instrument and provisional mediator: the brain.

¹ Il processo dell'apparire

² Presentito

The spiritual investigation outlined herein provides the key to understand the relation between thought and the physical instrument of thinking, and thus recognize that thought's "reflected nature"³ is not its reality, but a consequence of its being bound to the function of the central nervous system—a typical condition of present-day man, different from the inner constitution of ancient man. It becomes possible to realize that the exterior vision of things, the sensible experience with its attendant psychic life, are consequences of the fact that, in a point of man's constitution, inner life⁴ is linked to the physical organization. In this sense, the brain is the support that, at the same time, mediates, refracts, and alters the light of the soul. However, waking consciousness arises as reflected consciousness where the soul is bound to the physical world: Maya⁵ rises through it, in a world seen as "outside". One can say that, through Maya, man's soul is rooted in the earth: for this reason, the Tree of creation is pictured with its roots pointing upward, while branches and flowers appear to sprout downward. The mythic ideogram of the upended tree can be found in Hellenistic and Islamic traditions, as well as Hebrew esotericism; it's also present in Hindu tradition, as the Asvattha tree of the Upanishad and Bhagavad-Gita. Its ultimate sense is that man, as cosmic being, is rooted in heaven; he becomes oblivious to his celestial origin in the organ through which he makes contact with the world of senses: hence, his true knowledge ought to be a rediscovery of the height that lies unexplored⁶ in the depths of the physical body.

From this and other considerations of germane meaning, a legitimate doubt ought to arise as to whether it's possible to probe the soul's depths with dialectics, i.e., with psyche's reflected activity, arising from its being stranded from the very source of psychic life. The reality is that only the soul can explain⁷ itself: that is to say that only with the soul's power can one penetrate its domain. But pure soul power arises from the Spirit.

³ Riflessivita'

⁴ L'interiorita'

⁵ Throughout the text, the use of capitals is seemingly unsystematic. I have strictly adhered to the original

⁶ Involuta

⁷ Dare ragione

On the other hand, even if Spiritual Science can point to the “path”, embracing its teaching is not necessarily tantamount to translating it into the corresponding activity. Its domain can’t be accessed through mere knowledge, of a kind in which all men, regardless of their level, appear equal. While acknowledging the necessary value of information, this domain doesn’t countenance its conceited value, but calls for a hierarchical order, according to selfless, inner transparency. One has to remember this point to appreciate how far removed is current Psychology from this spirit, and how it should be ideally reconstructed from its foundations, if man is to be understood. This reconstruction calls for scholars capable of setting out from wholly different assumptions, compared to the agnostic aptitude that constitutes the foundation of modern science: which should be overcome not by giving up logic and pure observation, but—as we shall see—by applying them in a more rigorous fashion.

The basic typology of analytical Psychology is mechanical and arbitrary: it calls for a general distinction between “introverts” and “extroverts” that doesn’t correspond to the individual’s inner reality. It’s impossible to distinguish between “object”- and “subject”-polarized individuals, or according to an alleged, prevailing “subjectivization” or “objectivization” of reality, because the distinction implies, on the one hand, the possibility of an inner experience centered upon the subject; and, on the other, knowledge as the subject’s sole possession and yet, solely related to the objective world.

An individual who lived his own introversion to the point of seizing himself as subject, would at the same time seize the world of objectivity, because there can only be a subject insofar as there is an object. There can only be introversion to the extent that the external world induces man’s yearning for intimate isolation; and there can only be extroversion to the extent that the subject is firm enough to be steeped in the object without getting lost as a subject. Because getting lost in the object is tantamount to not experiencing it, just as the opposite character fails to experience the subject, and is incapable of truly living its own introversion: introversion and extroversion are something for a subject that experiences them, and are nothing outside it. In essence, unaccomplished introversion and extroversion accomplished by losing track of the

subject⁸ are the same thing, facets of the same psychological situation, and expressions of twilight consciousness: they can't be substance of inner typology. The latter, moreover, could never be understood based on its manifestations, but ought to be essentially understood by penetrating the inner nexus of data giving rise to the manifestation: an activity that requires setting in motion thought that is neither reflected nor abstract, but penetrating or "sense-free"⁹.

That distinction¹⁰ fails to grasp the relationship between subject and object, according to which, in cognitive experience, the objectivity of the subject's assertion is evident from the outset. The principle of knowledge¹¹ transpires already in it and establishes a mutual exchange with the will of an object, i.e. with the direction of the other element of knowledge. Thus, it tends to assert at once itself and the unfolding reality of the other element¹². This reality will become symbol of a loftier task, which rids itself of the object and, in its immediacy, engenders at once introversion and extroversion as two inseparable and complementary moments. In essence, it engenders the subject's objective experience, which is experience of the Spirit in different degrees of manifestation, including its psychic aspects.

The subject who truly realizes himself is steeped in the world's essence; likewise, the individual who has an objective experience of nature and cosmos has already conquered himself as subject. Introversion and extroversion, on which the aforementioned distinction is based, apply squarely to a unique, decadent individual, unable to seize either himself as subject, or the world as object. Wholly different is the individual who is able to experience himself and the world beyond introversion and extroversion: this is the path of the real subject (*purusha*), and at the same time of objectivity (*purusha-prakriti*). A distinction of types would be justified only as it relates to these two possible paths, which in the end are two modes of knowledge, hierarchically

⁸ Il principio soggettivo

⁹ In "The Light" Scaligero provides the following definition, " 'Sense-free thought' means thought experienced in its synthetic power, independent of sensible underpinnings" (pg. 65-66). Steiner describes it as "Sinnlichkeitsfreies Denken" or thought free of sensible elements. See note 23

¹⁰ Between introverts and extroverts

¹¹ Il momento del conoscere in generale

¹² Il divenire proprio a questo

distinct and nonetheless intertwined. In this sense, a Psychology describing “types” according to the spirit would represent a formative phenomenology for man.

Contemporary culture’s loss of inner direction, or direction of inner reality, is embodied by a purportedly modern “science of the psyche” that views the ultimate goal of uplifting experiences¹³, from the initiatory to the religious ones, as an attempt to free individuality from a state of neurosis and subservience to complexes, and move toward a condition of normality.

In this regard, an acknowledgement by one of the founding fathers of this science sheds light onto the vast and most ingenious elaboration that overran the world of myths and symbols, sparing none, thus tempting even serious scholars to characterize the supersensible experience as recovery from a nervous breakdown. He claims that, should that world of myths and symbols be interpretable according to metaphysics—i.e., in keeping with the only reality that befits it—and not according to the psycho-rational scheme, he would be unable to understand it. There is unquestionable honesty in this statement, almost a subconscious acknowledgement of the system’s own limits; but it doesn’t repair the damage done to science and to the psychic life of thousand of individuals, in whom conditions of inner dichotomy and neurosis are being nurtured by the very treatment that purports to heal them. All because the treatment appeals to an accord with nature and to an atavistic, biologic “unconscious”, without really knowing nature’s supersensible underpinning, and the cast of hierarchically superior forces that operates within psyche and nature. But knowledge of such forces is what puts the problem of man in a different perspective from that of “Psychology”.

The conceptual mistake¹⁴ on which analytical Psychology is based demonstrates that, despite the best intentions, every investigation aimed beyond the physical world is forestalled by an intellect bound to the physical support (brain), i.e., to the organ that mediates both thinking and sensory perceptions. To the keen observer, Spiritual Science

¹³ Esperienze superiori

¹⁴ Errore di pensiero

provides herein a solution that supersedes traditional Yoga, with respect to the resolution of the conflict between sensible mediation and intellect, actively engaged in mediating.

Those familiar with Yoga doctrines know all too well that, along the way of *samyana*, man reaches the *pratyahara* moment, when the senses' activity is unshackled from its physical instrument. The senses' activity is, in reality, supersensible: man ordinarily fails to recognize it as such and considers it belonging to the sense organs. He essentially acts through and unconsciously ties himself to the senses and to a superficial¹⁵ vision of things, because—as Spiritual Science makes clear—senses belong to the sensible¹⁶ world; they are, indeed, a part of the sensible¹⁷ world that is inserted into the human being. In Yoga, the discipline of concentration and meditation (*dharana* and *dhyana*), with which man strives to isolate the mind from the realm of senses, is accomplished through *pratyahara*, insofar as the intellect (*citta*) is able to unshackle its inner activity¹⁸ from the sense organs.

For the Yoga practitioner—assuming that Yoga is authentic and can be authentically practiced—the Spirit's experience arises insofar as the physical world becomes extinct. In contrast, contemporary man's Spiritual experience—according to Spiritual Science—is wholly different, in that sense perception is not viewed as an instrument to rid oneself of the physical world, but as a means through which the world Spirit flows through man's inner self. In every perception, he can envisage the presence of a spiritual element that tends to resonate within the soul; it does indeed resonate, but fails to be heard, because other echoes and subjective automatisms act to prevent it from being the intuitive form of this spiritual element, while sensation arises. Hence, man has a constant, one-sided resonance of the world, subjective at once and de-spiritualized. Here, thanks to Spiritual Science, he seizes the possibility of a thought process that, freeing itself from senses, conjures up a new rapport with sensations.

A special practice allows man to seize, in every sensory perception, the corresponding inner element, and thus reawaken the limited and illusory world of

¹⁵ Esteriore

¹⁶ Esteriore

¹⁷ Esteriore

¹⁸ Articolazioni interiori

sensations from its inner structure: the world of multiplicity, which on the surface appears fragmentary, can be reshaped within conscience according to an essential architecture. But this architecture, which appears to rise from within us, can instead be discovered as belonging to things: it's the world's own inner form.

The task is to behold perceptions in their pure form by being able to approach them in conditions of “inner quiet”¹⁹. Any additional echo of exterior and interior life must be extinguished, so that perception's content may reach consciousness in its “pure form”. Ordinarily, this fails to happen in man, because the “ego”—as opposed to the *I*²⁰—receives perception's contents. The element of perception stirs up the subconscious, the *vasana* world, which intervenes to react in its own way, according to its familial or ethnic heritage: the essence of perception is usually frittered away. Psychoanalysis mistakes elements that ought to be recognized as alien to true individuality, for contents of conscience, in which man can recognize himself. These unrecognized contents act as underpinning of hindering cosmic powers. To consider these contents as man's own and assume them as the profound content in which individuality ought to recognize itself, is a most misleading scientific practice: for it means to let the Adversary ever deeper within the domain of conscience. Conversely, the task should be to dissociate oneself from them by sheer strength of knowledge, up to the point of recapturing the pure force entangled in them: without which, they reveal their impersonal nature and objective function. In reality, man fails to live as a spiritual entity by giving himself away to an equivocal communion with forces of a subconscious rank, because he fails to know: fails to truly experience the object. He only knows his nature's response (*vasana-vritti*) to the perception of the object. He remains immersed in *avidya*, as long as world knowledge—and therefore self-knowledge—are tainted by the systematic intrusion of memory, i.e. by self-centered, subjective habits, alien to the world essence.

The practice of “pure perception” allows the investigator to embrace, besides the senses' content, the object's inner element: each individual thing, in this sense, is

¹⁹ Silenzio

²⁰ I have used italics when “I” is used as a noun (“the *I*”) and plain font when used as subjective pronoun (see note 167)

incipient bearer of a specific supersensible message. Ascetic aloofness from and blind immersion into the life of senses similarly err: the individual is either lost for or to the world: in both instances, he fails to experience it and loses sight of the meaning of existing in the world. The technique of “pure perception” provides the opportunity to realize, in the flow of impressions²¹, the very presence of the conscious principle (*citta*), on which metaphysical vision (*vidya*) depends. The split between spirit and matter, the synthesis of inner and outer polarities of being, begins with this possibility to preside over sense perception with the *I*. Along this direction, man may discover the ultimate sense of life as the acceptance of the spirit’s flow into the world of senses, by means of this inner act. It’s a spirit that constantly moves toward us; a spirit that man is constantly inclined to relegate to *maya*, or to the stage of appearances, through an obscure becoming (*samsara*), an illusory exteriority, from which only subjective pleasure and subjective sorrow can arise.

The techniques of “pure perception” and “sense-free thought”²² are the foundation of present-day supersensible experience. Man’s foremost task is to take stock of his own behavior before sense perceptions. Through them, he usually reacts with such immediacy as to mistake for “natural” and spontaneous—and therefore regular—a veritable fusion of their content with the immediately personal and egotistic element that conjoins them. It will be possible to show how the bondage of conscience to exterior impressions and their reverberating in every psychic zone, with nature’s attendant serfdom to instincts and emotions, arise indeed in this “moment” of alteration of perception’s contents, engendering the individual’s second nature.

The discipline consists in embracing perception with thought-free receptivity, in an initial form of “inner silence”, such that it can manifest its entirety, i.e., that unusual and subtle element, hitherto imperceptible, that belongs to spiritual life. Different perceptions will awaken different resonances, objective hues, echoes of qualities recorded by the soul: they appear to arise in conscience’s inner space²³, but have their own life and

²¹ Nella serie delle impressioni

²² Pensiero libero dai sensi

²³ Interiorita’

can be seen at once as belonging to the object itself, like the perceptions that triggered them.

Such a discipline can, among other things, rid conscience of the series of obligate reactions by which it's unwittingly constrained, even as it considers itself autonomous: it's the beginning of a relationship between the *I* and the world, independent of old habits or "complexes". It gradually purges the false relationship with the world exterior, caused by the constant encroaching of complexes on the action of the real *I*, in every perception. To be rid of this intrusion is simultaneous with the spiritual *I*'s (*purusha*) burgeoning activity. As this new relation between *I* and world responds to the secret reality of manifest being, it reintegrates the soul's mediating function between temporary and eternal, between finite and infinite. It's equally evident that, by this method, not only is the foundation of a Psychology according to the Spirit being laid, but also an implicit moral element, without invoking the moral question.

This discipline sets the stage for a true experience of the sensible world—as the ordinary one appears unreal—for a contemplation of the being's surface unspoiled by sensation, and bearing, along with perception, the inner element from which things draw their reason for being, even though it doesn't appear in them. Here, it becomes possible to understand Spiritual Science's vision of man as a creature whose constitution is the stage for the action of cosmic deities. At this point, self-knowledge ceases to be an intellectual, irretrievably abstract notion, and becomes profound contact with forces that sustain the various forms of existence from cosmic expanses. They flow in man's every organ in a fashion that can't be understood directly by its physiologic²⁴ functions, but only before they stray into the animal structure. A macrocosmic physiology corresponds to individual physiology, according to which brain, heart, metabolic and reproductive organs support forms of consciousness encompassing from a human degree—corresponding to cerebral activity as the basis of ordinary waking consciousness—to a superhuman one, knowledge of which is precluded to the soul by its bondage to cerebral mediation.

²⁴ Naturale

In his ascent toward higher states, the initiate experiences forms of super-individual knowledge, to which he can ordinarily gain access only by a dimming of waking consciousness from a dreamlike state to deep, dreamless sleep. In this layer lie the highest states of liberated conscience²⁵. The higher man rises with *sadhana*, the deeper he descends into organic depths through “subtle” ways, making contact with cosmic influences that act incorporeally in different organ systems. Knowledge is experienced as an element of life that belongs to universal becoming. Through this experience, man feels himself steeped into the mystery of being: he understands how cosmic evolution²⁶ can only continue through his cognitive act, as long as it’s enlivened by an inner²⁷ conscious light.

Toward this end, the western man who is somewhat familiar with Yoga, would be tempted to concentrate himself on physical organs, nurturing the illusion that it would be possible to force a passage through the limit by means of the very conscience bound to the bodily limit. Such concentration would plainly be automatic, bereft of inner autonomy, resting on corporeal dynamisms and inevitably confined to the world of sensations, the plane of *maya*. It would also be exposed to noxious consequences: a consideration that is relevant to breathing disciplines too, when they are practiced without knowledge of the path to converting abstract thought into pure “thought-power”, or “sense-free thought”, which alone can unshackle the inner forces linked to breathing.

The ease with which, in the western world, man attempts to put newly acquired Yoga doctrines into practice, reveals the difficulty of understanding that the intrinsic assumption of any oriental discipline is a type of conscience constitutionally different from the western way of thinking and operating. No matter how conversant with classical Yoga texts and with the possibility of understanding them, present-day man can’t realize any of it, except by creating his own “key” to access that experience, with means inherent to the state of conscience from which he departs. This, in turn, would no longer be experience of that same *Yoga*, but simply one for which *Yoga* would be a theme, or

²⁵ Ai quali i gradi piu’ alti della coscienza liberata inversamente corrispondono.

²⁶ Divenire

²⁷ Intima

pretext. But then it wouldn't be a "realist" experience, as can occur in the "naïve realism" that is so typical of many researchers of the Occult; it would be knowledge based on a possibility intrinsic to pure thought: the real starting point, as it were, for a true supersensible experience.

The rank of rational conscience is characterized by the loss of the key to metaphysical knowledge; it's bereft of inner activity independent of sensible experience. This is the typical condition of contemporary man. The stage of rationality represents the lowest step in the descent of the inner man, from a primordial, transcendent state toward the density of the physical body, along a direction described by traditional doctrines as the Four Ages: Gold, Silver, Bronze and Lead.

From the original stage of "magic-solar" consciousness (*kritayuga*), in which he is one with the world of Gods, man moves to the experience of the self, and tends to limit himself to a finite world, i.e. to a world bound for decadence as man develops an inclination to "finiteness". He begins to experience the original essence as other-than-self as "inspiration" (*treta-yuga*). Taking his adhesion to the world of limits and multiplicity to further consequences, he next draws his own meaning from a conscience that can only summon up ancient inspiration as imagery. It's the *dvapara-yuga*, the age of myths and grand cosmic-symbolic imaginations, unnecessary in the preceding age, but now required to follow with appropriate representations the forms of a spiritual vision that has been lost as immediate perception.

The last Age is the "Age of Lead" or "Dark Age" (*kali-yuga*), whose beginnings approximately correspond to the transition from Proto-history to History. In this Age, only a reflected echo of the ancient world of myths-images and original wisdom persists—passed on from master to pupil, thanks to a secret power of transmission (*Sampradaya*)—in "traditional" texts, the very existence of which denotes the necessity of entrusting ancient truths to the written word, next to an inability to retain them through "inner memory". The "Spiritual world" and its echo have been lost, because texts are not the Tradition, but signs of the lost Tradition. Now man has to look with his own eyes, think with his own thoughts, and act no longer according to innate wisdom, now nearly

exhausted and gradually replaced by memory—which will later become instinct, second nature—but according to burgeoning individual capacities and initiative. He will act according to a science arranged with his own means; a science that will be necessarily at first science of the finite world: profane science, restricted to a narrow aspect of being, which man will mistake for the real being.

Having lost the imaginative vision of *dvapara-yuga*, man can no longer rely on suggestions or revelations providing the inner interpretation of the daily experience or the perception of things. Isolated in a physical world that appears exclusively material, feeling counterpoised as an “*I*” to a vast and multifaceted “non-*I*”, man will acknowledge himself and the world only through abstract thought that, as lifeless vestige of the past imaginative faculty, can only experience a world shorn of inner dimension, and interpret the whole physical-sensible universe according to quantitative formulas. This is the last step of a descent toward individuality: an autonomy that at first will inevitably appear in a negative form: as arbitrary aptitude toward knowledge, as individualism as and materialism.

These are indeed the obscure prodromes of freedom. Man can err because of his freedom; but he needs to appeal to it, regardless of inner necessity, for it to arise as the being’s order-bestowing principle. He can’t use freedom in its negative, rhetorical, exterior form, to set himself apart from the ancient world of “dependence”, “transcendence” and “revelation”, and remain at the same time sub-consciously shackled to it through unaware superstition and obscure faith, entrusting itself to all things scientific, mechanical and progressive, just as in ages past it would entrust itself to idols. Man can’t expect a solution to his problems, except through freedom: implemented, clarified and interiorized: able to free itself from the superstition of “matter”, just as it did already from the coarsest superstition and the withered remnants of an ancient myth-spawning conscience.

We have stated that rational experience represents the last step of man’s descent from the height of an “original state” of immediate wisdom, toward the individual limit: last step that, for this reason, is also first of the re-ascent. The experience of thought,

which in modern times will become the dominant theme of philosophy, can't be done away with, can't be transcended: what else could indeed transcend it, if not another act of thought, unaware of its own reality? The re-ascent through degrees of knowledge—as we shall see—is possible through the conversion of thought into thought-power: inadvertently conjured up in every rational process and systematically squandered in reflected dialectics.

A vast horde of Spiritualists superficially inveighs against rationality, to defend super-rational values. In this adversarial posture, aimed at finding alternative paths, spiritualists fail to recognize that they can't do away with the ways of rationality; and that rationality is not a path onto itself, but the reflex of a mental activity that can be known in depth and perceived where it rises as an inner force. This is the direct experience of the Spirit, shorn of transcendentalism. Whenever man fulminates against the all-rationalizing “intellect”, he ends up failing to acknowledge its mediating function and remains unaware of the intellect's inner, dynamic element that makes this critique possible. He looks for the Spirit in a world “beyond” that can only exist as imagination or thought, and can never be experienced outside the thought that beholds it, except under those frightening circumstances in which one falls prey to abnormal sensations, mistaken for expression of the supersensible. But—as we shall see—one can't escape the corporeal and the sensible, indeed the psychological limit, without unshackling thought from sensible perceptions. This becomes possible insofar as thought enacts its essence, which is in fact supersensible. It has, indeed, become reflex in the sensible world.

The central tenet of Spiritual Science can be experienced as Science of the soul: the experience, in the soul, of transcendental laws underpinning its mystery, life and power. The *I* is the subject of this experience. The ultimate task is to rouse the *I*-principle through deep energies of thought, feeling and will, with respect to which man is usually either “unaware”: the waking state, or rational conscience; or in a dreamlike state (feeling); or in a state of deep sleep (will).

The act of knowledge, unshackled from its upper site (the system of the head), can be routed towards the depths of being. It begins by realizing the essential mode of

perception that, according to initiate traditions, lies in the heart. It's not the world of emotions and sentiments, which Western man simplistically connects with the symbol of the heart, but a world of knowledge, unshackled from cerebral mediation, and reconnecting itself with the heart, as it rises from the latter's light, as sunrays rise from the sun. This is the inner path that, according to Tibetan Buddhism, rises from the heart: *deva-yana*.

The ability to transcend ordinary conscience through different stages of mental liberation can be viewed as chance to gradually shine light upon three spheres: thinking, feeling and will. Freed thinking becomes the mediator of super-individual conscience, which gradually homes in on individual conscience and impregnates it with a novel inner quality (*vasana-ananda*), freeing it from nature, while ridding nature of it.

One can resort to a classic distinction of traditional Psychology by characterizing psychic life, as it unfolds, in three traditional faculties: thinking, feeling, will. Such faculties are commonly encountered in a mixed-up state in man: a chaotic mix arising from the subterranean collusion between "nature" and "I". But they can be experienced as distinct forces by a more self-conscious man: each of them, in their "pure state" manifests a power unknown to ordinary conscience, intertwined with the depth of a univocal *I*.

According to Spiritual Science, they are, in fact, three vehicles of inner life, each corresponding to a well defined corporeal "site": thinking, to the head; feeling (the sphere of passions and emotions), to the chest; and will (actions and instincts), to limbs, metabolic and reproductive systems. Each "site" corresponds to a different state of consciousness, from "waking" to "dreamlike" to "deep sleep", and eludes ordinary conscience to the extent that the latter is limited to part of the head system.

The soul keeps a direct hold on corporeal conscience through the nervous system, but the soul-entity is unaware of itself at the site where, by this hold, it impinges upon the bodily structure. A reflected conscience arises at the site of impinging to stimulate the thinking soul but, for this process to occur, inner forces must extinguish the organic life from which the experience draws support. The possibility of consciousness rises from a process of life destruction. Ordinary thought rises as activity after the spiritual has

impinged upon the corporeal: it can be viewed as epiphenomenon of a spiritual activity that lies unconscious at the site where the physical organization becomes imbued with it.

The reflected nature of thought, arising as it must from the entanglement of the spiritual with the physical dimension, is at once abstractness and freedom: freedom to retain an abstract quality, but also to resurrect the original spiritual dimension that is continuously frittered away. When the inner reality of the thought process has been seized upon, it can at once offer a key to its “disentanglement”²⁸ and account for its connection with waking consciousness and the possibility of self-consciousness. In another chapter, we shall examine the positive function that can be identified in the abstractness and lifelessness of thought.

In the “site” of the head, one can immediately experience rational activity, insofar as the latter is the mainstay of ordinary conscience: it can immediately act upon itself (self-consciousness), whereas the sites of feelings and will can only be experienced indirectly. Feelings and will are indeed experienced as facts²⁹. They rise to the level of consciousness because, from the deepest soul life, they have repercussions in the central nervous system: they are not experienced where they arise. Thinking, instead, by way of appropriate concentration, can be perceived as it arises: it can be said that one partakes of its being as well as its becoming: its being is self-contained in its becoming, such that the perception of becoming is simultaneously being.

Instinctual and emotional life can indeed act upon the individual, affecting its basal stability, insofar as it burrows into conscience through the head’s nervous system. The mediating influence of thought is powerless against a perception that has already morphed into sensation and state of mind. But it can be truly effective if, freed of the cerebral organ, it can move directly toward the perception, before the latter is corrupted in the stream of nature. Perception then turns into knowledge, then state of mind. That rarely happens, and that’s why man’s experience of the world is rotten. It’s inevitable that brain-bound knowledge, such as modern man’s, is a pawn to instincts and emotions, which avail themselves of their ability to encroach upon the site where the *I-*

²⁸ Svincolamento. I have routinely rendered it as “unshackling” (vincoli = shackles) except for a few instances where the sentence did not lend itself to the use of the gerund

²⁹ Si danno gia’ fatti

consciousness naturally resides. It's then understandable how "sense-free thought", by unshackling consciousness from the brain, can render it independent and proactive vis-à-vis the resonating of instinctual-emotional life: and thus transform it into matter of experience and knowledge.

An erring thought can be corrected by another one: an emotion or an instinct that reach consciousness are already facts, they have overrun conscience to the point that, even by thinking the opposite, one can't change the state of affairs, at least temporarily. Here we touch upon one of current man's most serious problems, as the individual's entire existence indeed depends upon the hues of the relationship between mind and emotional-instinctual world. One can say that important situations in individual as well as collective history are being decided by the prevailing of states of mind over rationality and vice versa. The futility of thinking about the havoc wrought by certain aptitudes and psychic landslides is by now a familiar experience for present-day humankind: a just thought has little leverage on the psyche's innate instincts or states of mind; or, to borrow a term from current Psychology, "complexes".

The technique of "sense-free thought", which shall be described in ensuing chapters, enables the investigator to move toward perception bearing a befitting, pure idea, and thus prevent the rise of wanton states of mind, depressing or enthralling sensations that undermine the soul life and prevent knowledge of what is objectively happening. The alteration of the experience always occurs insofar as the pure relationship of spirit and experience is hindered: relationship that alone can justify experience and in which the *I* acts as the order-bestowing principle. When that fails to happen, error, dispersal and anguish are inevitable. The perspective is wholly different when a pure thought integrates the perception's content, before the latter can trigger feelings and urges.

Next to a more conscious action of thought in daily contents, a contemplative meditation is possible, through which the light and stability of the pure intellect, i.e. rectified thinking, can transpire in the less conscious sphere of feeling and deeper sphere of will. The mind, when shackled to the sensible world, can't resist a state of mind or an

instinct; but can mediate a profound action, if man conjures up a train of thoughts whose content can be seized upon, by virtue of intimate affinity, by the powers of feeling and will.

The exercise of clear, energetic thought should not be pursued to further dialectic ends. That would be its failure, indeed. The uplifting of thought gives rise, under proper conditions, to a direct³⁰ action of the spiritual *I* in the upper site (head). The next goal—corresponding to the next stage of meditation (*dhyana*)—consists in letting the light-bearing *I*-presence be conveyed by its own strength onto other sites. It's an attempt to transfer not the intellectual activity, which indeed would be unable to reach those sites, but the spiritual quality activated through meditative contents. It succeeds insofar as they bear a subtle affinity with those sites' function, along with a potential for “soaring”, i.e., for man's superior nature that would allow it to connect with the “depths” of the relevant category. The latter appears to ordinary conscience as fully immersed in nature's sleep, but in reality it ranks as a superior state of wakefulness, alien to ordinary consciousness and therefore incomprehensible to current Psychology. Man bears indeed the “cosmic man” as an inner potential, constantly squandered on the threshold of rational experience.

The mentality shaped by ordinary experience may induce man to think that the task is to shine the light streaming from the “mind” site onto lower nature, in the form of *rajas* and *tamas*. Instead, the task is to burrow into a nature that hides the loftiest Spiritual powers: a profound vision of man's occult frame, of which man is unaware, being steeped, through lack of knowledge, in *rajas* and *tamas*. In this sense, thinking corresponds to the waking state, feeling to a dreamlike condition, and will to one of deep sleep. This means that ordinary man's transcendental powers are buried in increasingly darker bodily layers.

The disciplines described in this book aim to teach how to awaken these powers and disentangle them from nature, where they become tainted and dulled. The disentanglement takes place through a specific type of meditation that can restore feeling and will to their pure strength, insofar as it can be inspired by³¹ germane contents of

³⁰ Organica

³¹ In quanto possa prendere le mosse

world contemplation in the conscious experience of the head³². Observing and resurrecting nature's live forms through imagery—whose inner substance is in unison with the deepest sites—is still founded on senses and head-bound thinking consciousness but, by turning to that substance, draws from it a “quality” that can't be ascribed to senses, and can therefore be transferred to other sites of conscience.

Similarly, in the middle site (feeling)—where rhythmic life is primarily based as breathing, blood flow and heartbeat—one must calmly conjure up aspects of natural and cosmic life whose dominant sense is rhythm, and without which they would cease to exist: life and death, the alternating of day and night, the seasons' cycle, the life of the firmament and the revolving life of the worlds. The creative rapport with the more concealed, and more powerful life of will—where instinctual life takes place, concealing the individual wellspring of creative energies, including courage and tenacity—is implemented by conjuring up processes representing the generating and motion powers of nature: reproduction and growth, fire, lightning, blizzard and wind.

When such evocations—which are direct contact with the hidden substance and real life of nature—are transformed into contemplations, they provide a gradual opportunity to build a harmonious relationship between the spheres of thought, feeling and will, unconstrained by body and instincts, and appealing to a pure Spiritual principle. In due course, through the conscientious practice of this discipline, man may reach that lofty human ideal by which recognition of a goal as just, summons the resolve to realize it, thanks to a deep accord of pure thinking and will.

Imaginative evocation and contemplation of certain rhythms of nature, when rightly pursued, provide man with the opportunity to overcome the conflict by which a whole set of soul faculties appears estranged from the foundation of conscience by the brain's insulating action. As such, the brain can be the dutiful mediator of thinking vis-à-vis sensible experience, and this is a positive function, on which the positive element of science is based: but through this one-sided, physical-sensible rapport with reality, the brain isolates conscience from a deeper inner life.

³² La sede superiore

With this brief outline, we want to emphasize that neither Yoga, nor modern Psychology provide real solutions because, for different reasons, they fail to behold modern man's inner structure; nor do they have the ability to resurrect the communion of this type of man, confined to a logical-abstract conscience, with the "cosmic" element upon which it vitally rests. We have therefore hinted at certain aspects of this communion between "human" and "cosmic", made possible by Spiritual Science, i.e., by a supersensible knowledge that takes into account the demands of contemporary man's inner constitution, just as ancient wisdom took into account the demands of a human type yet unconditioned by an exclusively sensible and rational experience.

Man has to build up a foundation of stability with his own means, through knowledge and uplifting of will; however, he can be empowered to act by forces present in him and in the world. He has to press them into service: Spiritual Science can indeed show that present-day man can realize self-consciousness in his current condition; and demonstrate that the vision of Cosmos is laid open before him, as a standing offer, to arouse morally creative, healing energies embedded in his nature.

Nowadays, many cloak themselves with the authority of "Masters" before those engaged in spiritual quest. Esoteric literature is by now so vast and strewn about that any energetic man, capable of dialectic synthesis and endowed with some faculty of psychic intensity, can engage in self-promotion as a master, and arrange all around him a following of gullible souls, who may to an extent even temporarily benefit from him. Temporarily, that is. An unmistakable telltale sign will expose, beyond the veneer of sagacious spiritualism, the insufficient qualification of these guides: that they gloss over the problem of thinking, or the concept, singling them out as impediments to liberation. In so doing, they lay bare their own unawareness of the roots of the initial movement toward man's deliverance, and ignorance of the true technique of inner concentration.

II. The Secret of Liberation: “Sense-free Thought”

Any prospect to overcome the limit ensnaring man in individual, psychological and social problems, or in an “ego”³³ of which Psychology and Philosophy hardly appreciate the meaning, can only arise by overcoming the abstractness of knowledge.

We have indicated that abstract thought can be viewed as the lifeless vestige of an ancient “knowledge”, in which inner content was subsumed under the sensible data, as their spiritual integration. Hence, one can say that the course of “traditional” civilizations was true to a superior direction. But in this kind of knowledge, arising—in the form of intuition and revelation—from man’s proximity to the primordial Divine Conscience, man failed to experience a personal cognitive activity. He therefore failed to experience his own individuality: which was neither possible, nor needed in its self-conscious form, as it was sufficient for man to feel led by and entrusted to this guide, drawing Wisdom from the communion with the Divine and finding in it a poised art of knowledge, as well as an organizing life principle.

Initiates of those times nonetheless knew that this Wisdom was bound to be lost, in preparation for man’s autonomy and for the rise of individual experience, leading up to the conditions of *kali-yuga*. From school to school, from community to community, from master to pupil, they endeavored to transmit disciplines in which qualified individuals could kindle—in the face of gradually darkening times—the fire of superior knowledge, which ultimately included the hidden meaning of man’s decadence and his potential for re-ascent after the darkening of all values. Thus, throughout the times, Tradition was but transmission of knowledge that foresaw, next to the loss of an inner dimension, the potential for resurrection, according to an impulse independent of any ancient canon.

³³ Egoita’

The real strength of ancient Tradition was, in the end, its ability to fathom the concealed meaning of the impending anti-Tradition, and thus prepare man for the trial awaiting him in the age of the “conscious soul”. Next to this Tradition, throughout history one can envision an “initiate Tradition”, resting upon texts, mythical vestiges, symbols and sensible data, rather than direct perception: hovering around the edges of the authentic, ineffable Tradition, as an outward, reflected image, or constant attempt to restore, adapting them as needed, different modes of an ancient communion with the Divine. Such restoration was bound to become increasingly problematic with the passing of time, to the point of confusion and contradiction, insofar as dialectics gradually replaced knowledge of the Spirit. This event marked the beginning of modern, abstract thought. The link between esoteric dialectics [the reader will indulge us if we so refer to Buddhist, Jainistic and classic systems (*darshana*) of Indian philosophy] and Western logic is indeed a supersensible event: it can’t be pinned on influences, or scholarly and textual connections; it occurs as a process unfolding in man’s inner life. First arising as possibility in the Oriental soul, the process finds its measure and completion in the Western soul, insofar as the latter drives the development³⁴ of Spirit-free dialectics to its ultimate consequences. Man ought to be able to realize that very few among the Initiates of ancient civilizations were apprised of the ultimate sense of this decadence: only an “occult brotherhood” knew the authentic—or univocal—background of human history.

At every turn, initiates thus endeavored to resurrect ancient Wisdom, in certain traditions and within limits compatible with the place and time of their manifestation. But it fell to a selected few, belonging to a higher and more secret Order, to lay the foundation of the new age, disclosing for man the path to the radical experience of selfness. These few constitute the core of man’s great Masters. Their actions are hard to fathom, not only because they fail to conform to human or traditional canons, but also because they prepare something that is yet to come, by resorting—as needed—to non-customary forms, in order to express the element eternal. When compared to their mission, which looks past material times and is therefore

³⁴ Processo

unfathomable according to “spiritualist” schemes, the work of minor Masters—more accessible and indeed interpretable according to those schemes, by virtue of conveying a specific tradition in a specific race, and being more closely tied to provisional expressions and relevant limitations—can be viewed as an occult collaboration, mostly unaware, precisely because of its link to a specific doctrine.

It’s now fundamental for the researcher to awaken to the loss of an “original consciousness”, whose echo can only tardily and often unclearly be traced in “traditional texts”, but is nonetheless admirable and pregnant with significance. It’s equally fundamental to understand the potential, positive function of current abstract thought. While similar to the ancient one, this thought is internally devitalized, and thus unable to reveal anything to man. It can only reflect the external world and model itself upon appearances, through the mediation of the nervous system. Man thus arrives at an outward world vision, while preserving independence from the inner revelation that prevented him from being his own revealer, to see the world with his own eyes, and to be responsible for his own mistakes and truth.

The *I*, freed from a spiritual direction, finds itself in direct contact with things, in an arid, abstract fashion, through sensible and quantitative relationships: but this is the precondition for its becoming self-responsible, i.e., for its individuality to arise. The Spirit can yet rise from this condition of self-responsibility. Man can now be Spirit: even though at first, through his sensory-representative activity, he has to submit to the being and to be driven by nature. This passivity, steeped and organic as it may be, summons a witness and exists for a subject: whose incipient self-identification as Subject retraces the origin of the power that becomes alienated as nature, emerging against it as otherness and appearance.

Passivity and necessity can have an ultimate positive meaning if man’s inner being, under their spell, recognizes itself as their enabler, without which they would not be possible. This is the secret meaning of the *I*’s birth to freedom: that the disentanglement occur, insofar as the “*I*” also has the power to not let it occur: an inverse power indeed, cause of error and suffering, and yet related to a willpower no less real for being unconscious: a willpower that can be raised by the *I* to the level of

consciousness, and can therefore be willed. In truth, the higher *I* became ego, for the ego to become higher *I*. One can say that man has been snatched from transcendence by superior Powers and routed through an experience of the physical world along a “downhill path”, whose meaning is the symbolism of the Four Ages. Had man been true master and lord of the superior condition that characterized him during the Prime Age, the “Golden Age”, he could not have strayed from it. It was a superior condition indeed: he was contained in and inspired by it, but not free. He was set on a path to lose this condition and embrace lower ones, to be born as free man: along a descent whose ultimate goal is sometimes beholden and described with great precision by traditional texts. Decadence, “Dark Age” and rationalistic degradation had been foreseen by traditional Science. He, who objectively considers this fact, can grasp the real sense of the course of the Four Ages and related doctrines. It was all foreordained up to a point where, having exhausted the original transcendent drive, man could arrive at a Spirit-free image of the world: the deprivation isolated him in his individuality, and forced him to summon from within the inspiration to exist. The “Sword of Knowledge” has been shattered and duality has arisen. The relation takes now place between the *I*, experiencing itself exclusively through thought and perception, and the world. The latter is experienced exclusively as external, and its limit is therefore an internal one; a limit set for the *I*, but also in view of the possibility of a conscious transcendence: the *I*'s further form, as resolution of exteriority: its resurgence according to the original light. The original *I*'s resurgence, as pure individuality.

Rational thought is the last step of knowledge—as we have stated in the preceding chapter—but for this reason it's also the first in the re-ascent. It's the unique activity in which man can have an immediate relationship with the self: indeed, the rationalizing intellect isolates him, ever so abstractly, from nature, sub-consciousness, feeling and from the site of the organic will.

Nature, sub-consciousness, feeling and instinctual will are still obscurely imbued with an ancient correlation with the supersensible. It's a lost correlation,

whose imprint lingers on as urge to entrust oneself to the “other”, and reenter the dream, the undefined, the decayed images of what man used to be: to repeat in automatic inertia a past that undeniably charms conscience, unable to live its actuality. “Nature” thus underpins cosmic influences, whose goal is to keep man in a dependent state, comforting him with all the required appurtenances: Materialism and Spiritualism, Positivism and Idealism, Agnosticism and Traditionalism. Everything, except for the path in view of whose experience the “descent” has taken place: the path of thinking, for which the *I*-consciousness is born, even though reflected; and freedom, as possibility to rise beyond external and internal conditions, thanks to a new synthesis.

Breathing new life into the spiritual through the very activity elicited by its fall into the physical element; and laying open a path of conscious resurrection, or Initiation, through the conversion of that same thought, whose first manifestation, insofar as rationalistic and abstract, is anti-spiritual—this should be the overarching concern of the man who is neither consumed with a passion to restore ancient ways of knowledge, nor has entirely given up the living sense of knowledge, caught up in the illusion that rational thought is all that there is and can, as such, explain reality. Outside its inorganic aspect and finite appearances, reality can no longer be known by abstract thought, as long as the latter, caught up in it, fails to master it as an object of thought³⁵. He who knows the meaning of the Initiation reconnecting man with the Supersensible in the present time, understands indeed that the inner dimension of abstract thought can be resurrected in its conscious form so as to find a further, creative Spirit, without losing the thread of thought, but by transforming or rather converting its process.

Rational thought, born as logical activity elicited by experience, should not have been limited to this formal and abstract function, tied to a dimension born of the exterior correlation; it should have become power to know that dimension. It should have the strength to disentangle itself from it: this dimension should have had no

³⁵ In sostanza non la pensa

other function. One can say that man is already late with regard to this task, as the moment in which abstract thought required its own conversion, or liberation, has already escaped him: a liberation that is neither fateful nor necessary, as it proceeds from the act of freedom.

Even when modeled according to metaphysical themes, this thought is always patterned according to sensory perceptions and imprinted by their echo: it's not real thought, but thinking molded exclusively by sensible contents; its form doesn't change just because it withdraws from them to embrace ideal themes. For its form to change, ideal themes ought to be experienced directly, beyond their discursive appearance, in their inner liveliness, i.e. with the same lively perceptiveness with which sensible perceptions are experienced, such that man would transition from a world of reasons and reflections to one of real entities. But that it to say that man ought to perceive thought. This task is tentatively addressed here.

Thought should not have limited itself to mediating sensible appearances: this mediation is only the first moment of an unfinished act: which ought to have been accomplished by the transition of thought from mediating the sensible to mediating and experiencing itself as pure activity, "sense-free". Because only such thought, by virtue of its acquiring original life and returning pure inner power, can penetrate the world's secret, insofar as it represents its objective essence: it can penetrate Matter and overcome Materialism.

Thought that limits itself to reflecting the sensible world can't be thinking³⁶, because it fails to grasp its own self and therefore the object. This thought can only manage to "measure", to abstractly rationalize reality³⁷, without ever grasping it, because it fails to sense that the being to which it relates as other, inadvertently commences as its³⁸ pure being. The being, conceived by thought as an object, begins with this conception: on the verge of being born, it's thought. But, at the same time, it's self-perception, insofar as it's born as the *I*'s first, authentic perception of the

³⁶ Pensare—thinking—and pensiero—thought—are used interchangeably throughout Scaligero's works. Nonetheless, I have tried to maintain the literal translation, wherever possible.

³⁷ L'essere

³⁸ [Thought's]

being: which can never derive from abstract thought, whose limit is the world of quantity and whose greatest creative achievement is the machine, next to a Culture embodying the attempt to consecrate an abstract and mechanized universe. The downgrading of knowledge to mere cataloging³⁹ can only be thwarted by disenchanting the activity of thinking that spawns the materialistic cosmos.

The disenchantment consists in being able to have thought as object of experience, just as the object has been experienced through thought.

Through the ascetics of its own dynamics, “sense-free thought” can experience its own entity as support, just as until then it experienced perception or representation as supports. In reality, thought did not arise to be limited to its abstract form, i.e., to mediate the external world; the latter’s perception was to have been the starting point to achieve the mediation of its own activity: only through this self-mediation could thinking express itself in its essential form, as form of the Super-individual. By experiencing its own essence⁴⁰ beyond the reflection necessary to convey it, thought realizes within the “individual” a super-individual dimension, such that, the more individual it becomes, the more it draws from inner life. For it, extreme individualization coincides with universality: a reverse process compared to the provisional *I*’s, which becomes the more anti-universal, the more individual it is.

As thinking realizes itself by way of concentration, “relinquishing” the tool of its own manifestation, it can experience itself as being: it’s lifted up to a level where it’s no longer reflected, abstract, and deployed in time. Every moment in time is indeed present in it at once, having extinguished the series of analytical representations, up to an instantaneous content, in which the content of concentration is extra-temporally intuited: its synthesis becomes⁴¹ its rising as reality.

All thinking can be had in a single point, in its truth and fullness. Its entirety rests upon its instantaneity: in a lightning strike, it is whole⁴² and actual. It’s no longer

³⁹ Sistemazione

⁴⁰ Sperimentandosi

⁴¹ E’

⁴² Tutto

speculation or philosophy. The thought-entity now becomes thinking-as-will: no thought-form can do without it, but continuously demands and manifests it, even as it becomes reflected reality.

Thought-forms hark back to an eternal form-giving power that can't be reduced to any given order or type of thought, but acts as inexhaustible power to connect all forms, as the original fabric of thought. Fabric and forms are the entity of thought; they are neither its personal hues, nor the manifestations of its discursive appearance⁴³. Its manifestations are nonetheless the infinite and incipient⁴⁴ dynamics of thinking, on the verge of becoming conscious.

When man is intent on meditating, the thought-entity expresses itself as thinking and thinking reveals itself as being⁴⁵. It should be understood that thinking is not the Spirit, but its first manifestation as being, such that, by retracing the stream of thought, man can find the Spirit—mediated by thinking, nonetheless. It's thinking unconditioned by existence, thinking that be, not extinguished in the sensible world. That's why man exists within thinking⁴⁶, not without it: he lives not in abstract thought, but always in the dynamic moment that precedes abstractness of thought: the Spirit's living moment in thought, always extinct to reflect reality; a moment that can be realized through concentration, and lived beyond reflected reality. From it, man can hark back to the Light that engenders it. But first, he needs to grasp the immanent inevitability of thinking. He can dream of being outside thinking, but this very dream is mediated by thinking: thinking that overlooks its own being, and thus reflects the ways of its provisional support: existence, being outside-the-being.

The support is no foundation, only its provisional imitation: through which, an illusory element acquires power of reality, leading to a systematic⁴⁷ loss of being: a being, continuously presupposed and conjured up, but never truly experienced, because man can only exist in what he is, not in what he isn't. The whole unfolds⁴⁸ for

⁴³ Veste

⁴⁴ Diveniente

⁴⁵ L'essere del pensare si esprime come pensiero e il pensare si rivela come essere.

⁴⁶ Si e' nel pensiero, non fuori di esso

⁴⁷ Puntuale

⁴⁸ Tutto si da'

the kind of thinking that realizes in its movement the principle from which it arises. The world of perceptions encounters its essence as thought: we exist insofar as we are, but true life can only be experienced by way of thought, and only to the extent that we are conscious of it. We only truly exist in living thoughts⁴⁹, not in those that are not really thoughts, i.e., thoughts that fail to be living thought. Sensations of all sorts—wellbeing, joy of existence, pleasure, sorrow—are the material of an existence that can only become being by virtue of freed thinking.

But the act of thought is so fair and short-lived⁵⁰ that it can't be experienced in the same way as sensations pregnant with life: seemingly concrete and real, supposedly harboring living contents. Thus, man ordinarily loses the being in the existence, which remains unknown because, failing to be subsumed under the dynamics of thought, it lacks a subject: the subject fails to be, even if it exists, by failing to articulate itself in the being. Only he who has being can have existence too: man can't be by existing, but can again find the being—which constantly alienates itself—as thought. The being lives in thinking; thinking is always indeed the being, but immediately becomes the existing as reflected, abstract reality: the being is systematically⁵¹ lost, and found again by the ascetics of thought.

To the *I*, the being is born from thought. Outside the individual psychocorporeal limitation, the essence of thinking and the *I*'s being coincide. And a moment arrives when the *I* acknowledges as Cosmic thought, reflected in his own living organism, what it first considered as its own being—perception, feeling, will. Liberation of thinking means to awaken the dormant essence of feeling and will, which usually seals its fate by giving up the being in the sleep of consciousness: engendering its non-being. The latter is yet empowered to emerge through the ostensible liveliness of sensations and urges, and tends to affirm its non-entity as real and extant. This condition enables the action of cosmic forces, whose aim it is to paralyze the *I* by identifying it with the forms of its non-being. Thus, any

⁴⁹ Pensieri che si pensano

⁵⁰ Lieve e istantaneo

⁵¹ Puntualmente

reintegration of the *I* originating from feeling or will can't free the *I* from the influence of these forces, and ends up acting indeed as tool of their designs.

The *I* vision rises from thinking, as incipient objective essence, free of now obsolete, subjective limits—through ascetics. This vision was impossible as long as the *I*, entangled in a network of sensory perceptions, experienced itself only through its systematic response to sensory stimuli. Usually, psyche's dependence from the bodily organization binds the *I* to it, so that it can't be said of the ordinary man that the *I* has a body, but rather that the body gives itself an *I*. For this reason, it becomes inevitable to mistake being for existence: a confusion from which, for instance, arises Existentialism, a philosophy that fails to distinguish different values from a metaphysical vantage point. It engages in permanent quibbling, not because it values internal dynamics, but because it fails to distinguish data from inner perception. It believes that it's possible to derive a sense of being from existence; based, that is, not on the conscience-principle, but on the sensible instrument to which conscience is subordinated: the shared condition of all abstract knowledge that illegitimately identifies the perspective of being with existence, i.e., with the sensible world.

At this point in man's history, the experience of "sense-free thought" has taken on unprecedented urgency. Thus far, by failing to draw from the wellspring of its inner reality, thought has generated culture, world vision, and style that fail to reflect man's "real being"; in fact, they belie and tend to destroy it. There is no world power capable of solving the current problems, nor will abstract thought, political programs, sociology, philosophy, and psychology, or esotericism unaware⁵² of the function of thought's abstract form. This can only come about through man's transformation, insofar as the thoughts through which he senses his own thinking entity⁵³ begin to operate as living forces. In subsequent chapters, we shall outline a technique for the reawakening of thought, through a kind of concentration and

⁵² Ignorante

⁵³ Si riconosce pensante

meditation that initially exploit abstract thinking, as it comes to the fore in ordinary conscience.

Thinking, as thus far implemented by man, is not what rises from the Spirit's infinity: it reflects, shadows, and warps the Supersensible, drawing its own expression from the physical mediation, and letting itself be imprinted by such mediation, oblivious to its original impetus. Therefore, it's not real thought: what derives from its abstractness—mechanics, modern civilization, Culture—even when acquiring an aura of grandiosity, which would be unfair not to acknowledge, cannot be but transient, as it's bereft of inner value. As indicated here, reawakening of thought—which would be sufficient for a tiny minority to experience⁵⁴—essentially restores transcendental power to thinking and, in so doing, reactivates man's ability to know beyond appearances. This thought, in which spiritual vitality flows, can be resurrected in the investigator as crystalline essentiality, a source of calm and inner lack of preconditions.

Culture, Ethics, and Civilization, long sought out as ideals, can be realized through this path. Only this reawakened thinking, overflowing with pure willpower, can turn to the world and know it: from this pure thinking can self-knowledge and world knowledge arise. Prior to this possibility, it's not truly given to behold reality and experience the self in the current world. Any knowledge that precedes this experience of knowledge is fictitious: based on abstractness, it fails to grasp things, even as it weaves logical and discursive threads through them, without a chance to partake in the communion with the world's vital entity. Thus far, this abstractness has failed—and will continue to fail—to address man's problems: under its cover⁵⁵ surges the tide of inferior myths, superstitions, collective obsessions of the voluptuous and sorrowful kind, psychic lacerations due to “lust” and “ignorance”, but also intractable socio-economic situations.

Abstract correlation fails to comprehend the world and behold man's real image; it fuels instincts under a logical guise, due to its powerlessness to separate soul

⁵⁴ What is meant here is that it would be sufficient for a minority of men to experience living thought in order to change the course of human history.

⁵⁵ Apparente sistematicita'

life from nature, in essence converting all problems into dialectical entities, paving the way for individuals' and peoples' disastrous experiences, bereft of hope that a liberating knowledge may yet arise from them. It's no longer sufficient to pose questions about the crisis of knowledge, because the right attitude toward knowledge implies its solution. Something further is needed, a further act within the very process of knowledge from which man sets out: a novel, unforeseeable act.

The world's reality fails to reach us through sensory perceptions; rather, it's a world and reality inadvertently shaped by the inability to sense perception's inner element. Perception conveys a picture, paralyzed as "matter"⁵⁶, that is not due to the world, but rather to man, as he fails to sense the inner element of perception and the substitution that he carries out, turning perceptions into an essence-less admixture. Mistaken for a self-contained element, it can only so appear to the extent that something has already been subtracted from, and something else added to it.

Such pronouncements may appear gratuitous, but their justification will be clarified in ensuing chapters, by describing a method of supersensible experience, which alone can give the experimenter a direct demonstration by and to himself: for there is no demonstration that could be given to him from the outside. It would make no sense to discuss and squabble to demonstrate it, as it would not advance at all one's progress toward experiences beyond the limit of ordinary conscience.

In this direction, it's possible to verify how the double process of alteration of perception—which, as shall be seen in chapter VI, occurs at the level of dormant consciousness—paralyzes the sensible world in an exterior objectivity that stands opposite to man as reality. In it, man finds abstract laws, whose "truth" is based on the "constants" of certain quantitative processes, eradicated from the universality of being, and thus confined to the realm of "measurable". Man demands to extend this measurability to everything, so that the resulting Science, Culture, and world vision can only be science of an undefined superficiality, innocent of the possibility of depth. Pure perceptions are no longer possible, because they have been modified in

⁵⁶ Materialita'

their first appearance, arrested in their inner possibility, quenched by a cerebral mediation used to abstract thought that reflects the lifeless through a process arising from its own lifelessness.

It will be possible to see that thought is indeed the decisive element, not because it rambles on rationally on any given topic, but because it reveals itself as perception's inner element. The latter, while involved in the aforementioned contradiction, at the same time draws its own being—continuously sapped by subjectivity—from an extra-subjective, super-mental, purely spiritual sphere, such that within its appearance as abstract thought, it's possible to find its being and its authentic force.

When we talk of “sense-free thought”, we use an expression whose simplicity may be disconcerting, vis-à-vis the magical possibility intrinsic to this technique. But this is indeed the key to the problem, the secret, the escape route, Ariadne's thread. Only “sense-free thought” can muster knowledge⁵⁷, i.e., vault over twenty-five centuries of dialectic process, born as the extreme consequence of *kaliyuga*. This process, in turn, yields as its extreme consequence the world of “unreal science”—which, by grasping weight and movement believes to have grasped everything—as well as the world mechanical. Until now, man has failed to master knowledge: he has lost the path to the spiritual in view of an existential solitude and aridity, in which one could begin anew the human opus: from nothing, through sheer self-determination, i.e., through a determination no longer beholden to faith, providence, revelation, tradition, but drawn from an immanent foundation.

Spirit flows again from the conversion of rational thought, disenchanting abstract representations and obtuse sentiments, freeing individuality from the influence of a “false past” and present-day Materialism: the inner man can direct his gaze to the contemplation of worlds: can transform himself and the world.

⁵⁷ *Puo' conoscere*

III. Concentration and meditation

The conversion of thought, as outlined in the preceding chapter, presupposes the practice of “concentration” and “meditation”, according to a technique that can’t be drawn from traditional methods, which used to rest upon a “mental intellect”⁵⁸ yet unbound—unlike modern Western man’s—to the cerebral organ, i.e. to abstractness and rationality. The proper technique can only stem from Spiritual Science: based on the current Supersensible experience, and setting out from man’s present inner condition with respect to it.

It doesn’t mean that Spiritual Science is opposed to Tradition, because authentic Tradition has always been Spiritual Science, true to its eternal content, even when couched as doctrine alternately befitting the needs of space and time. Therefore, whenever the formulaic version—necessarily delivered by texts that, beyond ritual forms, can’t represent the Tradition—has been set forth as value, it has inevitably fueled a sectarian opposition between “new” and “old” tradition, unable to grasp further forms expressing, however indirectly, perennial Wisdom (*sanatana dharma*). The problem persists to this day. These pages are meant as orientation to its solution, insofar as they endeavor to draw from the truthful teaching of the present time, by way of a connection with its perennial substance. This teaching will never let man down, as long as he can see past its provisional form and, without becoming mired in it, use it as a vehicle to penetrate the teaching’s immortal essence.

Concentration has as its initial theme any object of the sensible world: not a *mantram*, symbol, corporeal spot, feeling, but a thought, drawn from the usual stage of life. We advise to choose the simplest object—e.g., a pin, pencil, or glass—that is, the easiest comprehensible theme for thinking. It’s best for the theme not to arouse

⁵⁸ Un mentale. It can be rendered as mental activity, or dimension, or domain, or intellectual activity. Scaligero essentially means brain-bound thought.

intellectual interest or states of mind; rather, to act as focal point for thoughts willed in reference to its content. According to the method referred to herein, the object is simply a means: to be assumed as pretext for the typical, current thought process, and not by virtue of its significance—as in traditional methods. With respect to the “typical nature” of its content, the theme ought to be as simple as possible, easily understandable in its totality and clarity. In other words, it matters not what one thinks, but the thinking activity set in motion to muster and piece together the series of representations related to the object, to the point where they can be held as synthesis: idea, or concept. This synthesis will have to be retained as object of concentration.

At a later stage, the investigator will behold the concept in such a de-materialized fashion, almost as symbol or sign, as to yield the perception of “pure thinking” flowing as a force.

In essence, one deals initially with the object’s sensible data: these are coordinated according to relevant representations, to give rise to a unified and precise picture, insofar as the theme or object can be placed at the center of conscience, to the exclusion of every other object. This is the basal exercise of concentration. In a second stage, one extracts from it the concept or thought-synthesis, rid of the series of sensible notes: one directs the attention, thus concentrated, to the conceptual synthesis that ought to stand out in the conscience. The thinking so elicited is “sense-free thought”: not the series of thoughts⁵⁹ that is object of concentration, but pure “thought-power”, which usually fails to rise in the mental experience, because it represents a new element in the world’s life. It’s a spiritual force independent of natural necessity: a force that comes alive in the stream of human history by an act of will.

This kind of “thinking”, unshackled from sensible elements, is directly summoned up in the meditation. The latter differs from concentration, in that its subject belongs to the spiritual domain, and thus can’t be product of abstract thought: nonetheless, ordinary thought can be directed to meditation contents, imparted by a spiritual master, that have an intrinsic power to undo the abstract limit. The ability to meditate, once aroused, can be directed by the investigator to autonomously selected themes, based on self-knowledge

⁵⁹ Il pensato

and demands of personal discipline: which is already an inspiration arising from the Spiritual World. Meditating is no intellectual analysis of, or effort to understand a content: there is nothing to be understood, because meditation is based upon an immediate intuition of its content: an intuition that has to remain intact, to be able to resonate within the soul, as in its incipient arising through a proposition. This has to be mentally repeated, during meditation, whenever its intuitive content drifts into dimness⁶⁰.

Meditation acts within the soul to elicit its independence from nature and reconnect soul powers with their essence: it opposes nature, on which individuality is normally founded, and requires an unfolding that can be authentic to the extent that it occurs beyond the “corporeal”. However profoundly it may act in the soul, meditation is possible to the extent that—mediated by thought—it unfolds as an unshackling of thought from the cerebral organ. Inner powers of the heart then operate.

Once “sense-free thought” has been aroused, it can be aimed at metaphysical themes, and realize a loftier inner technique: the practitioner may find it useful to nurture concentration on a *mantram*, symbol or sensation, even as certain themes—intrinsically carrying a transcendental direction—can be initially active through ordinary thought, when the latter is univocally focused on them. The ultimate function of meditation and concentration consists in their allowing soul powers to operate according to their authentic nature, thus manifesting an autonomy that is not possible under ordinary conditions.

If thought is not educated along those lines, every inner effort ends up leading the investigator back to the physical plane: even as he appeals to inner powers, he can’t control the moment when these powers, having been set in motion, become altered in the cerebral network, giving the illusion of a psychic achievement. In these instances, a shake-up of inner life does indeed occur, due to tension of the will. But it fails to be mediated by the liberating effort of thought, inasmuch as it’s founded on feelings tied to the body, and doesn’t sense the underlying presence of thinking: which, at last, remains the unseen, but necessary element to this process.

⁶⁰ Si affievolisce—becomes enfeebled

The consequences of such practice, in due course, will be a more or less serious neural-psychic unbalance and a heightened egotism, next to the inability to understand the sense of these phenomena, because abstract thought is bereft of penetrating quality and any related “esoteric knowledge” is wholly sterile. This situation is inevitable for those who entrust themselves to directions issued by latter-day masters, and practice exercises or occult rites without really knowing what they are doing, why they started in the first place, or whence those teachings, to which they apply themselves with diligence worthy of a better cause, arise. An easy diligence indeed, wrapped as it is in the illusion of developing occult faculties, while in essence one remains bound to mere psychic phenomenology, even as it resorts to an aristocratic, esoteric terminology to define it.

Some seemingly positive results, always temporary, should not mislead the investigator: “results” and “accomplishments”—whose positive meaning is itself expression of a human, practical conception, which man ought to endeavor to overcome—can’t be a measure to validate the ascent to a superior reality that can’t be measured by human standards. It’s curious to see how self-proclaimed esotericists link the righteous progression along the spiritual path with a vision of human accomplishments and hassle-free life, which are certainly possible, but by no means signs of distinction. The path, in its independence from the necessity of human appearances, may well leave the existential conditions of a candidate for initiation to the inner laws of existence, without intervening with gratuitous miracles or sensational events, in a human sense. But it requires of him a series of victories, trials, and a constant reaffirmation of the experience’s inner states through profound suffering—always overcome by the integration of knowledge—which can’t be reconciled with the aspirations to an easy life, in its current sense.

It behooves us to underline the special meaning of this type of concentration. Man sets out from thinking, insofar as any practice of concentration and meditation is initially mediated by thinking. And it fits with man’s evolutionary trend that he should finally experience thinking as an object. Through thinking, he can habitually observe anything but thought itself. No mental stand, decision or judgment can be carried out without a foundation of thought, even when man wants to deny the reality of thinking. Nonetheless,

he ignores thought. Indeed, he can mull over thought, spawn further thoughts about what he has already thought, and set down as principles and laws some straightforward relations of thought: but this is logic, philosophy.

The concentration is not about further philosophizing, but about giving life to a thought, such that it can rise as an object before the inner attention, which therefore elicits a loftier state of consciousness. Such object-thought must be observed with the same aptitude with which the physicist follows a phenomenon in impersonal fashion, dedicating calm, emotionless attention to it: an easy condition to fulfill with respect to an external object of sensible experience. But one that must be prepared with patience and insistence when the object is an inner datum, void of sensible references that vouch for its independence from arbitrariness.

It isn't simply a matter of thinking a thought, but of being able to observe it: for that, it must first be reconstructed. This reconstruction is the basal operation: beholding what has thus been reconstructed is concentration's ultimate meaning. The goal is to contemplate thought: a task uncalled for by nature, and thus beyond nature's demands. Nature has led man up to abstract thought that, by virtue of its lifelessness, is beholden to nature, as it reflects the latter in a dialectic fashion or sets it at odds with an external, mechanical world. But the potential to overcome nature is intrinsic only to abstract thought, albeit initially in a negative fashion.

Contemplating thought, hence: one must grasp the meaning of this task. Because the object of contemplation must be prepared in the same fashion as the subject—i.e., the observer of what has been cast “to “be contemplated”. Herein lies the birthing ground of creative mediation: a hitherto nonexistent *element*⁶¹, incipiently united with the world's being⁶²: the willed, enlightening act of thinking.

By contemplating thought and having it as an object, man elicits thinking unbound from an exterior datum, and experiences it within the depths of the soul, as it comes to life, because the object itself becomes thought; he activates a kind of thinking that is induced to express itself in the soul, in the same form in which it appears in its

⁶¹ *Quid*

⁶² *Divenire del mondo*

essence. It's an unusual event in the conscience, in which essence and existence coincide, for however brief a moment; but it's the beginning of a new history of being. The object lesson of the whole earthly experience—which man managed to have in an objective form and can be envisaged as a process occurring and self-contained within nature's domain, and with respect to which he was a passive executor—was to show him what he can now freely accomplish (and, in this sense, not accomplish). The objective world prompted his knowledge, so that he can now reproduce the act of knowledge by his own will: and thus transition from nature to Super-nature.

Man has been given the chance to have the world stage as an object, to stand at odds with it, to feel the *I* surge before the non-*I* embodied by the world, to be able to experience a relationship with something else as “object”, such that the “subject” may arise. It can be said that man has not been led to this point on his own initiative, and, in this sense, the process is still confined within nature, even as it pushes nature's boundaries. The meaning was to teach man a movement, or kind of relationship: a movement toward the object, a relationship that he can freely realize, by ceasing to be conditioned by the object. Thought is the real object.

No world object is such without being experienced and thought. But sensory perception—when carefully observed—is always born in view of an inner act: perceptions don't arise as such: they are always related to a conscious subject. He, who understands the meaning of this relationship, holds the secret to knowledge and can intuit the meaning of appearances. We must be absolutely clear that this doesn't mean that the world is my representation, but that, if I want to have the world-in-itself, I must have thought-in-itself: the world-soul. Indeed, man is yet unable to know in a concrete manner; he doesn't know what the world is, nor does he perceive reality, but only the dependence of his mental processes⁶³ from world processes and his thought's relationship to such dependence. Assuming this state as reality, in its idealistic and materialistic forms, is the error: the root cause of what will later manifest as spiritual failure or immorality, and will vainly be opposed where it's already a fact.

⁶³ Essere mentale

To behold thought as an object is for man the lesson of the usual experience of the world exterior, to which he has been led by nature: he can begin to will outside nature, insofar as willed thought acquires the strength to lift itself above psycho-physical determinations. Man thus begins to unshackle from nature pure individual powers, whose legitimate use—as will be discovered—ought to be strictly supersensible. Indeed, they inevitably become tainted, if subconsciously tied to the physical sphere, and manifest as mood swings: the “opposites’ pairs” of pleasure/sorrow, excitement/depression, attraction/loathing, and voluptuousness/anguish. They are forms of a blind and inexhaustible tension, bred in the occult and endured in the open: the Spirit’s defilement as nature, the *I*’s blind desire expressing itself as nature, while believing to will itself; seeking pleasure, and preparing instead its own unrelenting sorrow: ultimately reaffirming its dependence. (This condition, having steadily taken hold during the “fourth age” or *kali-yuga*, has now become grave, due the extinction of ancient wisdom’s vestigial inspiration through “freedom”, at the time of the incipient rebirth of Wisdom.) The technique of “sense-free thought” in essence restores the true dimension to original inner forces that, defiled, have become substance of error and evil, having been used by the *I* to experience itself in the sensible world and attain an embryonic self-consciousness.

Concentration leads the investigator to realize what used to be confined to the realm of aspirations by some of the greatest and least understood modern thinkers: to probe the origins of the process of knowledge and identify the wellspring of thought, beacon of the act of knowledge and paragon of Culture. To this end, concentration must be loosened from the ancient “*sadhana*” canon—appropriate for a mental act yet unaware of the modern, abstract dimension and its intrinsic potential for “objectivity”, and nowadays unable to rid the investigator of nature, such that he remains confined to a soul element founded upon “nature”. Had this task been accomplished by at least a minority of meditating men, it would have prevented the current chaos and solved the riddle of modern Civilization, through knowledge of the transition from reflected, intellectual activity to “pure intellect”, i.e. from the world of reasons and argumentations to *sadhana*,

from Idealism to “Magical Idealism”. (In the opus of the Initiate of the new times, this path to knowledge is illustrated as a “Philosophy of Freedom”.)

The object lesson of beholding an exclusively physical world, i.e., viewing it as physical “reality”—the experience of modern Culture and Civilization, which, accordingly, can only be materialistic—is learning to behold the non-physical. It’s within the realm of possibilities that, born from the sphere of “necessity”, can lead out of it. It’s a possibility for the current human character that, along with a concrete, scientific experience of the physical world, can achieve awareness of the thought unfolding in the process, and muster the synthetic element, first arising as analytical probe of multiplicity. As a result, he can potentially avail himself of the faculty to direct his attention to the activity of thinking as such, unlike the man who forsakes rational thought by failing to recognize its inner element, and seeks the Spiritual outside the element exploited to think about it—while it’s this very thought that allows him to turn his attention to the spirit, because the Spirit is already in it, albeit indirectly⁶⁴.

Man can begin to observe thought through the preliminary technique of concentration. Resting upon thought modeled after rationality, concentration has the intrinsic ability to arouse, in the investigator, the experience of the entity above nature. Due to its very abstractness, this thought has in itself the initial possibility of independence from nature’s categories.

The inevitability of setting out from thought to reach the Supersensible may be cast aside by followers of paths inspired to “feeling” (mysticism, *bhakti*) or “will” (*yoga*, traditional magic), or by thought patterned according to feeling and will. These individuals are unaware of the very thought that allows them this freedom of choice. They fail to grasp, despite their best intentions, the characteristic state of current man’s etheric body⁶⁵. Feeling and will are tied to the body, thus forming a unit—a functional mixture—held together by the bodily structure. Today’s man thinks according to the demands of emotional or instinctual life: his *I* fails to live through the body, but the body

⁶⁴ Riflessamente

⁶⁵ Morfologia sottile

lives through the *I*, providing all the necessary justifications for it, subordinating the power of thought to it, and taking advantage of their logical and cultural form.

In the end, ordinary thinking feeds man's nature, to the point of bestowing on it a spiritual and even religious character: man is outwitted, as the sharpest thinking is shorn of the possibility to become real thought: the conscious, non-abstract experience of its entity. This predicament can't be overcome through psychological and dialectical measures, which are themselves expression of the lack of knowledge of man's inner constitution and dependence of the symbiotic relationship of thinking, feeling and will from the corporeal organization, under guise of the *I*'s autonomy.

The activity of thinking is intrinsically able to unshackle the *I*-principle from this "symbiosis", so that it can experience itself as entity that need not rest upon nature, and can indeed only exist to the extent that it realizes itself beyond that possibility, manifesting a power flowing from its essence, unsullied by reflected reality and nature. This realization belongs to an advanced state of meditative work, as it implies a different experience of feeling and will that can only be achieved by way of a thorough knowledge of their nature, especially as they dissociate from thought and become forces in their own right. They tend, at this point, to manifest an autonomous direction, at times tenacious and impetuous, that stems from their being rooted in an inferior and yet unexplored⁶⁶ nature; not because they rest on it, but because it is engrained in them. It can be said that lesser nature is the offspring of an obscure "ego"-will, clad in hues of feeling and willpower, according to a direction that ties it to the body.

The opus becomes at this point long and arduous, but certain, because the liberation technique allows the *I* to gradually replace nature as the keeper of the three-powers relationship; powers whose origin is essentially supernatural. We are describing a kind of concentration that can hardly be confused with others, seemingly germane, because it's founded on direct supersensible experience, not on texts or doctrines. It's based on a vision of man's current predicament, in which "personality" depends from the mixture of the three forces—thinking, feeling and will—held together by the physical constitution. We have seen how man normally thinks, feels and wills in a certain

⁶⁶ *Inconosciuta*

direction, because he depends on a certain nature, and how every normal psychic phenomenon always arises as a collusion of the three forces.

A psychic discipline that fails to take stock of this condition ends up strengthening this amalgam, and therefore personality's dependence from natural necessity. It does so to the extent that it coaxes the powers of conscience to concentrate on contents in which the three forces are intermingled, failing to provide a distinction amongst them, or to unshackle the power endowed with the potential to disentangle itself: thought—which, by freeing itself, can at the same time let loose feeling and will. This is the meaning of the concentration technique, as outlined in this book: it consists in focusing the power of thinking on a single thought, wholly alien to the motivations of feeling and will in the meditating individual, and thus independent from his likes and dislikes, too. It's essential to loosen thought from the subtle bonds with feeling and will, if nature-bound feeling and will are not to be strengthened from the practice, thus increasing the *I*'s dependence from nature. The latter is the customary outcome for devotees of occult or yoga practices: they never manage to have real inner experiences; instead, they jeopardize their normal balance, which at least endowed them with a basal “natural personality”.

The practice of liberation of thought (which requires persistence in the concentration for months and years on end, testing willpower's resolve to overcome the ego-limit) must unfold without letting subtle influences of nature-bound feeling and will intervene in the concentration, so that super-individual feeling and will can begin to flow through thought. One can then appreciate what happens when the strengthening of thought occurs without separating its movement from nature: such as in mathematical, rationalistic or scientific thought that unfolds unswayed by feelings or urges, according to a cool acknowledgement of facts and phenomena. As an abstract condition bestowing temporary freedom on thought, it strengthens a will that disregards the task of freeing itself from nature. Whereupon rise detachment and aloofness of will, conferring self-assuredness to the most recent human type. This self-assuredness is always a fact of nature, which has undoubtedly become more peremptory and virulent in its expression, shattering old rules and spent conventions. But in essence, the *I* is misled into believing

to be master of the game, for as long as vital energies abound: a fleeting time, indeed. The demise of a few cells turns into the demise of this titanic will, as of any other psychic game conditioned by corporeal dynamics; aging gives way to a smoothing around the edges and mellowing of personality, or to a resurfacing need of church and hopes for salvation.

But this animal, rather obtuse, titanic disposition is in reality a failure of the real power, even as it expresses itself in extravagant artistic and cultural forms, mixing together instincts and intellectual production, and being able to assert itself only on the basis of peremptoriness and presumption. It's an imitation of the *I*-power according to nature, which manipulates the *I* by leading it to strong, nature-driven exterior statements. In the end, the power of the "conscious soul" alienates itself as nature, because the Spirit fails to seize it.

Man's entire mental experience is an inferior form of concentration of soul faculties, just as mechanical civilization is a kind of materialistic magic. This mistake is akin to a false path to the supersensible. Any technique that disregards the importance of wresting thought from the commixture with feeling and will and therefore fails to animate a "pure will" independent from the body, ties inferior powers ever more deeply to the physical organization, and thus to the world of appearances.

The concentration technique highlighted in this chapter aims to tease out a "pure thinking" activity from feeling and will, i.e. from nature's sphere. The ability to unshackle thinking from this amalgam means to begin to deprive the instinctual entity of its ability to encroach upon the thinking conscience and operate through it, taking up the *I*'s function: which is indeed the situation of the ordinary *I*. The ordinary *I*, thus manipulated, reinforces its dependence by passing it off as valor and couching it at times in a metaphysical, magical, yogic, or hermetic posture.

From the contemplation of thought as an object, one begins to experience the deliverance of an "inner person" from the exterior one: a hitherto unknown experience that takes place through the arid enlightening of a precise, geometric thought, kindled by an intimate, pure warmth. This warmth is supersensible will. Once its confinement to the

cerebral organ has been lifted, consciousness begins a relationship with feeling and will powers, outside their bodily ties; it therefore ceases to experience the world as confined to the physical limit. Outside meditation, as man returns to ordinary⁶⁷ life, the three faculties—thinking, feeling and will—manifest a tendency to split and autonomously express their own entities. This now becomes the *I*-theme, when the *I* begins to act as the unifier⁶⁸ of faculties that were until now held together by nature⁶⁹.

As the *I* homes in on its entity, it's inevitable that the three faculties, in their initial loosening up, manifest unsuspected tendencies, as irresistible at times as forces of nature, before which the *I* may feel unprepared. The practice of Spiritual Science provides the investigator with the means to develop, from the *I*'s depths, a calm contemplation before this burgeoning, hidden instinctual life: which, before then, he had never really faced. This ability to contemplate becomes power of self-knowledge, vis-à-vis the three flowing powers, insofar as the investigator can seize them as they unfold and discover that their alteration as instincts is the substance of his own entity. Gradually, in this regard, a higher organizing principle replaces the merely aggregating and fictitious one, based on corporeal organization. Contemplation of thought has, in this regard, a preparatory and enlightening function, insofar as it allows to behold instinctive powers as exterior and alien to one's interiority: the ability to behold them deprives them of their power, and allows it to become again what it used to be in the first place: the *I*'s pure motion. Through this path, man attains the transformation of instincts: the ultimate sense of their irruption into the existence.

The object lesson of the finite world was to observe things as alien. At some point in his history, man started to have the world as “thing”, and no longer as living entity, because he was no longer one with world-soul, as in the past, when the exterior world vision was inseparable from the interior one, in a symbolic and inspired form. The *I* had not come of age, because it was not yet standing in opposition to the world: the “non-*I*”. Modern man has attained the possibility to dispassionately observe nature, and thus arrive

⁶⁷ Esteriore

⁶⁸ Correlazione univoca

⁶⁹ La compagine naturale

at a science of the physical world: a science whose validity is founded upon the “exactness” of observation, i.e., its objectivity and impersonality.

The ability to observe was a lesson needed not only to build a mechanical civilization, but primarily to turn it toward the observation of soul life: which begins with the observation of thought. The inclination to comprehend how the entire experience of the physical world makes only sense in view of the possibility to contemplate thought is already a sign of intelligence’s spiritual reawakening. Contemplating thought is the *sine qua non* for the contemplation of other soul activities: which arise to be experienced, and not simply endured, enjoyed, or suffered. Contemplation is a liberating experience, to the extent that it’s not limited to watching, but is also experiencing and transforming. Man can’t contemplate those very functions, as long as his conscience is “entangled” in them. The entanglement⁷⁰ is evil.

One can at this point understand the provisional and fictitious nature of all that stands as “existence”, “truth”, “science” and “culture” in the current sense of these words. What matters is that the unconscious process—the inner, occult, impersonal background, underlying their exterior use—be seized as inner counterpart of an experience sought by man because of the forces flowing in it, and not because of its appearance. Only in this case is man free from deformations intrinsic to appearances, because he can identify them and at once experience the secret possibility to mend them, not in view of an exteriority that in the end doesn’t exist, but as an act of the *I* that autonomously wills. Man leaves the stream of illusion and destruction, and can act on it. The possibility of “resurrection” of the inner man and the reintegration of his being is connected to this action: the path of freedom.

Man has been led by nature, the ancient Mother, to the physical world experience: beyond that point, he can only proceed on his own strength and accord. Because it’s a freedom path, he may also decide not to pursue it: he may give it up, as he’s currently doing, and use freedom in a negative fashion, creating a Civilization in which power is sought out to achieve earthly, physiologic domination: to master an element whose inner core is disease and death. Man’s current predicament reflects his rational yoke to the

⁷⁰ Mescolanza

values of a reality that doesn't exist as such: he manages to conjure it up as mechanical reality, displaying in the process a passion and a fighting spirit, that are in truth decayed spiritual forces. At the same time religions, deprived of their eternal nourishment and utterly unaware of the meaning of its darkening, mistake it for a normal condition from an earthly standpoint and mechanically administer a cult that purports to represent their spiritual counterpart.

The observation of thought ought to be recognized as a chance to amend the error of stopping at the sensible world's objective experience and considering it a definitive condition. The normal sensible experience simply requires of man the thinking reflection on a self-standing natural perception⁷¹, whereas inner experience requires that he deliberately evoke thought by means of an object⁷² cast by him before conscience by way of concentration or meditation. The outcome of reflecting on sensible data—temporary and limited as it may be—misleads man, and confines him to a mechanistic world experience. If sensible experience is to be incipient *I*-experience and not self-fulfilling⁷³, blind phenomenology, it requires that man meet the demands of the physical world with rational-mathematical thought. Not only to create machines or abstract natural science—purporting to even grasp the Universe as weight and measure—but primarily to acquire conscience of the thought so unfolded, observing it dispassionately: the object lesson of the physical world.

Contemplation of thought allows the *I*-power to arise, inasmuch as it's no longer supported by sensory perceptions transformed into representations, feelings and impulses, constantly stirring up nature and being stirred by it—in essence behaving as a manifestation of nature—but can find an active point beyond the psycho-physical necessity, where it begins to convey its own reality. The usual *I* is a “provisional *I*”, because it constantly squanders its superior reality, drawing “self-consciousness” from the physical-sensible support: a self-consciousness required for the finite world experience, born indeed of it in a lesser form. The lesser form is temporary; it should not be enshrined in a Civilization and Culture that can't be real. It should not be done away

⁷¹ Dato che si presenta come natura

⁷² Dato

⁷³ Che vuole se stessa

with or disregarded, but overcome by transcending its process, so long as it can be seized from within, according to a movement arousable no longer by one's existing nature, but by an act of freedom. It's positive assertion of the autonomy arising from having fallen from an ancient super-nature—in which one wasn't free, but one with it—into nature.

When man, through an act of pure will and essential logic, turns his attention to thinking, not as abstract series of thoughts, but as process; not as intellectual pursuit, but with the investigator's mindset; when man has thinking as an object and realizes the "concentration", the gaze that can be cast upon the object is inner gaze. That such gaze arise is the sense of the opus: the beginning of knowledge as renovation of the substance of creation. The eye of the beholder is the "heart's eye": the vision and the beholder are one. Through it, a transcendent element begins to flow into the world, in its intact substance; an element usually extinct in the act of individual knowledge, clad in forms of natural necessity as reflected thought. Pure super-individual willpower, hitherto untried, flows in it, if man can experience it as "sense-free thought" before its extinction; this pure will can be recognized as *I*-power, flowing free from natural processes.

Will flows through this thinking: not ordinary will, but *I*-will, in which the *I* finally begins to truly will something. It's thought unshackled from cerebral dynamics, and thus removed from its abstractness by strengthening the determination intrinsic to abstract activity, because man can think what he wants (except that he ordinarily doesn't think what he wants, but what is willed from the outside or from what he is identified with). This is the *I*'s birthing ground: before then, it was discursive supposition, image, reflected and potential entity. Concentration is not an artificial tool, but the practice through which man begins to express himself as if the *I* manifested its own pure will: in essence, man frees himself from reflected mediations and blazes the path toward the *I*'s entity.

At this point, the investigator experiences a state of "uplifting", or self-confidence, or deliverance from tensions that can be referred to as "inner independence from existence in the fullness of existence". He feels powers, heretofore identified with him through an obtuse, sorrowful tension, beginning to free themselves and flow from the center of the self: he feels himself "vast in the finite", steeped in himself and in the world.

Two possibilities now simultaneously arise before him, twin aspects of a single, nascent “reintegration” faculty.

IV. Pure perception

In its incipient disentanglement from sensible conditions through concentration, thought can forge ahead in the liberation process, by casting again a rekindled gaze on sensible contents. Freed thinking, transcendent and immanent at once, does indeed arise by an act of freedom whose principle, unwittingly present in the modern scientific-rational aptitude, is nonetheless constantly frittered away in the identification with reality, thus in mere self-denial.

Without a proactive⁷⁴ assumption of this possibility of freedom, pure thinking is bereft of life. But proactive assumption is the *I*'s act: necessarily mediated, in a reflected and lifeless manner, by the thinking activity at his disposal: abstract thought. It becomes, through the practice of "concentration", consciously willed thought; enlivened by an inner life, it breaks loose from the sensible and rises again as pure thought-power: it's born as "novel" spiritual element. ("Novel"—it should be made clear— vis-à-vis the provisional human experience, but endowed with life eternal: the novelty consists in its surfacing directly as mediator of the supersensible within the individual, thanks to an act of will.) For the first time now, it does indeed encounter the world.

The reality of the unfolding earthly saga begins to make sense if viewed as leading to the point where man can turn to the contemplation of being: not with the tools of nature, or being steeped in its process, which can no longer deliver knowledge; but as pure Subject, beholder of a process to which he has thus far been confined and of which he can now become author: as he is in the mystery of his own transcendence. The relationship is now different, unusual, and unprecedented in man's history: hence, it's difficult to seize its meaning and easy to confuse it with other cognitive experiences, or refute it dialectically, based on an agnostic mindset whose goal is self-preservation.

Thought has only arisen in view of this correlation; at first, it did not rise as such, but as manifestation form⁷⁵ of contents pertaining to the correlation with nature: as

⁷⁴ Positiva

⁷⁵ Manifestarsi come forma di contenuti

abstractness. Now it can effectively be thinking and, as such, incorporeal vitality: penetrating the essence of things, because it moves from its own essence.

Thinking begins to be vehicle of self-knowledge (a possibility that must not be confused with similar expressions used by philosophy and psychology): in this direction, it is incipient action in the depths, penetration into the being, and hitherto unexplored communion, as it realizes the *I*'s unity with the world, heretofore only mystically or speculatively beholden. Even though it occurs in the individual's conscience, this act is part of universal history. It carries out the phases of *Raja-yoga* in the inner scene, through essential resolutions, while at the same time transcending, in an invisible sphere, the ancient formative canon. Drawing strength from the conversion of modern intellect, it encounters a rising world: which, were it to remain unrecognized, would assert itself with the power of an obscure and overwhelming disaster: of which we already witness some omens. The event alluded to here plays out in man's superior being, even though it's within an activity founded on the conscience of the limit: it's the moment of a new history of humankind, awaiting creators of power-ideas, independent of past, paralyzing impulses, i.e., of the past's lifeless vestige.

Until recently, man's history unfolded by virtue of transcendental influences, from which it received a predetermined direction, acquiring value as a measure of its conformity to their Law. This direction and its function have now exhausted their value, as traditional Wisdom predicted.

We are moving toward an era—already begun—in which history has to be man's history, and not only his fate's. An evolution⁷⁶ imposed on him by transcendent powers, has to be replaced by an evolution in which the being becomes conscious expression of the Spirit: a birth demanding consecration of the will. The times herald something profoundly new and wholly unexpected: the real *I* must necessarily be born, as everything clamors for its birth. The unease of the present civilization is a product of the *I*'s negative and abstract experience of its freedom, as the latter fails to become conscious experience. Everything occurs for the *I*'s life, for its elevation or destruction: it's a painful generation,

⁷⁶ Divenire

which man ought to seize as it unfolds. It isn't easy to understand the causes of this obtuse individualism, most arid agnosticism, wearying attachment to existence, morbid and systematic fear of being left without the necessary means of survival, as existence has become a value unto itself.

Man is a thinking entity: he's capable of consciousness in thought. This is the liberation principle. But this liberation is being sought elsewhere, by means of thought: in myths, facts, things, idols, postures, or new philosophies, which couldn't be what they appear to be without thought. This lack of common sense and awareness vis-à-vis the intrinsic potential of thinking would vanish, if man could rigorously and concretely experience thought, just as he presumes to experience the world exterior: as objective observer and impersonal investigator.

One must be clear that this act is not further quibbling or speculation: it must become experience, according to a method rigorously consistent with the act of thinking, as manifested in normal consciousness. Regarding this method, only those who truly master the experience can provide clarifications about it, and reconnect it to the super-individual sphere, which is the basis of individuality. These individuals don't expose brilliant theories, but give according to their mission, because they are cognizant of laws that simultaneously govern thinking and the movement of the Universe. In this sense, they can provide orientation without affecting man's freedom. Indeed, they appeal to it, since thought, in its initial individual form, is the starting point. This is the quest's overarching criterion: that the modern investigator recognize the correct teaching, based on its ability to awaken his impetus for self-consciousness and freedom.

The path is laid open before the man who thinks and begins to develop confidence in thought, sensing that he can, at any moment, lift it up from reflected and abstract reality to the level of living ideas, recognizing in this possibility the path leading from individual to Super-individual. An essential way to experience living thought is "pure observation".

Thought begins to manifest its original reality. Experiencing it, that is to say perceiving a movement that was previously sapped by cladding sensible perceptions, provides the first supersensible experience. As a consequence, thought enacts a power of

objectivity and de-personalization, through which it can cast its gaze on pre-existing things, beings and worlds, and receive its own further movement from the awakening of their being. This movement, drawn from the essence, reveals itself as the inner content of a contemplated object. The experience is as follows: the life of the world rises again as life of thought⁷⁷.

Man finds the world scene already unfolded before him: indeed, he can only observe it to the extent that it has unfolded. The unfolding usually escapes us: the internal process of taking place—presupposed and yet unknown by thinking—which ought not to be confused with its exterior unfolding. This is a symbol, instead, of the unfolded⁷⁸, seized at the site of its physical-sensible manifestation. Similarly, in conditions of ordinary conscience, thinking is unaware of its own incipient, spontaneous movement to integrate perception's content in the very act of perceiving. Thus, the spectacle unfolds as it does, because we are indeed actors in it: not real spectators—indeed, we can't be, as long as part of us is inadvertently active in it.

Ordinary world observation can't be real, because it's not pure: it's bound to images that acquire shape in a duality-ruled process of observation, such that one may rightly talk of a “world of appearances”: *maya*, an unreal world. Man needs to become aware of the inadvertent inner motion by which he bestows form onto *maya*, because *Maya's* sense is to dynamically recapture the inner movement, by which it was engendered, not to escape from it as an illusion, for the illusion would then be mistaken for reality. Hence, the importance of the practice of “pure perception”. It consists in contemplating the object with a “disenchanted eye”, such that the object can rise again from its fixed state⁷⁹, thus freeing the observer's inner world from an unconscious bond, and solving the hidden duality that no Advaitism—however diligently conjured up—can solve. Indeed, pure observation, while directed at an exterior object by its own process, does at the same time imply a “reverse” movement toward the hidden root of duality,

⁷⁷ L'essere del mondo risorge come essere del pensiero

⁷⁸ Il già fatto

⁷⁹ Fissita'

aimed at restoring the inner unity between the process of knowledge and the world's becoming.

This act restores spatial forms to their timely rhythm, whose fabric constitutes the real space: never experienced, because ordinary perception is hypnotized by physical distance, i.e., by the point-to-point⁸⁰ relationship among places, by the relativity of the "here" vis-à-vis things. Spatial perceptions can rise again as time entities⁸¹ unshackled from the conditions of tridimensionality: density and volume—outside which, Universal life unfolds in pure time rhythms, similar to those acting within earthly spatial forms.

These rhythms fail, nonetheless, to be experienced by the usual consciousness, thus misleading man into believing that the extra-terrestrial Cosmos extends in space according to earthly rules of tridimensionality; whereas, in essence, this view reflects a provisional mode of knowledge, grasping as space what unfolds as pure time motion. The experience of earthly appearances is applied to stellar and inter-stellar appearances, which are definitely mediated by supports of a physical nature (just as the rainbow, visible to the extent that it's seen from the outside, but invisible when one tries to get into it): conditioned by earthly appearances in which space, being only physically understood, is bound to time. Whereas, for the extraterrestrial Cosmos, one would simply have to say that space is subsumed under non-physical time. Only on earth has tridimensionality been worked out as expression of the Spiritual in living forms.

In other words, we must be wary of a "naïve realism" which, cast out of the domain of existence by thought and science, now reasserts itself beyond it. Not because supersensible appearance fails to reflect physical values, but because an appearance-based perspective must necessarily change, depending on the standpoint: which, for the physical man, is necessarily bound to the earthly sphere and to tools of inquiry that function exclusively insofar as they belong to a narrow realm of physical existence.

Within the sphere of earthly appearances, man has the impression of moving about and covering distances in space by means of machines. But he should not forget that, just as every appearance is symbol of an entity that fails to be perceived directly, so

⁸⁰ Puntuale

⁸¹ Valori di tempo

is the vaulted sky, with its celestial bodies, symbol of a being that doesn't countenance an earthly life, as does the entity that, organized around the principle of the human nervous system, engenders such appearances and the possibility to move about symbols. We speak here to those who care to listen: on Earth, man can develop an understanding, based on the cognitive consequences of gravity's hold over the human body. But that same appearance has a different meaning in the cosmic sphere, where gravity holds no longer sway, and the appearances of void space and celestial bodies become symbols of a different relationship between transcendental and manifest being.

The practice of "pure perception" can be effective⁸² to the extent that one is able to achieve mental silence, which can be attained by way of thought control: lest one projects intimate or personal thoughts⁸³ onto the object, or alters perception's content with inner automatisms. It's essential not to arouse esthetic feelings, even before objects of nature or otherwise worthy of admiration.

The object–thing, being, fact–must be observed with the impersonality that, as we mentioned in reference to the "observation" of thought, is the object lesson of modern scientific quest, in its preliminary phase. Man ought to nurture an aptitude for dispassionately observing the object, to the point of gradually extinguishing the subjective sensory movement and replacing it, as a consequence, with one arising from the object itself, no longer tainted or paralyzed: lying simultaneously in the object and in the conscience as a non-sensible datum. The object elicits an unusual movement in the observer's interiority, normally committed to representations: a movement germane to its reality (by which we mean what is real or absolute, beyond what can be defined "unreal" as appearance). The object's inner content can surface according to a process lucidly willed and at the same time spontaneous to the soul of the observer, able to contemplate in silence. This content gives itself as image, but at the same time lives as motion of light in the investigator.

⁸² Si attua

⁸³ Psicologismi

The representation of perception doesn't become paralyzed as lifeless image, as it usually does through the action of rational conscience, but becomes enlivened in the investigator's conscience⁸⁴, as immediate sign of the observed object's essence. The latter is thus clad in a living "imaginative" form, in the soul; it's the essence-form, whose fabric is simultaneously the observer's activity. It's the inner content's real "life" before the *I* and for the *I*, as opposed to its usual extinction and paralysis in representations. This paralysis occurs in the usual act of knowledge, because consciousness, in its drawing life only from the corporeal element, lacks sufficient strength to encounter the perception with autonomy and immediacy. Hence, a lifeless and stultifying⁸⁵ representation rises as mediator, unable to transmit the world's living element: a world arising as finite, merely physical, confirming the typical, abstract condition of rational conscience. It's a vicious cycle, from which one can't escape without identifying its elements—rationally at first—and the motion that molds them; and by grasping the techniques of sense-free thought and pure observation.

In the end, he who observes with a disenchanted eye—which is no esthetic, lyrical, rhetorical or mystical act, but a step in an essentially supersensible art—can see imagery rise from the exterior scene as symbol of entities breaking loose from their fixed state⁸⁶ and speaking, resonating indeed in the interiority, if there is sufficient quiet. One can then understand why "all ephemeral is but a symbol". The contemplated object reveals itself, because contemplation is the continuation of soul life in the object; because in the essence there's no separation between them: the object is no longer such, but sign and motion of knowledge.

Man can grasp the importance of cultivating inner silence and ability to behold things dispassionately, or impersonally: molding a different eye for the world's scene, one through which the profound identity is reconstituted. The required aptitudes, while cultivated separately, at some point flow together in an ascetic synthesis: in the perception of the essence.

⁸⁴ Interiorita'

⁸⁵ Disanimata e disanimante

⁸⁶ Fissita'

In substance, every thought manifests as the last phase in a movement, at whose source the being itself ought to be rediscovered. The being's intuition is always experienced by way of thought: thought is the process by which man can seize the original sense of being: by peeling off layer after layer of sensible support⁸⁷. Obviously, 'being' is meant here in a metaphysical sense, not as a specific form of manifestation. In substance, man begins to be in the un-manifested being. Now, in the act of knowledge referred to herein, reality is experienced as shaped by thinking, as is pure thought; not dialectic thought, but rather thought-power. Penetrating the essence of an object is but applying pure thought to it, such that it can rise in the soul, woven by thought. It's the atmic essence, an idea no longer abstract; an idea, without which the sense datum would be naught, but by virtue of which it can rise from fragmentation, and find again its original unity with the being. In the meditating individual, it indeed rejoins its ideal root. The investigator reaches the *I* of things and creatures: in essence, through the experience of "sense-free thought", he reaches self-perception. It unfolds its being to the extent that it can find itself again outside the self: it can find its own pure force, by giving itself to world's perception.

We have seen that supersensible thought can be nurtured through concentration and meditation. Pure perception, while in principle possible as a preliminary discipline, at the same time ensues as possibility from the practice of pure thought. We are not dealing with distinct operations, which they can be in the preparatory phase. But in essence man will realize, at some point, that in pure perception—as in "free imagination", which will be dealt with in the following chapter—and in the perception of "sense-free thought", simultaneously flow inner life elements that he has already been able to elaborate. Each of these practices, when experienced to the hilt, relies on the underpinning of the other two. Pure perception, practiced along with the reanimation of thought, is the incipient foundation of inner experience, inasmuch as it conjures up the supersensible from the sensible. Thanks to it, man can experience things' ideal roots and archetypes of sensible

⁸⁷ Scartando supporto dietro a supporto

entities. At certain junctures of the ascetic practice, spatial-external space becomes experience of inner temporal rhythms of forms arising on the spatial scene.

Man retraces the inner temporality of entities that would otherwise remain unknowable symbols of our being, tied to exterior events⁸⁸. This inner temporality is woven in the same texture as “pure thought”: the act of retracing it, renews the memory of the entity we are⁸⁹, and wears out an ancient memory, in which layered appearances coalesce in the shape of a past, endured as nature and sublimed into metaphysical, ineluctable tradition. Man soars toward a pure being of freedom and light, encountering the world’s creative stream as our incipient life: when knowledge and willpower can open up to it. Or he can encounter it as projection into the nothingness of earthly happenings: its ordinary outcome. Man experiences this stream flowing into him from the future, insofar as the specter of time dissolves into its own non-entity: because time is in reality etheric texture, imperceptible by normal consciousness. It can only be pinned down through sensible reference points, i.e., physical measures of conventional, abstract time, viewed as irreversible necessity. Inseparable as necessity from the sensory process constrained by exteriority or extroversion, it’s irreversible to the extent that it’s impossible to conceive the reverse of its direction. But the impossibility is reversed for those who experience thought in its creative essence.

The function of sensible experience can’t be understood as long as man, steeped in it, draws his identity from the perception’s spatial-temporal modalities. Through it, the Spirit must develop powers, which couldn’t possibly arise in any other way. Such powers could not arise without being triggered by an exclusively physical experience. The model for this act of knowledge ought to be the modern scientist’s objective, detached relationship with the outer world, free of psychic interferences, and enabled by a lifeless vision, shorn of metaphysical or mystical vestiges. This point should also be emphasized for the benefit of those who believe to envision in the technique of “pure perception” something akin to the Vedantic doctrine of *indriya*, or the Yoga and Tibetan magic’s *pratyahara*.

⁸⁸ Divenire

⁸⁹ L’essere che si e’

The man holding the key to the Spirit's resurrection from the sensible is one who can extinguish the *kaliyuga* conscience, having first fully accepted and experienced it, and having thus understood the ultimate sense of physical evolution. Bound to the sensible, he can thus embrace an immanent vision of life, and prove his mettle through the limitations of the physical world. This human type has fully understood the consequences of the fall, and doesn't attempt to be shielded from it through mystical stances or disciplines echoing rehashed awakenings of past initiations. This aptitude can be mustered for a modern, titanic revolt against the Supersensible, just as for a lucid experience of its ultimate sense: it's a dual possibility, intrinsic to freedom's alternative. If the decision is affirmative, the task—as discussed—consists in reawakening the inner element, entombed in multiple finite forms. Any path that shirks the conscious assumption of sensible experience, based on which man can reawaken the spiritual content of sensible impressions through inner activity, can't but further bind the inner Principle to nature. He who observes man's history can grasp, in relation to this dual possibility, the sense of the "fall" as well as that of the "re-ascent".

It's easy to believe to be soaring, as long as one hasn't truly fallen, just as the descent is easy if one doesn't know any other direction. These are two equally misleading temptations *vis-à-vis* the possibility of reintegrating the "primordial state", never lost in itself, but definitely lost to conscience. Drawing from the sensible, conscience tends to constrain the metaphysical vision within its limit, without sensing the ultimate task, that is to enact the being from which it arises: based on the supersensible, and leading back to the "primordial state".

In reawakening an inner element from the sensible, sense-bound conscience acts from its true and eternal foundation, but fails to recognize it, even as its movement implies and in fact realizes the latter's presence, by committing its original power, without directly conjuring it up: it is, indeed, unknowingly founded on that power. Man implements this reawakening through an act of freedom: possible, but certainly not foregone. Only this is the true human opus; the rest is the work of the divine, which is man's essence. And this is the secret: that the essence is already realized in him by the

Logos: only his free action can restore the foundation of conscience, without which it couldn't even be reflected consciousness.

The positive aspect of outward, modern experience—on the path to a freedom that could also be negated, or negatively implemented as freedom to obliterate freedom—implies not only the possibility of an impersonal attitude, rid of subconscious evocations before the world stage, but also the need to act, through aroused cognitive power, in depths of the organic entity where the soul is tied to nature, through tainted echoes of sensory perception. Here we allude to the zone of instinctive life and automatic reactions that inadvertently feed every irregular state of mind, and can't be opposed by ordinary conscience, because they are enriched by a psychic vitality that conscience has given up on, insofar as it's conditioned by abstract thought. They are, in the end, *I*-powers, defiled by their adhesion to a unilaterally physical experience, estranged from their essence and bound to the sensible through lust. They give rise to an experience in which the sensible is inextricably bound to the lusting for it, and the combination is mistaken for reality.

Man must reactivate the pure *I*-strength in the depths where its alienation resides, having taken place through irregular sense experience; and he should understand how only consciousness of the limit to which he is subjected in this experience, can be conducive to setting free the Spiritual element, defiled in the sensation. Sensible experience and the attendant lusting for it are an “impure category”, when entangled with and constituting nature: the sensible, separated from lust, returns metaphysical objectivity, while lust, freed from the sensible, rises again as pure willpower. One has to sift the “subtle” from the “dense”, the inner element corresponding to the *purusha*-principle from the element belonging to inferior *prakriti*, i.e., to sentient nature.

Inner life becomes deprivation, error, obtuse and destructive instinct as well as egotistic conscience when bound to nature; but it can become the foundation of pure spiritual experience, when pried loose from nature. The initial task in the sensible experience is to separate “subtle” from “dense”, spiritual from Sensible, and to gradually develop attention to the feeble inner element that accompanies every perception. The power that frees itself from nature—thereby freeing nature and transforming its

perspective—is in essence something that could only arise from sensible experience to reach the Spirit, and by virtue of which the Spirit can act by recognizing the radical sense of the earthly illusion, no longer by way of remedies that are themselves expression of this “illusion”. Its action is possible as resolution of the admixture with the vital-physical being, in which its original power is alienated as lust. The illusion persists as reality, as long as man fails to acknowledge it; but, having been acknowledged, it turns out to evoke real knowledge, i.e., knowledge as magic action.

Man’s spiritual being ought to be conjured up where it already is: it can’t arise from processes in which man is involved with nature. The Spirit would be nothing, if its reality failed to rise from its autonomous act. One day, man will understand why, despite the limits of ordinary conscience, this autonomous act exists as a possibility for modern man, as if a higher *I* were already operating behind the conscience-screen. The practice of concentration and meditation ought to aim to achieve a state that already exists in the depths, freeing man from the illusory limit *vis-à-vis* enacting an *I*-power that already exists. In essence, the opus’s sense is to take charge of a liberating and transforming power, potentially identical to us, but ignored and felt as other-than-self by reflected consciousness. It’s possible for man to overcome duality and reflected reality⁹⁰ as an act of freedom: the consequent flowing of the force is an act already accomplished by the Logos. But this is the secret: to become aware that it is already present in modern-day thinking consciousness, for which it’s urgent to get rid of rational hobbles, to soar toward supersensible knowledge, to celestial Knowledge, whose Gnostic symbol is Isis-Sophia.

To inner observation, it’s apparent that the spiritual being in ordinary life is absorbed by the corporeal organization, being no more perceptible by the *I* than when the latter is in a state of dream or deep sleep. The spiritual entity is indeed steeped in the physical being, as if in a sleep that becomes the denser, the more it partakes of organic life. This sleep is the inevitable counterpart of physical immersion, to which the Spiritual commits to fulfill an experience that can only occur in the physical form. But taking up this physical gear implies binding conscience to the corporeal organism’s differentiation, as well as the ability to perceive: initially mediated by senses, through which the Spirit

⁹⁰ Riflessivita’

has gained access to the external world, shaping them up according to the demands of physical world powers.

To encounter world phenomena, to perceive external manifestations in lieu of essences, implies a spatial-temporal correlation: which can be transcended any time the essences' perception is resurrected.

Space and time don't exist before things or their perceptions: "sensations" of space and time arise to provide man with a "site" to lay out sensible perceptions and prospectively unfold their multiplicity. The reality of space and time is not sensible, but ideal. As such, it's imperceptible by the man unable to access the world of pure ideas; he ends up projecting the ghost of space in outward forms and the specter of time in their unfolding. But overcoming ghost and specter is no lyrical and metaphysical longing for an oft-invoked world "beyond space and time", but the actual experience of the a-temporal and a-spatial texture of space and time with an inner organ. In other words, negotiating space and time is not possible through abstruse diversions on a "beyond" space and time, but through the perception of space- and time-weaving powers.

The process of perception unfolds at a level of consciousness corresponding to the sleeping or dreaming state. Perceptions fail to be seized as they take shape—with a consciousness of their process—and are only encountered where they kindle instinctive "memory"—which, therefore, can replace the essential inner act required by perception's content—and arise as lifeless representations. This picture is best recapitulated in the exclusively sensual experience of representations, where the presence of the inner Principle, for which sensations arise, is dimmed to the extreme and becomes instead impotent testimony that lets conscience assume tainted sensations as real. It's inevitable that this mind-borne⁹¹ animal experience constitutes the obstacle to real knowledge, being modern man and his culture's basal condition.

Man would have essential world contents, if he could conjure up at a conscious level the subtle process of perception, as it occurs at the level of dream and deep sleep. But that would mean to awaken the soul to a higher life, innocent of correlation with the

⁹¹ Mentalizzata

corporeal organism that provides the basis for waking consciousness, and in so doing implies the loss of perception's living content in the representation and the simultaneous intervention of "false memory". The possibility to attain essential contents begins already with the unshackling of thought from the organ of its manifestation; and it is wholly realized through pure perception.

Pure perception unfolds as a contemplation of sorts, in which thought is silenced so that the perceived object may speak⁹². The latter initially communicates through its sensible notes; these become extinct before the power of contemplation, while simultaneously their re-enlivened image arises, emerging with its overarching features. As the latter unfolds⁹³, it can be identified with the subtle motion aroused by pure perception: and is, therefore, an act taking place at a level of consciousness in which ordinary man is dormant, a "zone" between the pure mental element (*manas*) and the sphere of metaphysical inspiration (*buddhi*). It's an initial perception of the *I*, still connected to individual conditions, i.e. to processes requiring further cognitive experience. Nonetheless, the world at this point becomes animated as landscape of imagery that can be contemplated or assumed as symbols. These will later rise as letters of a superior language that can be unified and translated into soaring inspirations toward a higher step of inner life: it's now a direct communion that frees the cognitive act from residual individual limitations.

In this regard, the Initiate of the New Times thus writes: "The man endowed with imaginative faculty views the sense organism as part of the outer world: definitely closer than the rest of it, but outer world nonetheless. It differs from it to the extent that man can be cognitively steeped in the rest of the usual world only through sense perception, whereas he is steeped in his own sense organism by way of experience⁹⁴. The sense organism is part of the outer world, in the sense that man, entering earthly existence, plunges his own spiritual-soul being, that he carries down from the Spiritual World, into it. If we neglect the fact that man fills the sense organism with his spiritual-soul being, the former is part of the outer world just as the surrounding vegetal world. In the final

⁹² Sia attivo

⁹³ Nell'esprimersi

⁹⁴ Sperimentando

analysis, the eye belongs to the world, not to man, just as the rose we perceive belongs to the world, not to him. [...] When imaginative knowledge has purged the surrounding world, in which man lives through the sense organism, he begins to experience—through a detachment of the spiritual-soul element from its corporeal foundation—a thought-supporting organism, similar to the sense organism that supports the perception of other sense-mediated images. Through the organism of thought, man feels connected with the celestial world around him, just as before then he felt connected with the earthly domain through the sense organism. When man rises to a higher step of knowledge, he realizes that he can do away with the world of thought too, just as he did with the sense world. He realizes that, even with the thought-organism, he belongs to the world, and not to his own being, and that cosmic thoughts operate through his thought organism. He realizes that, when he thinks, he doesn't merely receive an image of the outside world: he is transposed with his thought organism into universal thinking”.

“Man is therefore the world, both with respect to his sense organism and his system of thought. The world steals into him. Thus, in sense perception and thinking he is not himself, but world content”.

In summary, the starting point is the practice of “rightful thinking”, nurtured by way of a conscious relationship among data of ordinary experience, and especially by developing the keenest attention to certain thought connections⁹⁵ in this experience. This same thinking, having acquired consciousness of its movement, can conjure up an object of its own that represents its activity, experienced as synthesis. In pure perception, the investigator experiences that same synthesis, beyond sensation and representation: it wedges itself in the correlation between original thought and world. Both disciplines educate the ability to observe, i.e., to face the object as an entity that reveals its inner movement in thought-filled perceptions, according to an inner/outer harmony, hitherto impossible. The object, beholden in its reality outside a spatially- and temporally-fixed state, is born as inner being in the Subject. Exterior objectivity is indeed but a symbol.

⁹⁵ Nessi pensanti

V. Creative imagination as restoration principle of a “primordial state”

“Sense-free thought” relinquishes the corporeal support, whose mediation is expression of the *I*'s identification with nature: the root cause of its transient character and elusive problems. Man now thinks according to the very principle of thought, and not according to a determined nature: a support which, in the best of cases, gives rise uniquely to the objective reflection of a physically measurable world, confined to mathematical formulas.

Along this direction, man can now attain self-consciousness, not simply by virtue of meeting the conditions of waking conscience and calling himself an *I*, but because there's nothing behind him, no urges, feelings, memories, thoughts: it's a point in which thought is nascent, and outside which it's but a tool of nature. Man finds himself at a point where creation of imagery or ideas doesn't require pre-existing models, as is the case for ordinary conscience, whose reflected character calls for a rehashing of the extant. Consciousness does now fall silent, as a first step toward its annihilation. At this point, sleep would ordinarily ensue, but man can remain alert thanks to the reawakening of profound *I*-powers, earlier committed to the process of nature and now rising as foundations of true consciousness.

Every echo of abstract thought fades away: rhythms and inner forms of an unmanifested being can arise at this point. Man can open up to a thought-power whose act is no reflected or sense-bound thought, but possibility to become “imaginative garb” of pure spiritual world essences, hitherto imperceptible directly; hence, this faculty is called imagination. Man finds himself at a magical point, in which every possibility of a superior fantasy, whose texture is formative power, is present: nonetheless, he doesn't yet have this power's texture in himself (this will be a further realization of initiate transmutation).

Ordinary imagination is that same power, but under ego's control, subject to nature and, at this level, tied to the "representative" function, shaped by the demands of sensory perception. Representation is particularized thought, conditioned imagination. Common imagination, as a subjective faculty, carries an arbitrary and "unreal" element—except in those rare impersonal moments when it's enlivened as esthetic imagination, which has become increasingly less spontaneous in modern artists. Nonetheless, it also carries a latent freedom principle. Conditioned by nature, i.e., by temporary and abstract personality, constrained by the prevailing of rational form, and thus cut off from its inner spring and forced to vehicle sub-conscious stirrings, imagination ordinarily unfolds as a wearying activity, easily morphing into reverie and morbid psychic life. Therefore, it can be said that mere representation, corresponding to ordinary reality, untainted and maintained in its "spontaneity", is a lesser degree of depotentiation of the imaginative faculty.

By conjuring up the liberation of thought, the practice of concentration and meditation—according to the method appropriate for modern man—leads the thinking activity back to a point in which it's neither bound to any content yet, nor manifest as shape, because here content coincides with shape. At this point, imagination rises again as power to shape ideas and image-ideas: harbingers of reality and archetypal impulses tending to unfold. For the first time, man generates ideas by drawing from the virtue of an entity that lives insofar as it creates. He doesn't embrace this creative power to find rest and deep safety in it—which is entirely legitimate as a temporary reprieve along the path, not as its goal—but he backtracks through its inner manifestation, retracing the retraceable, in order to find the point in which he assumes responsibility for the first creative form: free imagination. To go beyond, man has to step back, disenchanting states of extroverted expression, which usually force him to a constant repetition of the already-done, to endure always the same limit, automatism, error. In this sense, we said that man reaches a point in which he has no thoughts behind him, no feelings, memories, needs: he realizes the presence of an essential, transcendent world, whose language can only be absorbed as imagery, insofar as there isn't yet any direct communion with it. When this possibility is

directed as an activity toward the sensible world, it becomes faculty of creative imagination, according to a supersensible order.

In the past, the Spiritual researcher let a higher principle act by carrying himself beyond the personal limit: the *Shiva*, *Buddhi* or *Shakti* principle: Grace. The present-day initiate sets out from different conditions, demanding individual initiative at this level, and experiences the possibility of bestowing an inner form onto something that is yet devoid of it. Everything before him already has shape, which is therefore exterior shape, nature; everything has already been accomplished without his intervention: creation, being, history, becoming. It's the past: something that has already been accomplished, or is being accomplished according to a foregone logical impetus, and therefore according to foregone rhythms. It's a world that can be reconstructed by perception and thought in its exterior modality, but whose latent creative moment, i.e., its being unshackled from space and acting in non-physical time, can only be resurrected by the act of living thought.

The practice of retracing, by way of thought, the genetic process of what has already been done, nurtures conscience's⁹⁶ ability to unravel exteriority: by retracing with living thought the inverse process of manifestation, the latter is rejoined with its inner source, which for the researcher is the source of being: seized in its unfolding. Hence the possibility for the *I* to be born as pure *I*, or spiritual subject: possibility of self-perception in the experience of power-ideas that constitute the foundation of creation.

But the possibility of free imagination unfolds in view of a further accomplishment: those power-ideas are indeed not creative, with respect to the manifest world, i.e., they are not acting directly in the creation. If they were, the world would be real and the Earth a self-contained spiritual body; and such ideas would act in the meditating man beyond any mediation. A similar condition to that of ancient humankind would thus occur: transcendent Powers then directly animated the world body, and man was the center of cosmic, world-shaping willpowers. The birth of self-consciousness set man in opposition to the world and isolated creation from the creative powers, which

⁹⁶ Nell'interiorita'

persisted behind the creation screen as a reminisced, yearned-for Spiritual World: safeguarded by myths, symbols and Tradition, but simply as an echo. From it, man can ascend again to the original sound, as long as he ceases to project before himself a temporally and dialectically articulated “tradition”, self-contained as nature and matter, independent of the act of knowledge that first bestows truth on it. On the other hand, it should be said that, from a superior standpoint, there would be no need to distinguish between creative powers and creation, between un-manifested and different degrees of manifestation, because the divine perennially encompasses everything and can’t be limited by contradictions or separations that only have value for the individual⁹⁷, for the sphere of non-knowledge, *avidya*: which remains the Divine’s manifestation form. Nonetheless, from the standpoint of a conscience drawn exclusively from “gross” manifestation, from the physical-sensible stage, and which doesn’t cease to belong to it even when it reminisces or longs for ancient spiritual doctrines, the separation ought to be observed and understood, because it necessarily represents the stepping stone: a condition that can’t be overcome, unless man recognizes it and grasps its reason for being, function and current relationship with the Eternal are grasped. These can’t be contemplated in doctrines that antedate the experience of this condition, corresponding to the abstract-rationalistic level.

The nascent *I* can open up to power-ideas on which reality rests, and embrace their imaginative vision. As we stated, it’s no direct perception of their transcendent being, which will later be expressed as cosmic sound, and finally as creative word in the inner man; but it prepares the descent of the enlightening Power toward the site of the heart, after removing the obstacle of cerebral mediation, which normally confines any conscious activity to the intellectual sphere.

Pure imagination arises as garb of spiritual essences and becomes at once vehicle of an inner experience of the sensible world. But, at some point, this experience finds itself confronting unexpected paths, predicted by spiritual doctrines as possibilities, and as such not predeterminable. The task now is to realize that the pure Spiritual can live

⁹⁷ L’individuo individuato

again in the world, not so much through those who reenact creative processes through living ideas (this could be introductory ascetics to the liberation experience, if one were aware of it), but through those who open themselves up to the spiritual and, by way of inner activity independent of body and mind, make it creative again. Not only are these individuals sensing⁹⁸ ideas, they are creators of ideas. It's a pure operation, in which the Spirit continues its creation. But, at the same time, it's the solution of a rhythm ruling the human-earthly necessity.

Here can the inevitable, the fateful, and the determined be seized at their root and steered toward a different mode of being. The limit that binds to an iron law of fixity and exteriority is internally lifted. The psychic being can be animated of a liberating vitality, at the point where it's bound to the forms of passion, greed and fear. Man discovers that willpower's bond to a necessity alien to its essence is evil, and that instinctual life arises from nature, according to a necessity that, once its inner form has been delivered, loses the power of coercion and unlocks from its center a capacity that is principle of transmutation. Evil becomes the opportunity of a superior good.

The act of pure imagination escapes the "lesser memory" that subjects man to the instinctual being, because it's woven in the same power that normally projects memories in multiple forms, bound to subjective and fictitious impressions: it can then act without suffering memory, which is the memory of necessity, of the limit's ineluctability, of guilt that doesn't allow the liberating vocation to emerge.

The element on which inner life inscribes sensible notations, so that memory's activity can find them again, is not the brain—as modern Psychology holds—but the etheric body, which is to say the structure-giving form, independent of space, that acquires spatial connotation as vital power in the body physical. The mnemonic activity is itself an *I*-function that takes in experience as representations and concepts from the outer world and impresses them upon the etheric, so long as it's imbued with them, however temporarily. Since the etheric is the supersensible element that shapes the physical one, what becomes inscribed in it can, by insistence or intensity, be transferred to the physical and become a permanent condition. This is typically the case with acquired habits: which

⁹⁸ Intuitori

arise continuously as the *I*'s bearings, allowing it to find again mnemonic contents that have already been impressed and in regard to which, therefore, it doesn't have to act and record them, even though it's present to their actual unfolding. Memory here becomes corporeality.

Otherwise, one can't explain shared racial and familial inclinations that, in their ability to condition conscious life, can be recognized as data, whose radical process harks back to an experience preceding the current incarnation: experience that, to be reflected in the present birth, uses cosmic influences and appropriate ethnic elements; the latter, therefore, don't represent the original data, but only a vehicle of their expression. In this respect, the *karma* doctrine can clarify the direction of human destiny, which—while purportedly ruled by “fatefulness” and “fortuity”—is indeed the result of a profound *I*-direction, in which certain forms and events are deeply willed in a pre-conscious way, according to the inner articulation of “memory”.

At this point, we must clarify the distinction between “spiritual memory”—by virtue of which the *I* can consciously articulate itself in the physical body and for which the mnemonic process takes place—and silted⁹⁹ memory, which feeds off man's lesser being. The latter memory, originally arisen from a spiritual act, lost its connection with it and became inclination and nature, opposed to memory's true direction, which—as constant exchange between sensible and supersensible—is an *I*-function. The powers of memory, in the ordinary individual, are used by psychophysical life processes that belie the spiritual direction whence they rose. This condition enables certain impulses, feelings and sensations to take direct hold of consciousness, at times with an invasive character, and thus exclude the conceptual function through which the *I* should assume and evaluate them, in order to determine their impression upon the etheric, according to their real value. Manifesting directly as exterior reaction, they utilize the same power with which memory imprints its imagery in the etheric and physical bodies—altering its substance, though. Within the ego ambit, this memory contrives to force the *I*, to the extent that the latter draws its own meaning from the physical body, as from a mirror. Not only the

⁹⁹ Sedimentata—sedimented

impinging of uncontrolled instincts and feelings, but also that of organic habits, and therefore of diseases, can be recognized as a consequence of the immediate translation of a process alien to conscience into a value that should only be so determined by the very Principle of conscience: a process that, by constantly stirring up the internal contradiction of conscience, ultimately annihilates its unity. Human suffering is expression of this state of affairs.

Spiritual science's contribution in this regard is the intuition of conscience's inexhaustible creative power. A new act is every time at the root of remembering or recollecting. Man is unaware of it, because what is already impressed in the etheric and physical bodies inevitably tends to reduce the motion of this pure recreation to itself, assuming it as a model: a motion that nonetheless can become experience in the meditation, which is an essential remembering, as an instantaneous power relationship between the *I* and a content that can impress the physical body, by virtue of the mnemonic power emanating from the *I*. Concentration and meditation allow pure memory powers to re-constitute the relationship between the *I* and the world. In this sense, it's especially helpful to hold reminiscences as objects of meditation: intensely relived, such that their very texture become creative again and restore to conscience the inner extra-temporal reality that escaped it.

The lesson emerging from this possibility is that man is not necessarily conditioned by reminiscences, past and lesser memory: a force can continuously flow through the *I* with the power to impress itself upon the physical element and extinguish inclinations and impressions that illegitimately condition consciousness. True memory is, in fact, the Spirit's relationship with being and reality. It's indeed the very experience of reality, whereas the world of instincts, sensations and uncontrolled feelings represents unreality, encroaching upon consciousness with the power of reality to give rise to false memory. But the very contrast thus determined arouses the *I*'s life: which will ultimately prevail.

In ordinary life, memory is but alteration of a transcendent power, driven by personal impressions and representations: the subjective vision constantly turns into

memory, conditioning further knowledge. Thanks to initiatory discipline, this transcendent power can be experienced beyond the subjective condition as real memory: as man's unacknowledged past, his a-temporal cosmic history. And it begins to be realized as vision power, encompassing the succession of essential contents of all that was subjectively experienced and, as subjective reminiscence, constrains man within its own limits. Memory now becomes reality's power to exist in a cognitive evocation. The fabric of this power can be recognized as "pure will", uninvolved with nature. Free imagination flows in its immediacy as willpower that can be experienced directly: it doesn't have to face "false memory", constriction of memories and past, but only a void in which to express what it freely conjures up from its pure being.

Initially, the possibility arises to "fall silent", but it's simply an exclusion of residual echoes of sensory-mental experience from the soul, so that a purer dimension may manifest. At the same time, having intensified the concentration and rendered it diaphanous, man can experience the form-giving power as its own content, not tied to predetermined models. Intent on this contemplation, the interiority can open itself up to a higher, essentially extra-human Power that delves deep into the human to loosen its instinctual bonds. It flows into conscience as light-substance and, turned to the framework of the extant, resurrects rhythms of a life that frees itself from existential necessity. For the first time, Spirit now wills itself directly in that content: its true life appears as "celestial food", to be experienced in terse luminosity; it belongs not to Earth, but to its transcendent mystery. In it, man can recognize the nourishment descending from the Holy Grail, the mystery of the Holy Chalice, over which man's invisible Masters stand watch: substance of the original beatitude, also referred to as "food of resurrection", having in itself the power to act at the root of disease and death. Despite a millennial wait, long forgotten and no longer known, erased from the intellect and yet yearned-for, this food can't nourish man and rekindle the original light except through man's act of freedom: opening up to the essence of the self.

There arises the possibility to exist beyond the past, accomplished¹⁰⁰, fossilized form of reality, that is to say beyond the "ego" memory: a new Cosmos is born of the old,

¹⁰⁰ Il già fatto

freeing itself as if hatching from a shell that once shielded and nourished it, but has now become an impediment: commonly assumed as positive reality in its capacity as support, nature and identification. Everybody indeed assumes it as his own reality, opposed—as defense, closure, and creed—to everyone else’s.

Opening up to the Spiritual, stepping back through acts of knowledge to retrace the unfolding¹⁰¹ manifestation, is the eventual redemption of the deceptive, separatist world vision: it sheds light upon, but fails to solve the existential condition, get to the core of the “human” state, and trigger the actual arousal of one’s distinctive being¹⁰². The beginning of resurrection is an opening up to the Spiritual to envisage the point where its flow into the being through individual conscience is stanchèd. This is the point where man is independent of created world, of individual conditions and their echo, as well as of those of a spiritual direction that shaped man and world, and is not to be restored according to recollection—which would fail to go beyond the limit of redemption. It’s the point where man can freely create according to unshackled willpower: this is the beginning of the resurrection. It’s the eternal’s new foundation in the world, in view of further creation: for which the whole plot unfolded. The expression “further creation” ought not to be misunderstood: it could be understood as a realization of the human state, of something at a still larval stage, a seed fighting it out against chaos, because nature is bereft of transcendental inspiration, egotistic and tainted, a chaotic symbiosis of instincts and lust. The investigator finds self-fulfillment in the opus, shaping it even as he sets himself apart from it; a largely irrelevant distinction anyway, because the opus is perennially contained in him as an ever-nascent possibility. The object lesson is enacting a life that could well be defined as “novel”, insofar as it’s drawn from the Principle of being and probes its unexplored possibilities: an ego-free life, “bereft of desire and passion”, arising from the depths, in a point preserved from the “fall” during man’s creation, by virtue of its connection with the mystery of the Tree of Life.

Man confronts the meaning of his ultimate task: facing that most concrete event, death. The ultimate achievement, which will eventually spawn life, is resurrection. True

¹⁰¹ Nei suoi gradini

¹⁰² L’essere per cui egli è l’essere inconfondibile che è

redemption comes from resurrection. To know the past, freeing it from the illusion of its time-bound dialectics, to intuit its secret element—"the lofty heaven of memory", the eternal, spawning an unspent, unwritten history—still awaiting its discoverers—that can be envisaged as time's yet unlearned, secret fabric—this is undoubtedly a way of wisdom, but it's still the way of the Father, if one limits itself to conjuring it up and to being aware of it only as a possible "direction". Man is next to the vision of Mystery, and worthy of sharing in its Tradition—the real one, untarnished by conformist dialectics—but doesn't possess Mystery yet: he is on the verge of sharing the ultimate content underlying the "Akashic Record", a vision that can only be achieved through a further act of absolute change in man's entity, whose being-for-now paves the way for death: the absolute change being resurrection.

The way of the Father doesn't fulfill man, because it's the way of ancient memory, a path marked by the expectation of death and the deception of the wait. It's no Way of the Son, demanding memory's presence in a single instant that sums up the past as its sense. Otherwise, it remains the past, unable to aspire to anything but death: the lingering past that ignores resurrection. From the thrust of Resurrection, peremptorily arises the ability to overcome the gravest human difficulty and hurdle, as well as the seemingly ineluctable.

It isn't a matter of retracing the steps from the condition of the "fallen" man to what he used to be prior to the "fall", or of dreaming up a return to the Father, caught up in the illusion of retracing the steps of the fall; but it's a matter of understanding why man fell in the first place.

Not restoration, but freedom: freedom to exist outside the need to be bound to a determined being; i.e., ability to overcome death. It begins as ability to create from nothing, to resurrect thought from its unconscious strain: it's the first life arising in the purity of the void, the first resurrection annihilating the conscience of existing for death, sleep and rest, which conjure up the ineluctable expectation of strain, disease and death. As the adamant quality of thought life arises, it enrobes the eternal and lets it bloom in novel, unexpected, unanticipated forms that eventually lift up the being from its condition

of systematic strain: thoughts arise as breath of resurrection, enveloping the desert of existence: a blanket of light, as vast as the love of Him who led the way to every arising, recreating, and rebirth after darkness and desperation.

To begin to live where Death is no longer all too powerful means to begin from the origin, to draw again from the wellspring whence truth rises and where it temporarily preserves its essence, as it rises; to unfailingly recover the creative moment as one of pure independence. It's the path of "free imagination": from it, the soul draws nourishment that restores the dimension eternal. By virtue of ideas experienced in their arising and meditations that are no longer mere thoughts, but living realities, the soul steps onto a path to Infinity, the original homeland beyond the world of conditions, including memories of ancient Wisdom and paths of Tradition.

Ancient Wisdom and Tradition are true directions. Not for the fallen man, who will never again be uplifted by them and will be unable, in his predicament, to recapture their integrity; but only for the man who realizes the spiritual principle intrinsic to the "fall", and endeavors to radically convert the power buried therein: inverted, and cause of unraveling and death. For man, this means to endeavor toward the conversion of "Luciferism", shaping rational or abstract thought. Only the fallen man can act according to what the spirit can do beyond the fall; the man who can develop the conscience of this condition and strengthen it to a point where it transcends itself. It's no return to the Father, but enactment of the Mystery of the Son; it's no escaping the human condition, but fulfilling it. The Way of the Father was righteous, as long as dependence from the Father was man's source of Wisdom. But it becomes luciferic temptation, when the function of that dependence ceases and man can draw from the newly found essence of the soul: Wisdom. Dependence, now deprived of meaning, takes the form of abstract thought, whose passivity is used to justify the subjugation to ancient nature, under moral and scientific guise, or as Spiritualism and dialectics of Spiritual Science.

The inversion of the spiritual element, brought about to different degrees through its manifestations, doesn't postulate a reverse path, destined to remain untrodden as long as it conveys a reflected conscience, fancying a return to the origins. It rather dictates the conversion of such conscience within the very process of being, and thus a direction

stemming from the being's self-recognition, and containing not only the possibility of return, but also the root cause of the "fall". It possesses its own reason for being, a power striving to become act from the depths of human nature¹⁰³. The act's initial form is pure imagination, principle of a being that is the eternal's further manifestation, unfathomable to the soul, in the essence.

It's the possibility to realize the "real man": a "real man" waiting to be created, not a ready-made one, whose unblemished perfection is visited upon ordinary man as a conditioning power¹⁰⁴. It's an opus yet to be commenced, even though it had its Initiators: even though One, the Son, has already accomplished it for man in its entirety: unknown, however. It's yet to be commenced by man, because it's no repetition, but ontological act of freedom, simultaneously entailing the restoration of a primordial being and the principle of victory over death. The power of Him who accomplished it flows immediately as man's free act, as he begins to attain it: which is, therefore, a "creation from nothing". Obviously, Tradition's perennial content is necessarily conjured up to complete the opus, but as super-temporal essence, unbound to any formulation; definitely not as a value in which the conscious element, shaped by the modern era, should be extinguished: it's a seed cast by ancient supersensible experience, which can be said to end for a novel birth.

Failing to understand the mystery of present-day sensible experience, from which this possibility arises; disengaging from it for the purpose of restoring past Wisdom; failing to grasp the sense of present-day knowledge—which, as it has been seen, is predicated upon the re-awakening of the Spiritual from sense impressions, and thus upon a non-abstract vision of the ultimate sense of material experience—this means not to have truly grasped either past Wisdom, or its perennial nature's current expression. It means not to possess the very Tradition one appeals to, to be outside the Spirit's living stream, which in reality demands a metaphysical relation with sensible experience: without which, the rule of abstract "matter" remains untouched, and the world is consigned to the

¹⁰³ Dall'intimo umano

¹⁰⁴ Non condiziona con una sua perfezione originaria già data, che occorrerebbe subire

realm of death. Man is trapped in a soulless accord with the Father, who can no longer be the Father, but only its lifeless image.

It's neither restoration of ancient Wisdom nor arbitrariness, then. From the kingdom of the Father, a kingdom of Law, dependence and fear, no true love among men can arise, because love must be founded upon freedom, and not upon nature or law. This Fatherly kingdom remains paramount among men—even as they invoke freedom—disguised as herd mentality, as thirsting for authority or order that can function in their stead, and as dogmatism's various hues: from the religious to the materialistic ones, under the pretense of finalism, mechanism, superstition, or inert fideism and fatalism, entrusting one's fate to progress, Science or evolution that are always supposedly working for man's betterment, but are negation of freedom, of the pure spiritual element that can arise to overcome the current consequences of the fall. The kingdom's counterpart is the possibility of error: arbitrariness, the egotistic use of freedom by the fallen man, whose fall will nonetheless spawn freedom.

Negative freedom can be viewed as the ultimate consequence of a "fall" that occurred independent of man's autonomous decision. Man "sinned" because he had been "seduced"; as such, he was not in a state of freedom. As a byproduct of "sin", man gained the possibility of freedom—in an initially negative form—as long as he could escape the being (in that form), as well as the non-being (opposed to that being). Arbitrariness is nature's use of freedom. A transient *I*, born as antithesis to the "non-*I*", is discursively opposed to nature, but draws strength from opposing it, and finds its own inner strength, inversed, in the opposition. In this sense, man believes to be free, while in reality mistaking the confirmation of necessity for freedom, only because he disguises necessity in a discursive garb, and believes to possess the real content as discourse: which is, instead, always the necessity of nature, and is no less nature when it becomes mental and rational, as opposed to impulsive and emotional. As an ancient aphorism has it: "The golden chain binds no less than the iron chain."

Any imagination shaped by this condition is only abstractly free: it can pretend to be free in an undefined, formal and reflected "luciferic" play, which can even be clad in

artsy forms that theoretically would redress the imagery, to the extent that they can be objectively contemplated and, at a later stage, voice their identity. This positive possibility is open to “luciferic” imagination, but, on the other hand, lends itself to falling to the level of the psychic substance in which its dependence is rooted, and become vehicle of every excitement and depression, every unreal, morbid image in which man suffers, rejoices, hates and loves, without a real relationship between this turbid “feeling” and its object.

Normal imagination is not free; it represents human psyche’s contradiction, so long as it is subject to nature, and—as such—acts virtually unbridled. It’s a mendacious state that constantly feeds inner life with lies that, no matter how decanted, sublimed, and rendered relatively independent within nature’s inner core, remain a source of error and irresoluteness, by constantly conveying an element that contradicts the reality of being. Ordinarily, man projects as images his being-according-to-nature, i.e., his dependence from the grouping of tendencies, habits and instincts: the freedom of this imagination stops at the iron limit of nature’s memory. The task is reaching the limit, because from its meaning can arise knowledge, as experience of what is to be overcome. (Abstract art, for example, could be a way to envision the meaning of this experience, were it to become conscious of its internal proceedings. This conscience almost never arises, so that the dematerialization of the form, instead of transcending the latter’s finiteness, is replaced with the substantiality of an amorphous element, of a cerebral and therefore materialistic nature. Acting on pretense of overcoming figurative art, man steps down from its level.)

The same unfree imagination—lacking transparency and unaware of its internal dialectics—tends, on one hand, to sublimate its “luciferism” through artistic expression, subconsciously summoning up autonomous, cleansing inner powers of a higher degree; but not without friction with the luciferic element—hence the tension and suffering of the artist, who creates with a modicum of depersonalization, i.e., with some independence from the ephemeral mirages of practical success. On the other hand, it constantly embodies the “unreal” element of conscience that imagines what is untrue¹⁰⁵—not by virtue of lying beyond the non-being, but because it warps the being, to whose substance

¹⁰⁵ *Imagina cio' che non e'*

it's bound in such a way that the bond is at once its necessity and possibility of manifestation. Indeed, it can only be active by belying the necessity that engendered it, but without the possibility of getting rid of it, and therefore in the constant alternative between reverie and mendacity, or between fantasy and esthetic imagination: two conjoined possibilities with ill-defined boundaries, because they draw nourishment from the same root.

Man imagines what doesn't exist, what could exist, what belies the existing, but every aspect of this imagery casts off the foundation from which the process is drawn; a process in which, therefore, no autonomy, clarity and truth are possible, unless imagination is imbued with an active willpower principle: but the act of this principle—already in some way present in esthetic activity—can't lead out of the basal contradiction of imagination, unless one knows the dynamics that shapes it, along with its metaphysical foundation. Pure willpower, aroused by concentration, can act through imagination, by imparting on it a series of formative motifs that respond to its essence, unbound from nature and necessity. The value of certain meditative themes consists in the fact that pure imagination draws from them its will-element, rising to the level of non-subjective activity: it can reach the very content of its act and rise as objective creativity.

In substance, ordinary imagination echoes sensible life in shapes that rehash the representation process, bound to sensory perception; it's therefore a "being willed" from an opposite direction to that of conscience and willpower: in that respect, imagination is passivity, confusion and disease. It's the body's morbid state, ordinarily projected in a series of images, as symbols representing a metaphysical translation of the vital element's dependence from the physical condition. They are not real thoughts, even though they command a will-stream¹⁰⁶ of thought, because their imaginative or representative substance is exclusively drawn from the sensory sphere. In passing, we ought to note that any real therapy should strive to let the patient educate himself to control this flow of images, even more disorderly than the ordinary, and thus summon up some degree of *I* powers' autonomy, with regard to the morbid process, interiorly strengthened by this

¹⁰⁶ Corrente volitiva

disordered flux. Indeed, concentration and meditation exert a curative influence, by subtracting imaginative thought energies from physical illness, as the latter seeks to gain a foothold in the soul sphere, to continue to exist undisturbed in its corporeal manifestation (Conversely, one ought to seek the root of psychic illness within the physical sphere).

Essentially, man imagines according to what he is in his existential “predicament”; at the same time, he imagines something that doesn’t exist as value—as we stated—because what lies in the realm of existence is not the real being: this is the contradiction of imagination.

The possibility of endless imagination within the ego limit is essentially projection of an obscure necessity that fails to be recognized as such, unless one is present to this imagining or has it as an object: a presence which, on the other hand, would immediately stanch the chaotic flow of images, bringing a meaning to bear on it, or a principle of conscious willpower. The task is not to intervene in the imagination process with a stifling rational element, but to relieve it from the subjective strain, restoring its texture of reality, which is the being and the world’s inner form; in it, the *I* can and will create to the extent that it commands the process’s principle. The element of freedom persists then as imagination’s burgeoning possibility to imagine what-is-not or -is-not-yet: by virtue of persisting in this element, its nature morphs from abstractness to life, from death to resurrection. Imagination becomes creation.

The ordinary result of the lesser imaginative form is its inverted and self-oblivious power: the steady assault of conscience’s fictitious life, the constant reaffirmation of deprivation and necessity. Man can imagine the non-existent, insofar as he lives in it: in this sense, every image can only embody his non-being, tethered to a limit that doesn’t allow it to move differently. Free imagination means overcoming this limit. This psychic limit is also physical, of a physical nature involving the psyche; a limit that should first be seen, because seeing it then becomes the *I*’s act; and the *I* can look, to imagine beyond the limit. Self-observation means to endow the *I* with eyes, so that it may see: see what man can’t get rid of, unless he has the strength to behold it.

The man striving for reintegration will confront hurdles characteristic to the human predicament: along the path, he can't avoid facing barriers that stifle common man's vocation and force him to remain what he is. At some point, these barriers show all their power to rule man's ordinary being with an iron fist. The talent then is to test the limit of this power: next to human experience, sense-free thought can impart this knowledge. From it arises the possibility of free imagination, i.e., of overcoming the human limit.

There are no ties that man can't imagine unshackling, no throes that he can't imagine escaping, no illness that he can't imagine healing: the principle of reality, now contained within the imagination, paves the way for the *I*'s action as one with the cosmic *I*. This free imagination, born by extracting it from a sphere in which it's usually negated in the form of objectivity and necessity, can achieve—for the *I*—the miracle of transcending the limit erected by nature with the power of a firm, definitive determination: the real cause for despair and for quitting the struggle. Here, imagination eventually finds the point of transcendence, indicating what is to be overcome, as a measure of passage from Earth to Heaven, from nature to super-nature: like a passage that, negotiated at least once, is now familiar. Every time, the conquered height is lost, because man can't lie in the Spirit, he can only be in it; and, to achieve it, man needs to conjure up time and again the point in which ordinary condition, hurdle, error, and illusion can be overcome.

There is a Spiritual World waiting to welcome man, but he has to walk the distance separating him from it, in order to find it again: even if this walking is not a "proceeding" in the common sense, but rather a "backtracking", a descent into the depths of the self, a sinking into nothingness: a re-adsorption to the foundation, to the Higher-*I* standing behind the screen of ignorance, the Divine One. Man can lift the obstruction to it—even for few moments—so that the soul can act according to its principle; even though the opus has been, from the very beginning, the indirect, mediated work of this Principle: the soul now opens up to it.

Once thought has been stilled, the secret is to let the basal peace leaven: it's a transcendent climate that lies at the roots of life, by which nature is rid of the self, and the

self of nature: the latter can descend into the rest of its metaphysical texture, while interiority is open to the transforming Power. Unshackling thought is the path to true relaxation, to the extent that it frees psychic life from the cerebral organ, the sounding board of any sensation and instinctive uprising. It's the veritable "releasing the hold": which can never be direct action, and can't be willed as such—as orientalist spiritualism would have it, thus bestowing a materialistic character on it.

The whole discipline is but a technique directed, with ever-subtler means, at a vital disenchantment that can't be achieved by wanting it directly, because in that instance man would have at best a subtle sensation of it. If he fails to master the science of thinking and imagination, he will inevitably lead the image back to the physical sphere, where it's bound to become corrupt, because the entity bound to sentient nature constantly seeks the disenchantment to subordinate it to its demands. Whereas the task is to unshackle a celestial power from nature's core: an unrealizable task, as long as man doesn't know the extent of the natural limit: beyond which, having exhausted all tensions, that power can emerge as foundation and effuse its vast principle within the interiority: it's at once nature's respite in its own essence, and disclosure of the soul to the transforming Logos-power.

In concentration, meditation, pure observation, and contemplation of nature's rhythms—according to the techniques described herein—man truly realizes a mediating activity that distracts the principle of individuality from the characteristic limit of a specific psychophysical constitution, committing it to a motion that is already supersensible in the sensible. As a result, man restrains the limit's influence, so that the Power of the Origins can descend unfettered and act in the being's depths: at first, by establishing calm. In other words, the power can't descend by directly turning to it (which would be a metaphysical error as well as an impossibility, in man's present predicament), but by virtue of indirect action. Man turns to a different object, and in so doing spontaneously opens up to the power: a possibility requiring that man avert his gaze from the opening, and not seek to have it as an object.

This power doesn't give itself so that man may be driven by it as an automaton. This was the aptitude of ancient ascetics, and is no longer repeatable today, because it would be reduced to passive resonance with the action of a Power that, failing to take hold in the only, pure inner principle in which man can will himself, would inadvertently descend into a life of instincts, or nature's inertia, while continuing to foster in the investigator an illusion of contact with the supersensible.

The power is given so that man can translate it into acts of freedom, without altering its essence, but letting it live as courage of an individual relationship with the world. The Logos becomes substance and strength of man's resurrection, as long as he lets the power flow in his free act: a continuation of the divine in man. This absolute initiative, this courage to commit, to act outside nature's prescription, is man's first authentic affirmation, the birth of an *I* that only rare individuals have known so far, and only Gods have exceptionally experienced before him: in this respect, it should be said that man's real history is about to begin. Thus far, man has been led. Understanding the other can only arise from an act of freedom: by which, he who truly seeks the *I* in himself can envision it in others, and see it rise for him from the other. Fraternity's foundation is an exquisitely individual event, its real thrust being initiatory.

He who can grasp the meaning of these lines, will not find it difficult to understand how the alluded Path captures every radical demand of Yoga, Zen, Christian mysticism and Sufism: concentration and meditation, aperture and submission, patience and abnegation: not as ends in themselves, but as means to accomplish the opus: the birth of a higher *I* from the seed of lesser individuality, shaped by the agnosticism of physical and sensible experience. Man is free: no universal finalities can condition him, no divine goals can constrain him: nothing forces him, except what he ties himself to. Hence, he is free in the essence. But it's necessary, urgent indeed, for him to know this; otherwise, he would unknowingly use his freedom for self-destruction.

In modern man's lesser freedom, agnostic aptitude, anti-traditionalism, anti-mystic vision, and arbitrariness, one has to envision the obscure and convoluted possibility of freedom, as germinal power of the authentic man, i.e. of his real human

state: a step beyond those heretofore known to human experience. Its achievement is beyond being and non-being, i.e., beyond the “human” as it has been conceived so far, or interpreted on the basis of man’s history and past, of what transpires from his existence: only the courage of such vision gets man near the mystery of his essence.

Two temptations are possible vis-à-vis this task: to ward off lesser individualism as evil, and thus forsake an understanding of its ultimate meaning, in an attempt to breathe new life into past spiritual conditions as a defense against it; or to accept agnostic individualism as a normal, self-contained condition, deliberately seeking it out and, in so doing, believing to seek and justify one’s own principle—even scientifically—by varnishing it with a veneer of culture. Both temptations aim to eschew the achievement of that human state, for which man left Heaven and appeared on Earth. One prompts him to erase the “sin” and avoid the “fall’s” consequences; the other tends to consecrate the “fall” as a normal condition. Both leave untouched the domain of ego, disease and death, according to the rule of ancient, de-spiritualized nature; and conjure up the degree of fear needed by egotism to remain fixed in its ways. But, in this way, man fails to realize its potential and overcome the fall; he continues to suffer from its consequences, without transforming its impulse into a power of resuscitation¹⁰⁷. One can then explain why, despite the swarm of schools, currents and teachings that purport to point out a “path of return”; despite the confessional activism and organizing of religions on all worldly planes, including the political one; despite complicated sociological studies and the general dialectic obsession with social redemption programs; despite scientific progress in all its specializations, something in the human organization has ceased to function.

Man senses that the world is coming undone, and seeks daily to redress its immediate and urgent demands¹⁰⁸, without getting a unified sense of the situation, not to mention the possibility of reining it in: there is a pervasive ill foreboding that something is about to collapse, indeed that here and there it has already collapsed and is being buttressed somehow, while man gets inured to this state of affairs.

¹⁰⁷ Resuscitamento

¹⁰⁸ Secondo la richiesta immediata e urgente

Neither traditionalism nor agnosticism, then: they are both, in their exclusivism, errors. And yet, either one can become a force, if freely adopted by those who are neither seeking restoration, nor easing into the current, obtuse materialism; the former¹⁰⁹, by shedding light onto the history of man and the ultimate sense of earthly experience; the latter by rising as ability to be rid of all idols and superstitions, including materialistic and scientific ones. (Science is for now merely a science of quantity and fails to overcome the limit of what is physically measurable, because it assumes as foundation the experience of that limit. It fails to grasp the world in its reality, nor will it ever be able to, so long as it limits itself to abstract thought: that same thought modeled after the measurement of quantity, directed at what man is able to imagine, under those conditions, beyond the quantitative limit.)

Gradually, the unfolding inner vision extinguishes the titanic element, on which every spiritual quest inevitably rests, as temporary foundation of self-consciousness; it allows the individual to understand the sense of an activity, creative beyond the limit thus far accepted and nonetheless unknown: because every limit is set by thought, even when conveyed in spiritualist and metaphysical shapes. Man has to be able to see the limit to overcome it, but the entity that can overcome it, is the pure Subject: which can't be pure unless it recognizes its non-being¹¹⁰ as distinct from itself. The redemptory experience becomes possible at this point: an experience that begins a life of being-beyond-the-past, the accomplished¹¹¹, and the fixed; beyond the limit's rule, implicit to drawing support from the identification. "Free imagination" is the possibility to will in an initial, creative form, according to the spiritual upon which one begins to be founded: to will something that is neither prescribed in Heaven, nor on Earth, because it's the Spirit's creation, operating from nothing, beyond every limit.

Even those who presume to be connected to Spiritual Science sometimes fail to show sufficient independence from a veiled mechanistic vision, according to which one surmises that, once attained, the Supersensible is expected to act on man's behalf. Man mistakenly believes that, as the Spirit flows, the individual has to follow its thrust as an

¹⁰⁹ The Mediterranean edition here reads "non" where it should be "uno". It's obviously a typo

¹¹⁰ Cio' che essa non e'

¹¹¹ Il gia' fatto

automaton: transcendence is seen as a reality in itself that man is excluded from and fails to be in or establish a relationship with, save for that inherent to the way in which he represents it. In doing so, man has effectively forsaken the Spirit's act, in which alone can the relationship be established. In the end, it's dynamic identity.

The experience of "transparent thought", in its absolute independence from nature's schemes, can only unfold as source of a novel operating, and faculty to devise solutions to problems, creations, initiatives, and actions, when directed at the world, on the basis of a detached observation of reality: it's thinking, whose essence is rendered dynamic insofar as it becomes pure initiative. It unfolds as power when it flows into the individual¹¹² and operates toward the sensible.

The pure strength of thinking, rid of thoughts, is the instrument of supersensible quest: incipient faculty to imagine according to the *I*, if its orientation toward existence makes it flow toward the world in shapes in which man is creator, just as nature is within the limit of finite and exterior forms. Cleansed powers of feeling and will begin to flow in this imagination. While rising every time as perceptual "garb" of an objective Spiritual World that will become direct experience only through further development, this imagination can, in its relationship to human experience, act on something that is neither predetermined by necessity, nor dictated by rules: to create outside the realm of nature. Man wills something to which he is not obliged by anything, and through forms that can be summoned up from the individuality: which realizes its own essence¹¹³, only to the extent that it can create beyond itself; so that the more individual these forms are, the richer of liberating inner life they become. The birth of pure thinking is an introduction to creative power: it should not be limited to the moment of its incipient supersensible unfolding.

By virtue of "pure ideating" man can look at the world and feel its essential content rise in him as imagery: it rouses deeper energies, leading to the self's radical identification with the world's metaphysical being, through images rising from

¹¹² Quando si individualizza

¹¹³ Diventa se stessa

exteriority. Deep knowledge arises: it's a creative accord with the world, assumed with its internal history. This accord is creative motion: it should not be considered as an obligate step on the way to further progress. Likewise, man has to rid himself of any idea of "progress", based on representations bound to exterior experience. For the possibility to know one's depths to unfold, a correlation with actual events and man's a-temporal history should be established: a correlation with retroactive transforming power. The accord with the world pivots on the fulcrum of inner freedom, so long as man responds to the world's demands, not according to a foreordained plan, habit, nature or process that partakes of the world's death process, but with free creative imagination, breathing new life into the world.

The new aptitude of knowledge is such to the extent that, while adsorbing contents from the world, simultaneously beams them back, not in an automatic mode, but according to the metaphysical spontaneity of a lucid and aware creativity. In this sense does man will, not according to what has already been willed, but according to a will that begins to lend truth to the *I*: an *I* that is all the more steeped in lively universality¹¹⁴, the more individual, self-identified, and self-founded it is. The more it exists in the world's heart, the more it realizes its luminous solitude: in its vastness, it's able to feel every *I* as a unique accord: each one absolute in itself, beyond lesser appearances. Consecration is born from being free.

Its creativity presupposes an absoluteness that can be referred to as the *I*'s "celestial nourishment" and flourishes as imagination: a celestial, solar nourishment-awaited by presently incarnated individuals-that can become, through them, power of transmutation of human history. It's called "nourishment of the Holy Grail".

¹¹⁴ Si avviva di universalita'

VI. Nature's extinction and supersensible vision

Knowledge now unfolds as ability to distinguish “eternal” from “ephemeral”, “reality” from “appearance” and, at the same time, to will outside the limits of egotistic necessity. Man looks beyond, and recognizes a reality untainted by the usual mode of looking through the ego, a powerful reality flowing as worlds' foundation: beholding it has the power to extinguish the ego at once. Man can finally recognize demands outside one's own: such as others' and the world's, both metaphysically authentic. This ultimately turns out to be reality and bear relationship with morality.

Abstract thought, shorn of internal dimension, has cut off moral demands from the human stream. In a world limited to quantitative relationships and existential motifs of an exquisitely physiologic order, in which it's inevitable to see economic welfare as univocal solution to all problems, there's no reason to take the moral instance seriously: it therefore remains anemic and rhetorical theme for priests and sociologists, or driving impetus of a Spiritualism unable to acknowledge the ideal and historical point where the world's immorality begins.

Many investigators are driven by goodwill; not enough, though, to allow them to see the limit that inevitably confines them to the world of contradictions and appearances that they strive to overcome. No discipline, either oriental or occidental, esoteric or mystical, can restore moral strength to modern man, without spawning the capacity to act where immorality is rooted; i.e., in the element that subterraneously sets up for failure every spiritual practice and asceticism, traditional or not.

Man's immorality is not perpetrated in the sphere of feelings and instincts: it unfolds there, but doesn't originate with them. It behooves us to consider what was alluded to in earlier chapters as the “impure” relationship of the soul with the sensible, a relationship shaped through “descending” phases—intended as inner decline—of human history. By retracing them, one can envisage an archaic human type, for whom sensory perception did not end with sensation, but had the perceived object's supersensible

content as constant, extra-subjective inner counterpart. It was possibility of transparent vision, foundation of a superior human history that man was to lose in order to achieve the agnostic, exclusively exterior vision, spawning the birth of individuality, independent from metaphysical references. The moral problem arises when spiritual powers stop flowing into man as nature's impulses.

When the relationship of knowledge between man and world unfolds exclusively on the basis of rational activity and sensory perceptions whose inner content, because of man's altered inner constitution, has been replaced by the subconscious motion of feeling and will, it begins to be source of immorality. The pure objective element that is always present in the perception process is prevented from resonating, overwhelmed by the automatic sentient element, through which subjective necessity, combined with sensation, prevails upon the subject with the strength of objective determination. Thus, world reality, altered in the sensible experience according to this sentient necessity (attachment and lust), ends up feeding it. Hence, rules and provisions that strive to eschew certain forms of sensible experience, in which the instinctual being is explicitly manifest, are powerless to realize the catharsis, as they leave untouched—considering it innocuous—the ordinary sense experience on which they are based. Man is bound to a *being* that becomes *existing*, and believes to know the being by virtue of his ties to it. A Spiritual doctrine that ignores the relationship between soul life and the world exterior—the subtle connection between perception, sensation and representation—and is therefore unable to provide proper ascetics, acting in a systematic form on the irregular and “impure” element that rules this connection, will ultimately lead the investigator to a sterile and wearying fight against states of mind and instincts, rendered more aggressive by an inappropriate discipline, and potentially leading to real forms of unbalance.

Mystical aptitudes, embodied in Yoga practices, traditional ascetics and eclectic contemporary spiritualism, fail to behold the inner function of the sensory process and its relationship to thought. Even when, in the best of cases, they provide introductory elements to the supersensible experience, their help inevitably stops short of the limit intrinsic to modern man's constitution: one in which ancient supersensible “inspiration”

has faded, by virtue of the very process that leads to the present man, who relates to the being through a simply, indeed exclusively sensible experience; because—if one looks at it—any other conscious function lives as an echo of what is absorbed daily from the external world. Hence, the soul is wholly imbued with a resonating physical life that doesn't leave place for any other content. Thus, when man endeavors, from within, to reaffirm the Principle of conscience, he can achieve at most an intellectual modification and never a transformation of the being, because it can neither alter the relationship between senses and world, nor realize how much of this relationship, tainted in its process, penetrates and secretly seizes the soul life. When man misleads himself into believing to be rid of, or to overcome nature, by embracing mystical or yogic practices, he essentially achieves a goal that leaves intact the zone in which world perception is altered and from which rises, enveloping the *I*, the radical cause of man's immorality: which can't cease, as long as he's beholden to asceticism and esotericism that used to be valid for a kind of man not yet exclusively conditioned from sensory perception. In essence, one deals with unawares mediumism, of a higher degree than ordinary mediumism, but equally conducive to the overwhelming of conscience by sub-sensible powers.

Therefore, even when man observes all possible rules, living in purity and prayer, doing charitable deeds, and thus conjuring up a righteous disposition toward inner elevation, nature remains virtually intact in its root immorality, as long as the sensible experience is not converted. The world's degradation persists, as does the modern human state, leading the soul to resonate and act exclusively on tainted sense experience, continuously translated in cultural, ethical and artistic values.

In this regard, one must wonder how much responsibility for the predicament of current "civilization" rests with those who, while somewhat qualified to lead the way to profound knowledge, apt to penetrate the mystery of sensible correlation, have failed to devote themselves to this work—having liberally helped themselves to the teachings of the present-day Initiate—by prematurely assuming the masters' mantle or by losing their way in partisan bickering, according to a presumption borne out more by doctrine than

knowledge¹¹⁵. This position, in its negative stance, is similar to the advocates' of a traditionalism that, even as it manages to provide some possibility of contact with ancient Wisdom's teachings, fails to offer anything to shed light onto the background of current sensible experience, and thus to establish itself as modern liberating technique.

The very strength of individuality that binds itself ever more tightly to nature through sense perception—as we have seen, current man's only source of concreteness—becomes a destructive force, to the extent that it's directed toward earthly values, or to the cultural or spiritualistic translation of these values. It gradually inverts its spiritual nature, and lends scientific dignity to this inversion: before which, any rhetorical, moral or Spiritual call, any attempt to religious or social redemption, as well as ethical and sociological theoretical presumptions, are but the dialectic aspect of the unfolding inversion, an illusion of catharsis and salvation. A superhuman tension of the will is to be exerted by initiatory communities, lest man, under this relentless onslaught, slides into the third catastrophe of the present century¹¹⁶.

Ordinary consciousness adsorbs impressions from the external world, as they unfold with a character of “necessity”, not unlike the exterior process's from which they arise. The life of conscience could be envisaged as passive resonance of natural processes tending to condition the *I*'s activity for their fulfillment; it's possible to realize that nature is not reality, but something already sullied by man's sensory-mental relationship with it.

Nature is not a being-in-itself, as it can be abstractly surmised from its “appearance”, because it's spawned by this very appearance. Nature, as encountered by conscience, is already an alteration; and this alteration is related to the sensory-perceptual act, in whose process—as we discussed in chapter I—one can recognize different gradations of intensity¹¹⁷ of the act of conscience corresponding to waking, dreaming and deep sleep.

It's easy to dismiss nature as *maya*, illusion, or “sensible appearance”: what matters is to experience the element through which it rises as nature, the point in man's inner constitution where the alteration of principles begins, giving birth to duality—the

¹¹⁵ Piu' al sapere che al conoscere

¹¹⁶ The Twentieth Century

¹¹⁷ Gradualismo intensivo

root of sorrow and death: the more secret and unknowable, the more it appears as unity in the form of “identification”. Hence, no de-identification technique, *neti neti*, or separation of *purusha* from *prakriti* can be of any use, when the subject that presumes to resolve duality through knowledge is himself expression of duality, because he is fettered by nature.

For modern man, duality can be overcome by unshackling thought from its sensible support, insofar as thinking, by overcoming reflected reality¹¹⁸ and reconnecting with its essence, frees conscience—even temporarily—from the corporeal support and restores to it the point in which its foundation is one with the being's. Without indulging in transcendental figments of the imagination or sensationalistic psychic practices, ordinary thought—when properly exercised—can absorb a power, of which it is usually lifeless expression, and intimately develop to the point where it coincides with its own source. This thought reveals itself as energetic spiritual element, of which modern man is yet unaware, even as he uses its reflected form to express his nature in various hues, including mystical and aspiring spiritual ones: which remain nonetheless expressions of nature and therefore prone to subordinating the Spiritual to it. This thought is capable of breaking loose from nature and achieving the dynamic-magical synthesis in which nature is resolved.

Before considering this possibility, it behooves us to remark that nature, fallen because of man, perpetuates itself by seizing radical soul powers in man, and that this process constitutes the basis of ordinary conscience.

Nature, already tainted and assumed *under guise of matter*¹¹⁹ by brain-bound consciousness, prompts processes that seize man's inner life and limit the act of knowledge to mirroring their content and movement as thoughts. The only possibility left to thought is to establish abstract correlations among a host of perceptual contents which, having forsaken their inner content, exclude the conscious principle's essential activity, placing the emphasis not on the *I*, but on the process exterior to it. This content constantly

¹¹⁸ La riflessivita'

¹¹⁹ Sub specie materialitatis

reaffirms the “deficiency”, because it reaches consciousness, warped by the wanting¹²⁰ perception process. Such is man’s ordinary condition: nature rules the individual soul regardless of the latter’s creed, dialectics and vocation. And where nature rules man, spirit is excluded. By “nature”, we obviously mean not only what nature is in its elementary state, as an etheric-physical category, but the result of an ego-sentient footprint related to the etheric-physical body, which can be envisaged as the “fall’s” footprint, or as “luciferic seduction”, following which the Eden, lost as interiority, becomes external world, opposed to man.

In the end, what fills the soul and seizes inner life is not nature in its pure form, being, or world, but transformed appearance, adapted to a fictitious condition of knowledge, according to the “sentient necessity” that is at once “thirst for life” and obtuse attempt to become individual. At the same time, it ought to be noted that this passive acceptance of nature’s extroversion and related pervasiveness renders the *I*’s authentic relationship with what appears as nature impossible. Thus, “things”, “facts” and alternating daily vicissitudes penetrate conscience as reality, without in fact being reality; at the same time, this type of conscience gives rise to the misunderstanding of lending a foundation—systematically destined to crumble—to a world that in reality doesn’t exist, but that—were it recognized as appearance—could act as symbol of the liberating experience.

Man’s Spirit fails to experience things, facts and world history; it endures processes that, in their seemingly autonomous character¹²¹, take hold as “things”, “facts” “circumstances”: as such, they are reflected and coordinated—and even utilized to provide an organic structure for Science and Culture. In essence, nature rules man and man can’t oppose this rule, except by the sole possibility of autonomy: abstract thought. But this discursive thought, in addition to failing to grasp the meaning of its own process, fails—because of its limitation—to affect vital power, mental processes, emotions and instincts: grasping that meaning would indeed be the initial step toward an inner overcoming of its own mediation. The lack of means to find again the spiritual, dynamic element within

¹²⁰ De-ficere

¹²¹ Aseita’

thought can explain why, even in the best, the possibility of courage and inner firmness may fade, when faced with anguish, fear, and inner dissolution, as inevitable expressions of the soul's unconscious passivity with respect to nature's processes.

Anguish smolders under the surface of abstract thinking, as long as the principle from which thought arises, is barred from its own inner core. Indeed, the ordinary act of conscience is only possible to the extent that it destroys etheric forces: where abstract thought rises, life is quashed; and where a vital process takes place, thinking is not possible. In the point where thought rises, the body's vital power must cease and the sensible content undergo an alteration: pure spiritual power is arrested by vital processes whose nature is indeed organized by the Spirit, but no longer has direct correlation with it. Thus, nature stands opposite to the Spirit; only when nature is annihilated can the Spirit flow. Conscience is born from the clash of spirit and life: life's destruction will be necessary for as long as conscience requires corporeal support; as a consequence, life fails to have that intensive correlation with the Spirit through which it can become its inalienable garb: an adamantine body, or "body of glory" which will one day rise from overcoming the need to sacrifice Life for the birth of conscience.

Where vital power and sensible echo of the world come to the fore, pure spiritual activity is excluded. Representation arises as correlation between de-spiritualized sensible content—devitalized, or become external to its inner form—and brain-bound conscience. In essence, through the activity of representation—the soul's provisional correlation with the external world—sensible contents are deprived of their inner dynamic element, their etheric being; not because the latter disappears, but because it's overwhelmed by extra-personal powers hostile to man, and constantly active in him. These powers have a free hand in the psyche and even rule sensation, through abstract representation, i.e., the antecedent and consequence of abstract thought.

For this reason, as long as nature is bound to the brain, its processes reverberate within the soul, through the central nervous system: they tend to persist indefinitely in the human being, drawing nourishment from tainted soul powers. This is possible to the extent that the spiritual element is adsorbed in a depotentiated form by those conscious powers that rise as opposition to "nature". Conscious powers are themselves maneuvered

in depth by nature, even as they have arisen as opposition to it, to the extent that they refuse to recognize themselves outside this opposition. We will not belabor the point that pure willpower, an essentially spiritual entity, summoned up by man for his existential needs, self-affirmation, and individuality's inner form, is bound to fall into the sphere of instincts and reemerge against the Spirit as reinforced nature or instinctive individual power. This gives rise to the image of present-day man, focused on affirmation of personality, but purposeless and innocent of deeper motivations in his willpower. For this man, the urgent remedy would be an honest self-assessment, buoyed by an understanding of the alteration of his being's original forces: understanding that, through willpower, he squanders pure forces of being; through feeling, he tears asunder the secret fabric of universal rhythms; and through thought, he loses the *I* and world's reality: a picture that he can't possibly draw from the current type of knowledge, whose detrimental characters give rise to it.

As discussed in Chapter I and II, self-knowledge begins to be realized by unshackling the entity of thought¹²², provided that it isn't an illusory, rational or traditional reaction, an image of the self, conditioned by a deep necessity to remain what one is; and that it rises as a consequence of being able to step outside or above the self, i.e., outside that "personalized" nature that is generally mistaken for the self. This unshackling presents an opportunity for the *I* to experience itself beyond the identification in which it construes itself. Through pure thought, it can be discovered that the "*I*'s" self-perception never occurs in ordinary life: when man believes to witness manifestations of his *I*, in reality he refers to "admixtures" or "contaminations" of the *I* with psychic functions, of an intellectual, emotional, or willful kind: man doesn't possess the *I*, but different forms of assent to what nature demands of the *I*.

Any time the *I* believes to be active, it's such in relation to an object. The object gives the *I* a sense of existing for something: wherever perception, sensation and thought are active in relation to an object, there's only reflected *I* life. Ultimately, this virtual *I* life can't seize the being, can't effectively penetrate the world. As long as the *I* expects

¹²² L'essere del pensiero

the motivation of its being to arise from an exterior or interior mediation, it's neither the *I* it opines, nor the one it aspires to be: it's author, subject—all the while asking something else to support his being author or subject.

In reality, the *I* owes its birth as finite, individual *I* to the objective contraposition of an exterior world, fallen into matter, and therefore into a being-unto-itself¹²³ with which it clashes. Man must break loose from the embryonic conditions of this birth: he is not just the shell that enabled this birth. He must find his origin and foundation not in the “shell”, but in himself. To be born, he stammered about a material, physical, rational, scientifically interpretable reality. This must no longer prevent him from growing to realize reality's provisional nature with regard to the element that, in him, rules and extinguishes it. The provisional nature of its “appearance” is a means to the *I*'s manifestation. Moreover, no science is possible without the relationship of an aware *I* with the world, observed not as projection of an *I* unconsciously active in it, but as a stage in which transcendent reality—no longer transcendent, in fact—begins to unfold as the very *I*-foundation and carries with it, as one of its lesser forms of manifestation, the physical appearance on which science would like to base its account of the universe.

The *I*'s task is self-experience: its authentic being and relationship with existence, which can only exist in relation to the being. Before this self-experience, being, knowledge, and existence are dialectic themes, excuses for an endless, discursive or emotional quibbling, or for a philosophy that, after idealism's last pronouncements, has nothing left to say. Any further “pronouncement”¹²⁴ is backtracking, involution, hair-splitting, obscure philosophy: abstract demons and demonic abstractness. We exhausted all discursive possibilities, only to see them resurface more refined and multiply in a dialectic, critical, esthetic inflation, such that anybody who cares can become a respected author, parroting a most elaborate, repetitive, terribly perspicacious hearsay that is able to explain everything, reduce everything to representations and arguments, without concretely grasping anything.

¹²³ Aseita'

¹²⁴ Dire

The *I*'s self-experience is the present's yet unrecognized possibility: because for now the *I* is always active in regard to something other-than-self. It's essential to consider that the *I*, while virtually at the center of everything, knows nothing about itself, because it can only know itself in relation to something else. And one can discover that the "other" is always "nature" and—as such—rules man in ordinary conditions. A path to the being's authentic experience can only be disclosed then by the *I*-experience: it begins by giving the investigator a chance to experience the initial inner motion—the only one possible—as "sense-free thought", through the technique of concentration and meditation, practiced according to non-traditional methods: because the traditional ones—as we will never tire of reminding our reader—were directed to a human type, whose constitution had not yet descended to the level of rationality and utter dependence of the soul life from the nervous system. The expression "sense-free thought" would have had no meaning for the spiritual investigator of old, because his thought, while linked to the sensible world, did not depend on it: it could act in him, drawing directly from the supersensible sphere, where it was one with the powers of will and feeling. The technique of *pratyahara*, discussed in Chapter I, used to work because the possibility was already present, and needed only to be implemented: man could solve sensation in the inner element. In contrast, the act of "sense-free thought" can be realized as inner victory against an almost constitutional impossibility: the limit of abstract thought and self-contained sensible perception: a limit that must be overcome every time by strenuous effort, because it harbors nature's resistance.

In "sense-free thought", the investigator begins to experience the "dissolution" of sensible appearances: nature becomes extinct and its paths are now retraced in a reverse direction by the activity of freed thought. This activity has the power to extinguish psychic, sentient and instinctive formations, whose ramifications empower nature to seize the *I*: nature's extinction makes way for the transforming *I*-action. Here begins the *I*'s real self-experience. Indeed, the power acting in concentration and meditation—according to the method demanded by present-day Initiation—is drawn from the *I*'s depths, and not from the domain in which the *I*'s currents have already been sullied and become "nature".

Man will discover that the *I*'s depths are the very foundation of what reveals itself as nature, through perceptions metamorphosed by thought. Thus, in the initial self-experience sparked by freed thought, the *I* experiences the world's essence.

Knowledge that acquires this transforming power¹²⁵ gives man the opportunity to become an individual within; it's no longer the staging ground of rational thought, but thought enlivened by a reawakened harmony with "pure feeling" and "pure willpower". A more radical sense of *I* is born, unbound from the ego's ordinary tensions: it draws from an unseen foundation that stands beyond everything, and oversees the conversion of the vision. It's a rotation around one's axis; an inner unshackling that can never be mediated by ordinary conscience, as the latter embodies the condition that has to be so disenchanting. It's a "conversion" of knowledge, in a concrete sense, to the extent that it eliminates the luciferic "footprint" required for the origin of knowledge: the real consequence of the mythically represented "luciferic seduction". The dissolution of nature's foundations within the soul is indeed the beginning of an "upending" of vision: in essence, it restores the meaning of a process that was already upended. It begins by retracing the stream of thought in the experience of "sense-free thought". Ordinary thought becomes reversible and merges, as it were, into its own wellspring. The first moment of the act of thinking becomes the *I*'s objective hold, or support.

At this level, the disciple can experience as perception the occult sense of ancient sagas and mythical images: the possibility of a transcendent vision of man's history. This knowledge can be considered the first experience of the Grail's hidden sense: it doesn't mean that man has to set out from a notion of or faith in the Grail myth; but only that, at some point, man discovers the "path"—which is no "ordinary path", but the "path of paths"—as the Grail's path: summarizing for man all paths to "reintegration". Man can set out without the Grail's intuition, ignore it indeed; but those who probe the limits of individuality will inevitably meet its mystery. It ought to be clear that this is not a "mindset" specific to a certain vocation, but a transcendent, and thus univocal achievement, that can be reached regardless of one's creed. The Grail leads to Initiation, but Initiation allows the contemplation of the Grail.

¹²⁵ Conoscenza trasformatrice

Lest the vision be tainted and slide into the subconscious, the disciple must summon an original willpower to provide a foundation of stability before the resurgent psychic formations rooted in nature, including those that don a mystical or spiritualistic garb to imitate the Supersensible. Temperament has a constant ability to resurface and creep into the liberating experience, dampening the ability to discriminate and the will toward the absolute¹²⁶, by way of some sort of “metaphysical satisfaction” due to the egotistic use of the first forms of arising knowledge¹²⁷. At the same time, a watchful insistence in reproducing the inner motion’s initial purity is necessary to maintain the experience’s inner climate and shield its emerging contents against confusion and orgasm.

The transformation discussed herein requires the cooperation of high-tenor courage and is essentially a reversal of inner life polarities, even as the rhythm and discharge of ordinary duties remain unchanged. The development of that same courage is “foisted upon” certain natures in a less transparent and conscious form, through ordinary life’s harsh and wearying trials, whose meaning is rarely grasped.

He who understands the opus’ sacral sense, freeing it from any connection with human or worldly ends, and is able to live—as a restoring nourishment—the idea that the opus is not for him, but for the Divine; not for the ego, but for its annihilation; not to exalt life’s appearances, but to behold the mystery of death; he can grasp the sense of changing polarities, or “upending of vision”, or “displacement of lights”. It’s a crucial phase of initiate reintegration, because the resurgence of ancient nature, in forms that appear to be overwhelming, will not cease, so long as man falls short of reaching, through suffering and by virtue of intrepid willpower, the root from which they are nursed: the *I*’s power directed against the *I*. One can then learn that these powers are real, as motions of forces, while the powers of anguish, angst, or fear that they disguise melt away as soon as the Power is experienced: which is motion of the experiencing *I*. From it, perception is immediately translated into knowledge.

¹²⁶ Volonta’ di assoluto

¹²⁷ Le prime forme della conoscenza

Next to the practice that liberates the “thought-power”, additional practices described in the referenced work¹²⁸ are to be nurtured, such as the retrospective vision of the day’s events and the objective, dispassionate contemplation of one’s life—done as if one were an outsider—as well as the power to live, as one’s own, feelings that rise in others with strong connotations.

To extinguish nature, lest its lesser demands reemerge by way of existential needs despite the discipline, it’s useful to practice the technique by which sensation’s inner values are roused. As we discussed in Chapter IV, man must practice seizing the inner resonance intrinsic to every perception and belonging to it, diversifying it from others, because every perception is like a note with its own significance.

This practice must not alter perception’s spontaneity; indeed, it aims to eschew the alteration of its purity, insofar as pleasure and sorrow, desire and revulsion, reawakening of reminiscences and feelings are inadvertently mixed up with its original content. Man ought to educate himself to be present with a silent consciousness to the act of perception, lest its initially imperceptible, spiritual content be lost; a content that summarizes the very essence of the physical world experience. It’s a wholly independent element from sensation, even as it presents itself through it.

This content, usually lost to conscience, is perceived by virtue of adequate attention and patient wait. It must be separated from perception itself by an ability to catch it with lucid calm; next to every perception, one can dwell on its characteristic echo and focus attention on it. This means to summon up an active sensibility for the occult language of creation in the soul, and extend this dynamic discernment to the point where the sentient soul continuously alters sensation, preventing contact between pure conscience and the inner element of sensation: inner element, whose perception alone can raise sensible experience from the level of an animal response, clad as it may be in representation and concept.

Contemplation of nature’s forms, shapes and colors becomes a transfiguring experience. In order to become conscious of the instinctive element that dampens the

¹²⁸ Steiner’s work

inner resonance—which occurs anyway, regardless of whether it's perceived—it's useful, for example, to pay attention to a flavor, so as to separate the extra-sensible element that makes it pleasurable from its sensible wrap. This pleasure is in reality a spiritual fact that fails to be experienced as such and becomes alteration of the pure vital element. The alteration will eventually give rise to unpleasant consequences; whereas, having been experienced from a super-sensible perspective, it constitutes the real sensible experience: that can never be had spontaneously, and must be willed in its hidden reality. It's the physical entity's spiritual value, unshackled from its corporeal vehicle and, as such, the soul's nourishment of knowledge.

Lest sensation become exhausted in its animal process and translated in psychological value, man must behold it or be present to it with the *I*. It will spontaneously give rise to an unusual content for conscience. Having mastered the practice, man can experience this content when sensation arises, but can also prepare or implement it by a re-elaboration of certain sensations after the fact: a contemplative re-elaboration, demanding inner quiet in the beholder, along with dynamic participation to the recalled sensation's content.

Given its retroactive effectiveness, this practice becomes vastly relevant as its range is broadened by recalling elements that—as past sensory experience—bind inner life to a set of personal reactions, and thus to a “memory”-turned-limit, constraining the individual within the bounds of his limited psychic persona (the value of this memory is dealt with in Chapter V). By freeing the existing, unperceived spiritual element from the recalled experience's substance, not only can man acquire a real sense of his past, but also transform it, by reshaping his history—stratified or condensed in his basal psychic constitution—according to an immanent and objectively renewed vision. It's an undertaking to reawaken and cut down to size mnemonic material; it can be directed, according to suggestions arising from self-observation, to characteristic experiences of certain periods of one's life. Man can now seize their inner meaning, which until now failed to be disclosed; a meaning that, while related to past history, becomes current content, present memory modifying a past perspective: an act that, far from conditioning the *I*, allows it to manifest.

Sensation's re-elaboration is the more effectively carried out, the more man masters concentration, pure observation, and imagination. It provides a chance to reconnect in real time with every point in one's past, in a live and meaningful relationship—a true disenchantment of time; and build a foundation to practice extracting sensations' inner resonance, as they become experience.

This practice can later be extended to certain feelings and impulses, in order to free the supersensible substance that normally becomes tainted, as the *I*'s activity is combined with them: it gives rise to a different form of self-knowledge, in stark contrast to the usual one—transient and crass—elicited by immediate impressions, over which ordinary conscience holds no sway.

In reality, something unexpected and awe-inspiring moves toward man from the physical world: the Spirit streams forth toward him from sensible experience. He, who in calm and inner clarity, beholds and listens to the world, can find again the Eternal in it, and in himself. “The light shineth in darkness”: this discovery he makes, shorn of wanton relapses into faith, as experience of spiritual substance, temporarily clad in sensory perceptions. Spirit has truly been restored unto man: the Mystery of the Logos reveals itself. A gift of light-substance rises again for the free man of the present, bent on experiencing the sensible world from the standpoint of the fall, tied to a fragmentary, finite perception. The secret consists in letting the Spirit flow from senses by observing without egotism, assuming sensory perception not as an end, but as it truly is: a vehicle of the supersensible.

The gist of the practices described is to reestablish the relationship of reality between the *I* and the soul's dormant faculties, which in a transcendent sense are its own powers, so as to unshackle them from the inadvertent motion that turns them, in altered form and with inverted polarity, against the very “zone” from which they arise. This inversion is commonly mistaken for the real meaning of one's feelings, instincts, and opinions.

Man can understand the meaning of expressions such as “fall” or “luciferic seduction”, when he is able to catch the *quantum* of will that he constantly, inadvertently

directs against himself; whereby hardship, anguish, and tension, of which he would like to be rid, are nourished and held by the same impulse that strives to be rid of them. Man can at some point realize how attached he is to his ills, and how he deludes himself by combating them with the very means from which they draw sustenance. He will also realize that the condition tying to anguish, fear, and suffering—along with the inseparable alteration of knowledge—can't possibly be overcome without the mentioned unshackling: the possibility to invert the inner vision. It's essentially the possibility to invert the "reflected nature"¹²⁹ of soul life, due to abstract thought that normally nourishes it, by drawing itself from the brain—the insulator. Such reflected nature¹³⁰ renders exterior and lifeless what is metaphysically interior: in this sense, man possesses an inverted worldview and draws a Culture from it, whereas one ought to retrace the process in the opposite direction for a real culture to arise.

One can grasp at this point the meaning of the reversibility of thought, as beholden in the technique of "sense-free thought", as well as the aptitude necessary for the investigator to be able to intuit the Power's presence beyond the senses' screen. There is no use to any practice that fails to take stock of current man's predicament and convey—even within formulaic limits—knowledge of his present position vis-à-vis the Universe. By advising theoretical ways to overcome the intellectual limit, one can hardly unshackle thought from abstractness: the latter remains an irremediable evil, so long as one fails to act where it is engendered. Man can't get rid of thought, except by possessing its sense and process; seized objectively in its movement, with which man is usually identified, thought can become a vehicle leading to the source, whence it springs forth as power. The conversion of thought morphs then into conversion of faculties, and thus implies the possibility of resurrection of a rightful, or "penetrating vision".

Reintegration is no progress in an extrovert direction, derived from the physical world experience; it's rather a regression that disenchants powers: along this path, one

¹²⁹ Riflessivita'

¹³⁰ Riflessivita'

can only advance “backward”, from unshackling to unshackling, to the extent that one can behold what is to be unshackled.

Experiencing the reversibility of thought is not only an essential path to acquiring a different sense of time and space, but also the beginning of a disenchantment of inner life, bound to fictitious aspects of daily existence, and thus constantly misrepresenting its value: which fails to be known for what it secretly bears in view of liberating knowledge. As any self-assertion, delusion of greatness, and value become sterile extroversion on a plane where vision is unaware upending of supersensible reality, it becomes possible to sense how any impediment that appears to rise from without is indeed rising from within.

The object lesson is that sufferings, contrasts, and facts have no value in themselves, but only as outward projections necessary to the extra-terrestrial foundation of man's historical figure, along with his metaphysical components (karma): a power that he recognizes as existential foundation, a willpower imperceptible at the level of ordinary conscience, and thus transcendent, as long as he fails to behold it. But, once beholden, no matter how briefly, it reveals its meaning: the evil that appears to come from others is indeed our own. There is no culpability outside us. To blame the other is the error: any sorrow coming from the world is a request for an inner act of transforming knowledge that must necessarily be our task: a task that, were it to be realized, would cease to exact sorrow. In this sense, any hurt and suffering is help offered by the world, so that we may perceive and experience as resentment what is to be rectified in our nature.

This act seizes from without those who don't realize that the movement rises from within; projected out as facts, situations, and movements, it embodies for every individual the content of a “destiny”, whose fabric flows as profound willpower. It's his own willpower, but foisted upon him—unrecognized, alien, and yet immanent—with the power of a necessity that can be recognized as pre-natal in origin. It's indeed what the *I* wants for itself in a given incarnation, and occasionally in view of future tasks as well, based on one's real history: whose concreteness and legitimacy—outside the supine acceptance of their seemingly fateful character—can only arise from the inner act of freedom, whereby man ceases to fruitlessly endure or oppose his karma, and becomes its cooperator. Thus, seizing the meaning of karma means to be able to see how it acts from

the depths of willpower, from outside space and time, to be projected out as reflected exteriority, i.e., as appearance that, seized in its immediacy, can only be misleading.

In this reverse motion of willpower that becomes destiny and history, there is no possibility of knowledge short of *metanoia*, or conversion, of thought currently committed to the present culture, worldview, and daily experience. Reflected thinking, when correctly thought, can seize the meaning of karma, but fails to penetrate its plot. It's akin to attempting to catch an object with a movement perceived through a double mirror, whereby one ends up moving in the opposite direction: one has the illusion to be advancing, while really backtracking, and vice versa.

From what has been said, one can construe the task to be single-mindedly pursued: to sense the incipient birth of the *I*'s radical strength, the Savior's immanent presence. Man must endeavor to free the essence that already exists, by acknowledging nature as the support to be left behind, even though it shapes conscience's initial move. The initial unshackling is thus resolution of the abstractness of thought, which will later become functional transformation of the support from which we draw abstractness: independence from nature that allows it to resonate according to its original essence¹³¹. Resonance is exchanged for the reversal of vision (*paravritti*).

For the reversal of vision to occur, disenchantment must not arise from mystical or yogic methods, or from rehashed Taoist doctrines and Zen teachings. This useful material can be restored to its noble meaning by those who know already the disenchantment technique. The latter, on the other hand, is only possible as redemption of the individual principle, polarizing soul life in the opposition necessary to its form's expression. Self-annihilation—as suggested by traditional mystical methods—mortification of the ego, “void”, and all techniques aimed at eliminating the ego-principle with which life is identified—leading up to the crucial experience known as “initiate death”, from which man reemerges as *dvija*, or “twice born”—are in essence ways to escape the reversal of vision, or illusory vision, or ignorance (*avidya*). Even when constructively

¹³¹ *Insostanzialita'* –unsubstantiality

practiced, these techniques could at best rescue the initiate from the consequences of the inversion, but not solve it, because they failed to retrace the roots of its process.

Disenchanting the vision becomes only possible during the age in which reflected thought becomes the basis of self-conscious activity, i.e., when the *I* is born—discursive, intellectual and rational as it may be, but for this very reason unbound from its own thoughts, unconstrained to be what it is by any inspiration; uniquely mediated by a kind of thinking that, by virtue of its abstract and lifeless nature, fails to coerce it. It merely provides the *I* with self-awareness and allows it to think, unconstrained, about anything.

In this lack of constraints lies the liberty principle: before that, in truth, nothing exists. Past, history, nature, existence are relationships that the *I* finds already made, and as such coerce him, and by coercing him fail to manifest their essence, acting instead according to a necessity, assumed by man as “truth”, “tradition”, and “culture”; they succeed exclusively by acting through the ancient “zone” of the soul, which escapes the *I*-consciousness: because the *I*-life, even though virtually autonomous, is still ephemeral, resting on the abstractness of thought and being continuously confused with the sphere of feeling and will. It's possibility of freedom, not freedom. Possibility of freedom that can initially manifest as possibility of error, contradiction of the world's reality, and denial of the Divine.

Man's history is yet to unfold, as the newly born *I* is yet unaware of its birth. The danger is for man to use the *I*-power to bind himself ever more tightly to the element, for whose deliverance the *I*-power arose: which would be further “falling”. Man should now be aware of this danger. The new history, therefore, can't be initiated except by a minority of individuals, animated by sufficient inner autonomy to enable them to see the past—surviving as nature, costume, culture, even as avant-garde culture or sociology of the future—as man's veritable ailment, preventing him from rising as the world's organizing principle: because only when man rises as such, thanks to supersensible knowledge, can the past become his power for the present, breaking away from fixed, finite, inert forms, through which it's able, as past, to constrain man.

Initiation can't be a way to get rid of the being, but to assume it as such, insofar as one possesses its principle. Indeed, man tends to get rid of the being because he is caught up in it: he doesn't realize that any attempt to get rid of it, is simply another way of being. The task is not to turn to metaphysical experience as a way to get rid of the "fallen" element, eschew what has become nature, and part from what is bound to existence and daily happening; it's rather a conversion, or integration, of the power with which man is involved in the existence. Because the same power that shapes existence is originally ours, if one is able to retrace its foundation.

Disenchantment of vision and conversion of power are, indeed, the motion that returns to the *I* what is essentially its emanation. To assume it, beyond its appearance, is indeed the initial task of liberated thought. Next to the renovated perception, it summons the capacity to distinguish eternal from ephemeral, the courage to envisage the instability of a world on which man has conferred values that don't belong to it. This envisaging is initial restoration of world reality, or creation of a world that is yet to come.

VII. The food of resurrection. Overcoming death

Recognizing itself in the world essence, the *I* finds the world again in the experience of the self. Yet, it isn't pure identity with the self, crowning achievement of Initiation that resolves the individual condition, even as it protects the integrity of the acquired individual form: in light of which man's history unfolds. Extreme individualization acquires, at a certain point, an altogether different meaning than becoming bound to nature, the process of ordinary individualism: its direction is opposite to nature's, insofar as the latter is capable of spawning an ego that lives the correlation for its own ends, thus hindering the *I*'s spiritual birth. This is the *I*'s moment of self-experience in its pure intellectual domain, i.e., metaphysical inspiration. The experience does indeed become possible inasmuch as the "*I*"—as thus far conceived—can be relinquished and somehow extinguished, while the power of individuality, brought about by its earthly garb—the provisional *I*—lingers on as targeted direction of the higher Self, and can be sustained independently of it. Now does man begin to be an *I*.

What is now required is the ability to dissociate the soul faculties from nature's processes, along with a "pure perception" of the element that normally conjures up the immediate reaction of the sentient-vital entity as pleasure or sorrow. No longer confined to experiencing its own reaction that, by overwhelming it without respite, is mistaken for reality, the *I* can avail itself of powers that were previously frittered away in this automatic response to achieve a "direct" perception. Having been freed from the necessity to support the *I*'s fictitious sensible self-perception, these powers rise again as creative faculties,. It's the kind of liberating technique described in chapters IV and V. Transmutation corresponds to the state of inspired conscience (*buddhi*), in its ability to evoke a novel correlation; it implies the transparency of feeling and will, and thus an ability to behold beings, creatures, things, and events without lust or aversion, unaffected by a deceitful, self-validated and self-sufficient finiteness. Thus, solar individual might begin to act on the entities' solar element.

A feeling worthy of being called “love of the world” doesn’t arise wantonly, as spontaneous sentiment, mystical duty or humanitarian prescription, but rather as a consequence of knowledge-turned-reality: an understanding truly born from within beings and things. A transparent correlation takes place, drawing from the “other’s” essence, and rising simultaneously in him. Not much can be said about this “love”, except that, drawn from the intimacy of beings, according to a movement opposite to the one commonly experienced as ordinary relationship, it’s a transcendence wholly free of necessity, most individual and yet not personal; nothing that goes by the same name in daily experience does in fact match it. In this respect, one ought to emphasize that any presumption to “love thy neighbor” can be recognized as naïve and boastful, until knowledge allows man to recognize in himself the roots of aversion for anything that falls outside the realm of self-interest.

This ability to behold is accorded by the Spiritual world to those who deserve it; at a certain point, it becomes faculty of transfiguring vision, provided that man is sufficiently unshackled from his own nature to behold its radical rot: an experience that implies the ability to get past imaginative conscience, which is only valid as a transition state toward the pure spiritual experience. Imaginative conscience is the possibility of the first super-individual experience, in which supersensible shapes are necessarily intertwined with formal echoes of the sensible world.

Man must have acquired steadfastness and independence from customary pretensions, to behold the depths of his “wicked nature” without being upset: deviousness, hatred, love of self, fear, and envy rule from the depths of their “site” with a power that, revealed, manifests an irresistible character, almost an absolute, seemingly unopposed rule. Yet, “beholding” it, is the principle of overcoming it. It begins with the practice of pure perception, with the ability to behold thoughts: it’s a liberating act, because it lets man recognize what he is not.

Ordinary man would not have sufficient strength to bear this sight, and is thus spared the vision: he must delude himself about virtues and moral principles that reassure and give him a sense of good conscience, so that he can nimbly move about the existence,

which he assumes to be reality. The task of ascetic education is to mold man, to endow him with sufficient inner poise to withstand, at a certain point, the vision of this hitherto unsuspected reality. Beholding this sight frees faculties and links them to the beholder's inner center: through the *I*, conscience is extended to a reality with which it was earlier confused, as its phenomenological expression.

The vision, to the extent that it is possible, is liberating and foreordained, provided that the necessary conditions are met: it's the harbinger of "being free of evil", and in this sense its positive consequences apply to all humankind, beyond the individual limit. The discovery of one's own radical wickedness and wild self-attachment prompt, along with self-knowledge, humility—because one knows that he's still beholden to that reality—as well as compassion for other beings, unaware of their predicament: real humility and compassion, and not those summoned up in order to feel better. Indeed, prior to the experience of this radical condition of human nature, it's impossible to have real compassion, tolerance for other people's mistakes, and understanding for the isolation of other beings.

He who has this experience, beholds a reality incomprehensible to those who are so entangled with it as to be inseparable from it, because it's their reason for being and inalienable support: ordinary man's condition, but also the spiritual researcher's, up to the threshold of the penetrating vision, next to which stands watch the entity known to Initiates as Guardian of the Threshold.

We have shown the way to a relationship with the "other" that is independent of necessity. We must hasten to add that—similar to the experience of the "vision of the self"—there are no human beings whose inner constitution is so firm and transparent to be able to behold the transcendent and beatifying power of supersensible love. The same love, which in the sensible world is power to transform the human—in those rare instances when it operates for divine design—can gradually nourish a secret contemplation by the disciple of Initiation: light of celestial depths, wholly distinct from what moves sentimental people as humanistic rhetoric or cheap charity. Until feeling is released from its vital bonds by virtue of "pure thinking", it might well bear impulses of goodness and

altruism as dispositions, but it's bound to remain expression of nature, subordinated to the activity of senses and, thus, voluble and obtuse within its limit, ever poised to find logical explanations for its contradictory swings.

Liberating knowledge changes the *I*'s relationship with the world, with moral and social consequences mediated by the inner process of external events. "Pure thought" is constantly called upon. But in the daily comparison with various forms of contemporary Spiritualism, the "path of thought" engenders all kinds of objections, as well as a polemic that, while availing itself of thought for its expression, rejects the notion that thinking bears any relationship with reality: a position that can be recognized as belonging not to the sphere of thinking, but to less conscious psychic zones. It's a typical case of nature's exploitation of thought, even as it encourages the belief—at times in philosophical or esoteric form—that thought is devoid of inner life, and can't stand on its own except to enshrine vital, sub-conscious, or metaphysical contents. According to this view, it would be important to get rid of thought, while it would be a mistake, along the initiate path, to cultivate a discipline of thought, naïvely believing that thought is a kind of limit which, recognized (by way of thinking, obviously), can be easily transcended. It's a naïve position, denoting lack of real thought—of the very kind, that one ought to first master in order to begin to conceive getting rid of it. Getting rid of thought, the result of a superior experience of thought, is mistaken for its prerequisite.

We have seen that the "path of thought" leads to the vision of a fully articulated universality, from which thoughts arise and flow through the human mind¹³², becoming lifeless in the process. But thinking itself will show the path to be retraced in order to experience this universality: the only experience that can, at some point, render independent from provisional and subjective thought—not by aiming directly to it, which would be an inadvertent relapse into provisional thinking, while dreaming of "detachment" and "void" that are just thoughts—but because experiencing the thought-power grants the possibility to overcome the limit of reflected thought.

¹³² Mentale umano

Getting rid of thoughts can't be a starting point, but can be the goal: it means to be an *I* independent of thought support, by seizing the power that used to guide their flow. According to those who naïvely dismiss the “path of thought”, thinking would be naught, or rather reflected reality¹³³, abstraction, name. But they fail to explain what bestows on it the power to be reflected reality, abstraction, or name; i.e., form of a different individual domain's content that could never take shape on its own, but only by misappropriating a form that belongs to the sphere where form is value, mediation and expression.

Urges, feelings and motions of the sentient or affective soul can be projected as values, so long as they are disguised as mental images or thoughts, i.e., to the extent that they reverberate through the central nervous system, and in so doing coax the *I* into identifying with them and manage to become specific urges or feelings. We have shown that the initial possibility to control feelings and impulses is by forestalling their translation into thoughts. It's fundamental to forsake thoughts that have been recognized as invalid. In contrast, “sense-free thought” unshackles conscience from the cerebral system, thus allowing it to seize feelings and impulses before they are projected into a site in the head, where they are absorbed by the *I* as its own contents.

Some speculate about the inessentiality of thought and the need to get rid of it as part of an inner discipline; they view it as abstract rationality: a form, to be shunned or dismissed, of other peoples' contents. In reality, they deprive themselves of the possibility to overcome the psychic sphere, giving up the experience of thought as a force in its own right, namely the force of thought-form perceptible as content in itself: the first real motion toward the supersensible. They refer to metaphysical realities beyond thought and to super-individual achievements that can only be conceived by thought, and thus remain unreachable, either through the form in which one thinks about them, or through a presumed magical or yogic act, in which they believe to proceed from the “mental” and “rational” to the “real” and “supra-rational”, while it's inevitably mired in the confines of nature, from which thought has not freed itself, because it's unaware of its shackles, and thus of the possibility of becoming unshackled.

¹³³ Riflesso

As long as thought is shackled, soul life remains inadvertently conditioned by nature, and there can't be a breakthrough from space to pure space, from mobility to pure mobility, or motion without space, from time to pure time: the "ghost" of space, just as the "specter" of time, continue to be fed by abstract thought, and can't be done away with by pushing them aside in the hope to thus overcome them, or by way of mystical or ritual operations, irremediably confined to the subjective domain and mistaken for metaphysical operations. Their level is irredeemably mediumistic.

Man is necessarily unaware of being confined within abstractness and nature, because this confinement lacks the distinguishing feature of conscience: "pure thought" or "pure intellectual activity", uniquely capable of discerning subjective from extra-subjective, individual from super-individual. Thus, certain subjective, sub-conscious operations, prone to being projected as visions and magical sensations, embolden their operators to consider themselves initiates.

There's no possibility to experience the idea of space and the essence of time without an effective liberation of thought from the abstract-representative tension drawn from spatial-temporal correlations, continuously projected by the senses onto the world. The path to eternity is barred to a thinking activity¹³⁴ shaped by spatial features, and shorn of a relationship with space-weaving, non-spatial powers; for the same reason why thought fails to experience its form's texture as one of pure time: which is no philosophical notion, but actual experience arising from a qualitative breakthrough. Through it, time becomes reversible: not as superficial¹³⁵ upending of a process conceived as reminiscence, next to the sensation of the present and the image of the future; but as experience of the simultaneous form of these three aspects of time—past, present and future—free of determination and yet containing all determinations, underpinning the real, or universal history of man: the *Akashic Record*, *Akasha* being the supersensible support to its unfolding.

Thus, space is the non-space that can be experienced as willpower, within a process in which the powers of motion are in a free state and simultaneously home in on planes of

¹³⁴ Rappresentare

¹³⁵ Esterioristico

sensible petrification. By this acts of will, it¹³⁶ disguises itself as physical space: its immediate form is captured in the image of the thunderbolt, in which one can experience, as in a real symbol, the breakthrough from pure motion without space to tridimensional space. “Pure spaceless motion, disguised as space in the thunderbolt.” The spatial-temporal experience rises as univocal perception, because metaphysical essences corresponding to space and time coincide with it, as does the thought-power that, unshackled from rational occurrences, can be experienced as cosmic garb of a pure metaphysical being, woven into spiritual space and time. This gamut of perceptions can begin with the experience of thought-freed-from-senses, which is abstract thought, not dismissed and alienated, but converted; it’s the pure *I*’s birth, to the extent that the *I* spawns its own world in and by itself. But to this end, thought must be converted time and again: bound each time to a finite content to be each time freed: according to an exchange between the world of senses and Spirit, between Heavens and Earth.

Dismissing the transcendental reality of thought and the objective strength of its pre-dialectic moment can be recognized as the power of nature. This power enslaves thought by rendering it unaware of being nature, because realizing it would be an act of thought, at least formally independent of nature. This independence is continuously lost in abstract thought, but its constant possibility begets the freedom principle.

According to Spiritual Science, thought is—in the mental sphere—the lesser correlation with higher states of consciousness (*manas, buddhi, atman*). The abstractness of thought is deprivation of reality, the reflected state: it’s also, nonetheless, initial correlation with those three worlds. Accord with them or lack thereof depends on the shape of thought, because the fabric of thought is their emanation. Content, which is ultimate form, can be at odds with the form that envelops it. In other words, one can think falsehoods, but the subtle dynamism that engenders them is true: it can be bent or altered, in its abstractness, to lend falsehood a veneer of truth. This means that man can retrace thinking as reality or supersensible life through any form of thought; but also that thought can be used to deny or belie the system of supersensible forces from which it emanates: a

¹³⁶ It’s unclear whether it’s referred to willpower or space

contradiction that cuts man off from the flow of universal reality, in that he has been afforded the free use of thought.

Any thought moves simultaneously in the three worlds: spiritual, soul and physical; any “rightful thinking” is an edifying purveyor of light unto the world, whereas any thought that doesn’t correspond to reality disrupts the accord with the Cosmos and its supersensible principles, even as it continues to be drawn from them in an inverse and reflected manner, thus feeding error in the world. On the physical plane, thought is essentially free: by inadvertently mediating nature, it denies its own freedom, which is therefore manifested as freedom to deny itself: by getting to know its nature—the path of “sense-free thought”, it lays the foundation of freedom: it enacts freedom as free imagination and pure action. This is the newly found accord with the metaphysical dimensions (*manas, buddhi, atman*): by which we don’t mean their realization, but a mental relationship with them, thanks to the initial experience of freedom. The latter is no arbitrariness because—as we have seen—even when viewed as a license to act at one’s will, one must look no further than that willpower’s origin to inevitably find nature again.

Man must not lose track of the will’s real subject: a pure Subject that can’t possibly be ensnared in sorting out problems or alternatives of whether to do or not do as it pleases. By taking this as a “measure” of freedom, man renounces the element of freedom intrinsic to thought and remains beholden to the necessity of external confirmation, i.e., to a sphere in which prescription rules, insofar as it embodies a contrast with provisional values or aspects of being, which should not be actively opposed, or viewed as demanding self-assertion as contraposition, but only as a test of the burgeoning powers.

Arbitrariness is nature asserting itself, and being able to, by way of the reflected *I*. It’s the principle of confusion, whereby man mistakes for freedom his sub-conscious inadequacy before certain duties and demands for forthrightness that leads to an amoral, exclusivist posture, beyond a “good” and “evil”, whose necessity, instead, rules unchecked in subtle ways—or else man would not endure this bondage. Faced with life’s predicaments, man ends up philosophically casting a state of necessity as self-initiative and mistaking it for expression of freedom. Arbitrariness can’t be overcome by casting as a rule, “to be able to afford anything, which one might just as well live without”: this

ought to be measure of independence from attachment, i.e., of the *I*'s autonomy, which instead is metaphysically quashed by the resulting action: whose worth is measured according to external rules. Any rule is limitation of the subject, who relies on rules to the extent that it fails to recognize and realize ideal principles¹³⁷ in itself, according to a limitless variation of forms, i.e., by constantly renewing its essence, as required by its conduct. Rules are necessary, so long as they reflect a metaphysical principle, and their determination can prevent mistakes for ordinary man. But in the case mentioned above, the rule is vouched for by the subject's personal reaction, rather than being drawn from a metaphysical principle. The subject, however, is neither free nor aware of the consequences of its action on others: consequences that, in their inevitable and unimpeachable logic, are the real measure of its freedom, ignored though as they may be.

Free action is truly moral, and action is free when independent of nature: its content is drawn from the sphere where pure thinking arises, springing forth as thought from the world's objective reality. Man's action represents, in this sense, what is spiritually required of the other, dependent not on us, but on the other: it is free, because dependent not on personal drives and ego, but on the other's needs, intuited as the essence to which he tends, by impersonally recognizing it through pure thought. Action then truly becomes an act of love and bears consequences not only for the individual, but also for the world; such that what he can afford, even if he could live without it, will have destructive consequences for the world and for him, regardless of his personal connection with the other, if torn asunder from inner freedom.

Any affirmation of freedom is such as long as it isn't prompted by the ego, i.e., by nature, but by something in which the ego has been silenced: the other's value is then not prior measure of being free, but its resulting sign. Man can only act toward the other as long as he is free, i.e., outside the ego state: any other relationship is a bond of nature, and not free. Duty and moral precept are necessary, but still act at the level of nature, whose expression must be kept in check through prescription, so long as the *I* is unable to act directly. At this level man seeks norms for his rightful action, which therefore is not yet his. But neither is arbitrariness, when mistaken for absoluteness, freedom from

¹³⁷ Principio ideale, rendered as plural to avoid confusion with the ensuing pronouns.

conditions, and autonomy: here the ego, incapable of overcoming the law's domain, wants to delude itself of being above the law by scoffing at it; but, lacking in itself the principle intrinsic to the law, he will be inevitably ruled by its process. And eventually the infraction will impose its consequences, in which law (*dharma*) reaffirms its power (*karma*).

As the first inner activity in which the *I* virtually recognizes itself as distinct from nature, rightful thinking is indicator of freedom. In its dialectic expression, this thought is active in the three worlds. Dialectics can't lead to the essence of the self, but can become its mental guise, expressing within discursive limits what couldn't be confined to them. And yet, it can do so in an attenuated and reflected form, such that its principle can be evoked by meditation, by summoning up its content in an inner act: which is then qualitatively similar to the fabric of thought that evokes it. The Spiritual element flows in a content enlivened by the same inner substance that confers form onto it.

The power of meditation can flow through the word. At some point, the word can be granted a new lease on life as resonance of the inner word: by reading out loud excerpts from Traditional texts or *mantrams* given by a teacher, or by the investigator himself, when inspired by an authentic poetic virtue, of a magical nature. However, it isn't a matter of magical formulas, impersonally active, but of a world of the word imbued with reawakened inner powers. Initially, it's mediated by reflected thought, whose reflex is always error, when embodying the level of necessity at which it manifests; but can also be steered to truly reflect the substance of reflected matter. In essence, concentration and mediation tend to reestablish the relationship between reflected thought and its light: which means that, at a certain point, the reflex is reabsorbed by the light that emanates it, and replaced by light itself; whereas, previously, it used to be necessary to the process of consciousness. As consequence, superior truths can be enshrined in thoughts and in their verbal expression, and live again in the soul of the man who pronounces those words and intensely lives those thoughts. By dwelling on a thought corresponding to cosmic reality, the meditating individual opens the way for transcendent powers to flow in him, and in the human conscience at large, because the

subjective limit is the same in all men. He now connects or establishes a communion with the universal within the individual, not by shunning individuality, but by keeping it at the center of the self: within the limit, a path has been laid for a superhuman element acting within the human.

Inner life is resurrected from its lowest level—the dialectic, reflected level—when it sets out from thought formulated according to powers of “knowledge”: its content is neither derived from nature, nor demanded by existential necessities. Drawn from the supersensible sphere, this thought conjures up freedom not only by being freely chosen through self-determination and willed beyond the mandate of ordinary life, but also because its animation calls forth an activity not driven by lust, and thus unshackles the soul from physical and psychic necessity. This content has been prepared by Masters of Knowledge who, having already trodden the path to freedom, can rouse it again. Man enlivens this content in the soul so that profound *I* powers, now called upon to nourish it and commonly involved in nature’s ordinary expression, are unshackled from the instinctive being. The practice of rightful thought imbues man with “cosmic thoughts”, gradually spawning the audacious idea that the human state can be overcome.

It’s commonly held that, with respect to morality and contrast between justice and injustice, the world has always been the same: in reality, the “historical era” most accessible to exterior culture, is indeed the “dark age” or *kali-yuga*, whose characters, from the third millennium B.C. have essentially remained unchanged. During this age, humankind is stripped of its connection with the super-human that had initially been upheld as reminiscence and yearning. Those who ignore the doctrine of the four ages, or fail to grasp the sense of holy texts, are rightfully inclined to think that mankind has been subject to error and decadence since its origins: whereas in the origins one can behold a superior human type, living in a “golden age”, whose reminiscence and nostalgia are cloaked in myths and symbols of remote traditions. The novel contribution of Spiritual Science, enshrined in “Wisdom-perennial”, is knowledge of the current possibility of a new cycle, paving the way for man to restore the “original state” in an individual and conscious manner. Every crisis and ferment of present civilization paves the way for this

new cycle that must be commenced under the aegis of freedom and, thus, may not necessarily occur, or may not take the form of an improvement over the present condition.

It's something that must be prepared from now, or else it will not happen. Decisive, in this sense, will be the action of the few, able to draw authentic inspiration from the opus of Rudolf Steiner, the Master of the New Times: whose name we shall mention in this page only, so that the reader can be free to make its own contact with a body of work, that has been tarred with all kinds of grievous misunderstandings and prejudices. It's an inevitable predicament, to the extent that even superior teachings share a discursive formulation as common dialectic denominator, on a level where all kinds of misleading comparisons are possible (it could hardly be different: prejudices and misunderstandings should be viewed as trials to be endured, given the decisiveness of the contact with this body of work for individual and collective destiny). Indeed, the sole teaching with a potential to help present-day man can be confused with superficially similar practices, devoid of real kinship with it; an artfully engendered confusion, whose precise intent is only effective, though, in those who are not determined to seek the truth.

The inner experience of the few who have been rightfully inspired and don't confine themselves to a dialectical doctrine, can jump-start the renewal of the human community, not as a lackadaisical salvation in view of a more comfortable enjoyment of well-being, but as orientation of the "conscious soul's" burgeoning powers, as meaning of hurdles and struggles, and unconditional motivation to overcome a dead world that stubbornly clings to the new one in order to confuse and paralyze its impulse. These very few must, above all, overcome their inner limit and break through: to this end, the Master of the New Times has bequeathed the teaching and established the initiate power.

Having the power doesn't suffice: one must be able to commit it. The power must be consecrated, in order to rise time and again as real power: only this aptitude upholds the living communion with the free men's Initiator, and thwarts his teaching's degradation into academic endeavor and sanctimonious bombast. It prevents the loss of what has been bequeathed: a danger that, unfortunately, appears not to have been avoided.

It's still possible that those called upon will fail to heed the call of freedom and venture instead down a "spiritual way" tenuously resembling the "way of the fathers", the "way of shadows" and not the "way of gods", because the choice is based on inner autonomy, and the decision can't be inspired by suggestions, inclinations or doctrinal preferences, but must arise exclusively from pure self-determination. This is the mystery of freedom: from it, can arise the unpredictable, the un-predetermined that doesn't have to follow an obligate path. This must serve as a warning of the responsibility befalling those who nowadays follow and advise on spiritual doctrines, and as an explanation of our insistence on the method that leads to supersensible experience, to the extent that it unshackles the powers of thought from the abstract form, in which they tend to belie thought's, and therefore Spirit's own laws.

Human nature must be overcome: only from this idea can spring forth morals that will restore the sense and value of man's being: morals issuing from knowledge, not sought for their own sake. What appears to have beginning and end, birth and demise, rebirth, disease and death, perennially stirred by yearning, passion and suffering, takes place within the limits of human nature. And is systematically reflected in a culture confined to this dark and desperate predicament; striving, within the forced narrows of these confines, for a transcendence and deliverance that will never become reality. This aspect of human nature is to be overcome, if the real man is to be realized. And now is the time, this is the occasion: which may not present itself again.

It's imperative that a superior confidence be instilled in man, a trust in the element that overcomes the ephemeral and without which the ephemeral could not be: the certainty that man can summon up the strength to overpower what temporarily enslaves and destroys him, to the extent that he identifies himself with an earthly existence viewed as greedy, labile and blind nature. Now is the moment, because the last echo of an ancient "direction" has been extinguished and something has begun anew; something that, even as its visage and meaning are still inscrutable, can be sensed in the urgency of the secret direction of contemporary events, and is already becoming history, albeit not under the sign of reality and knowledge, but of confusion and obscurity. This means that new

powers, corresponding to current man's knack for autonomy, are being squandered in obtusely destructive aptitudes: just as intellectual energies have been worn out by an uninterrupted dialectic tension, to support the contradictory forms of existence.

A higher power can be summoned up: one that man needs urgently, and that no human institution, culture or doctrine has been able to give him. We have shown in these pages that it's technically possible, through Spiritual Science, to find again the path to reality: a super-human reality. It isn't a question of empowering the human: that is the path of modern civilization, and is bound to fail, because man is not rooted in the domain where he becomes manifest, but in one that transcends it and whose rousing power, from its inception, can't but annihilate him, to the extent that he derives the sense of his value from the same domain, where the temporary and the mortal rise. We have somehow shown that in the current phase of his history, marked by the highest degree of autonomy—no matter how negatively expressed—man displays a power, entwined with inferior individuality, that can consciously reconnect him with his essence, if mediated by freedom. This task, even if realized by very few, can evoke the invisible canvas of a new life, a Cosmos that dawns as the ancient world is gradually torn asunder and sinks into oblivion. This event may appear impossible, as everything around has become so arid, woven in a logic that wants to minutely and acutely analyze every point of the being's surface, without in fact seizing its essence, which is the only entity and without which being is but appearance; and yet, it can become a possibility when sorrow seems to deprive us of the very foundation of life, and its attending logic.

When trials probe the limit of ordinary resistance; when anguish and fear grip the heart and freeze thought, man feels that only a higher virtue can restore autonomy and self-control, authoritatively turning the causes of anguish and fear into a matter of knowledge. This virtue has to become transforming experience, at least for the few, as a precondition to break down the wearying world of death, ignorance and superficiality as a decrepit shell, beyond any evasion and reward, whose intent is to leave untouched an evil gripping the entire human community.

Someone has to lead the way: it's no task for the many. What is needed is the impetus of the few who can overcome any human attachment, not by virtue of a doctrinal

or mystical evasion that leaves the hurdle unchanged, but by the sheer strength of knowledge, pressed into service against the hurdle and beyond the limit revealed by it: by virtue of consecration. Individual pretensions must be extinguished by the very strength of individuality. Every other “love” must recede before the love for this rebirth, such that no fascination, mundane lure, vanity, dialectics, or earthly ideals can derail the power of single-minded determination from its real task: which can’t be an earthly task, because the Earth, as it appears, is not reality. Its reality must be found again beyond its appearance. In this sense, the real Earth is still unknown.

The path of knowledge to which we intend to direct the reader is such that, assumed in its reality, i.e., to the extent that it is trodden upon and not simply studied, it can have far-reaching consequences: it all depends from those who recognize it. The limit imposed by the lability of human nature—let’s emphasize it again—can be overcome, not through the strength provided by nature, not by empowering the human element, but thanks to the element whereby, even when fully steeped in human nature, man doesn’t feel completely identical to it and can, to some extent, behold it: thanks, that is, to thought, manifest within the sensible order, but latently capable of being unshackled from it. Such power will then reveal itself as a mysterious spring of life, present in man as possibility and imperceptible to superficial conscience. A substance of life, the burgeoning germ of man’s entire history, whereby his past comes to an end: a gift and a possibility at once. A gift by Him who leads mankind, but not a free or fateful gift at that, because it can only be won by accepting freedom, as the act of freedom is the first flow of this substance of life. It first flows as thought, resurrected from abstract consumption; in this sense, it’s principle of resurrection from that state of death, in which man delusively lives. Life, or immortality, is spawned by thought that breaks free: the nourishment flowing from it can be recognized as the Holy Grail’s content.

Ordinary thought has the intrinsic potential to retrace its own process: a possibility to lucidly seize its process, not by thinking, but to the extent that man beholds it, in an instant-by-instant recreation of its wholeness, i.e., its a-temporality. Thought unshackles itself in nature, thus unshackling nature, to the extent that it takes full advantage of the act

of freedom and pure initiative developed to deal with nature. While beholding the substance of its own being—as opposed to the alienating thing, fact or sensation—thought flows in its own bed, homes its tension in on itself, thus acquiring again the life of its entity: and it's this pure entity that we refer to as substance of life, also called "Food of Resurrection".

It's present in thoughts that reflect the Supersensible, as is in the act of meditation and concentration. It's called "Food of Resurrection" because it lies outside conscience, to the extent that the latter is founded on animal existence and spatially- or temporally-limited experience; an experience confined to the limits of birth and death, and thus implying birth, disease and demise. It can become known, for moments at a time and by virtue of a mysterious transcendence, by those who probe the limits of anguish and suffering and, feeling themselves overwhelmed by the Spirit of devastation, experience a beginning of death: a moment in which nature reveals its extreme will to live. It's a death wish, a last ditch effort to keep the *I* at bay, such that the *I* believes to be on the verge of sinking into nothingness. Whereupon, like a flash of liberating lightning, the limit is lifted and the *I* animated of its real life: a fleeting animation, due to the flowing, for an instant, of the Food of Resurrection, or fare of the Grail. The germ of Resurrection requires the soil of death and annihilation to grow: for the initiate, this means ego's annihilation and death of the ephemeral, sacrifice of being into existence.

This is no fantasy. The Grail investigators teach that he who feeds off this substance, summons up a Principle of life eternal that persists as luminous vitality long after nature's support, at the end of this earthly journey, has been withdrawn: born in this world, it persists—identical—after Death, as the *I*'s adamantine garb. There are human beings, presently on earth, that have already been called upon to rise to the occasion: but, to the extent that self-knowledge is spawned within the mystery of freedom—that is, within the thought-principle and not by fateful transmission, but through a wholly individual initiative—the danger is that they squander their personality's strength and its potential to operate with absoluteness by chasing earthly mirages, and failing to commit to what's most difficult and costly: to overcome human nature and realize the "real man".

A discipline of the soul, along with meditation, ought to become the guiding principle of daily life: fundamental inspiration and vital habit—while at every step it ought to be possible to overcome the attained limit despite daily trials, difficulties, and hurdles. There is no obstacle that can't be overcome in this way: one must always will in the same direction, incessantly, always the same idea, the same summit, the lonely height, with extreme tension of the soul, up to its extreme possibility, beyond oneself, such that any sorrow can rise again as pure feeling, any aversion become naught, all ephemeral fade away and vanish in the metaphysical transparency of a world that, at last, becomes reality: one in view of which, the world as we know it, is chaotic, impossible, illogic, bereft of direction and hope.

Humankind must experience, through the consecration of the few, the “substance of life” to which we alluded. This nucleus of life begins to escape the death process, to the extent that powers of nature are impotent against it. It's the perennial nourishment of man's primordial *I*, restored by the Rite of the sun-Logos, carried out as invisible background to the Crucifixion, as principle of transmutation of life and death: the “restoration” yet unknown to man, because it can become an actual occurrence only through the act of freedom: whose technique is given by the Spiritual Science outlined in the present book.

The restoration of the original *I* and of immortality has been achieved in the supersensible fabric of earthly history, but is yet to be brought to fruition by man: by a man who, through sheer self-determination, can overcome the barrier and the “upending of foundation” that separate sensible from supersensible. Here, beyond the sensible, Initiation awaits him: the encounter with the Master who alone can confer it. From this level springs forth the “perennial nourishment” or “food of the Grail”: the mysterious nourishment that restores strength when every human possibility has been exhausted, transforms evil, extinguishes darkness and becomes substance of life: that will, however, escape death and prepare a time when it will be no longer necessary for the ego to destroy life.

VIII. From “pure will” to the “void”

Inner deliverance occurs to the extent that the disciple feels his entity encompassing nature, as opposed to being limited by it: he feels that until now he projected this limitation onto the world, thus believing to get to know it. He now sees in his vital-physical being the support of powers which, from within different organic systems, operate as signs and symbols of a language that he now begins to grasp: he feels that the “inner word” is rising in him, to the extent that he can pronounce that language. His correlation with nature becomes a new way to experience the world: he becomes acquainted with entities’ inner life without being thwarted by “nature”, because in them he experiences the fabric of time, in which their history is inscribed, being at once his own history.

The forms of space reawaken, to the extent that they are innerly woven in time, of a “simultaneous” and not of a physical kind: the real time, present at once in the triple texture of past present future. A texture that is at once substance of freed thought and formative power of the living, even as it conveys different essences.

Ordinary thought doesn’t occur in space, but does requires space-bound time for its provisional unfolding; whereas pure thought, as dynamic synthesis, unfolds in a “simultaneous” time that replaces the extinct concept, bound to physical space. This time is the real space, unbound to any physical point and physically immeasurable, even though physical shapes spawn the inner correlation that presupposes it, without grasping it. The ordinary correlation constantly refers to the space-idea, which man fails to experience as such, by projecting it onto the physical world, where it becomes a shade or “ghost” of its entity.

By overcoming the ghost of space, and through the subtle experience of time, the investigator experiences an initial identity with the spiritual Cosmos. The latter, nonetheless, dwarfs him; here, his fictitious autonomy becomes the impediment to a broader experience: a difficult impediment to lift, as long as any persuasion of life and power is based on that spurious autonomy. This moment can harbor the failure of

freedom for those who set out from a concept of freedom still unconsciously conditioned by the psychic world, i.e., by a world in which the only free powers are those opposing the Spirit, the real bearer of freedom.

The human viewpoint—as rationalistic viewpoint that can’t be amended simply with philosophical and esoteric postures—must be overcome to realize the “real man”. Indeed, present-day man, in his “modern” and agnostic aptitude, has negatively realized the human state; in his virtual freedom, he commands the material to realize the opus, i.e., the substance of his potential conversion, and can appeal to the depths of the fall in order to draw strength for the re-ascent, because only from those depths can he re-ascend.

No “transmission” is possible to those who fail to break through the diaphragm between sensible and supersensible by an act of freedom. This transmission, when possible, is always mediated by burgeoning metaphysical freedom, delivering the principle of individuality from the confinement of its egotistic alteration, where it vigorously defends itself with esoteric “postures”, whose real function is to let the limit stand unchallenged. In other words, Initiation is *granted* to the extent that man is capable to get past the limit marking nature’s domain (up to its loftiest forms, the *sattva*): a limit normally unknown, as long as man is confined to nature. The problematic and insoluble point is the apparent impossibility to escape nature, if one is contained within it, and draws from it a sense of being that also acts as foundation of the sense of knowledge. For this reason, man usually resorts to “traditional” solutions. As we have seen, “sense-free thought” is abstract thought which, without transcending itself, at a certain point frees itself from nature within nature, that is to say from abstractness, and reaches for the limit between individual and super-individual.

Supersensible vision is accorded to the investigator at a precise moment—even as it may present itself as a spontaneous and unexpected event—when he has been strengthened by the practice of meditation to a point where the vision can no longer overwhelm him. Because man is usually unprepared for the transcendent vision, a method that entails overcoming the limit of ordinary experience must nurture the formation of organs of

inner perception, according to a technically correct knowledge of the current path to the Spirit that is neither simply intellectual, nor human.

Initiation comes from the Spiritual World itself, as does the method leading to its threshold. The method can only be given by a Master Initiator, not by a mere thinker, scientist, or any other interpreter of human knowledge that writes astutely on initiation issues, because the figure of the Initiate summarizes and transcends the thinker or scientist’s function. Even when clad in dialectic form (as it’s bound to happen, despite a millennial habit of secrecy and ineffability), the Initiate’s utterance is untainted by a secret desire to persuade and excel; it doesn’t seek to impress: it bequeaths its content in unadorned form that can be accepted through free recognition and earnest yearning. In this sense, the hurdle to overcome is for the researcher to preserve his independence before the lure of the dialectic soul and of persuasive esoteric presentations—most convincing because they embody human ingenuity—in order to approach a body of work that doesn’t care to mollify human needs of enlightenment and assertiveness, but only to expose what is technically necessary to overcoming the human condition. We should hasten to add that such method, while springing directly from the Spiritual World, just as the revelation itself, at the same time appeals to the most rigorous logic that human thought is capable of: it demands unfolding knowledge, as the experience gains in lucidity. For the investigator, the content’s validity is vouched for by the very experience of the technique to which he turns.

The path of thought-freed-from-senses conjures up a world vision in which the *I* feels embodied in a spatial structure, woven in time: an experience now wholly independent of the sensible, as act of the *I* that ceases to perceive itself limited to a given system of shapes, and feels expanded into a vast entity, partaking in it with the pure power of individuality: a state akin to a beaming forth that is simultaneously conveyed back to the center. At this point, there is no distinction between the world there and the *I* here; the *I* sees the world as densification of evolutionary stages¹³⁸, from which its entity

¹³⁸ Gradi di un divenire

arose to achieve self-consciousness, and which, therefore, are not alien to him: in created forms, he sees “fallen” forms of the “original cosmic man” that lies in his own depths.

The “cosmic man” lies shattered in the multiplicity of celestial bodies: the *I* recognizes the possibility to reconstitute the primordial unity by establishing a center within itself. He views multiplicity as a sacrifice performed by the original entity to lay the foundation of self-consciousness: but, deep down, he is this entity. The entity became non-*I*, for the *I* to rise in opposition to it. The Higher *I* became ego, for the ego to develop the power to become Higher *I*. The divine subject has been transformed in cosmic object, shattered in worlds, bodies, and endless elements. Here is the life of the ego born, as are traditional expressions, such as “to be complete in the fragment”, to become “infinite in the finite”. The ego exists as an entity that draws its *raison d’être* from what has become particle; from what, having been created, has fallen. It rises as mirror image of the Higher *I*, to the extent that the latter limits itself to a “relationship” with the created world: a relationship that, by relativizing the *I*’s essence, engenders the corporeal screen that gradually emanates the mirror image, to which the sense of *I* is transferred.

What is the meaning of the Spirit’s reflection in the corporeal, in a way that every mental activity bears the marks of the body’s provisional belonging to the mineral world? The Initiate of the New Times teaches that the Spirit itself has molded the brain as a reflecting apparatus to achieve the experience of a finite, fragmentary, earthly world as an expulsion of the Spiritual. On this foundation¹³⁹, the Impersonal experiences the individual, egotistic element: freedom’s earthly underpinning. To this end, it was necessary for the spirit to isolate itself and curb its experience by deriving it exclusively from a relationship with the reflecting instrument: any other state of mind was to have been forgotten, so that only conscience, resulting from a relationship with the corporeal entity, be left. (Any time this relationship is interrupted¹⁴⁰, the waking consciousness comes undone and man’s inner being returns, by the paths of sleep, to contemplating the spiritual World: which becomes profound contemplation and man’s further cosmic history with the dissolution of the relationship in Death.)

¹³⁹ [The brain]

¹⁴⁰ Il rapporto e’ sospeso sino al *limen* vitale

The resulting mental activity bears the footprint of earthly existence¹⁴¹, a world that is naught for the Spiritual. Soul life is imbued with this naught by the mind’s activity, as it strives to uphold a communion with the transcendent in the face of a constant flow of disheartening or exhilarating appearances. The communion could unfold as profound and creative peace, or as informed and enlightened detachment from sensible impressions, were the *I* able to free the soul within. Its deliverance would be at once restoration of soul powers to their celestial vitality and further cosmic creation. But the mineral world¹⁴² and related appearances cast their footprint over feeling and will in the form of error, mendacity and disease, as long as the conscious entity is drawn from the physical-sensible world¹⁴³ and endures this correlation; it thus draws even the vital-physical organization toward nothingness, or annihilation. The process can be viewed as a destruction of vital powers instigated by the Spiritual so that consciousness may rise, as long as it requires corporeal support. The reflecting apparatus is constantly warped, up to that final moment of death, when the vital form, used by the Spirit to cast it in the first place, is finally rendered unto the Spirit.

The upheaval of instincts and passions is expression of the power of “lust”, which is nothing but spiritual power deprived of its real object and turned to the appearance of the mineral nil, with the characteristic intensity of its original and spontaneous transcendental identification. Because of man’s “fall”, the only possible object for this power, at the level of sensible manifestation, is provided by reflected conscience: earthly appearances, which are just that, because they fail to be integrated by the enlightening act of conscience. Through lust, spiritual power is tied to an unreal world, assumed as its domain; lacking another object, it can neither foreswear it, nor—at the same time—be unshackled from it. The *I* is rooted through lust in the mineral nil.

The secret is to identify this nil, and reawaken spiritual substance from the sensible. We have seen that the world’s living entity rises from nothingness as pure perception and spiritual act that seizes it: novel contents act within the soul, and different objects from

¹⁴¹ Terrestrita’

¹⁴² Mineralita’

¹⁴³ Supporto

those provided by sensible appearances can be offered to the spiritual power degraded as lust. This is of the utmost importance, because existence is radically imbued with lust. Fear of death, indeed, relates uniquely to thirst for life, which is quenched neither by satisfying it nor by forswearing it; nor, for that matter, by the suicide’s inability to bear it. Thirst for life and nature’s will-to-be are the same motion. Therefore, lust is present in every aspect of vital experience, as continuous need for sensations, systematic demand to mark time with goals or ends, and rely on space forms: it isn’t only desire, urge, passion, attachment, but also will to blindly persevere in a form in which man can only exist, without being.

The issue is not resisting lust, but gradually restoring its pre-corporeal reality, and letting its power unfold unsullied, by providing it with objects that correspond to this reality. Its binding power thus undone, it rises again as the *I*’s freedom stream. Lust can again become willpower, if the Spirit is active where reflected conscience spawns sensible appearances required for lust to arise.

Hence, the necessity of a technique that doesn’t elude thought (how, on the other hand, could it—before the supersensible experience?), but disenchant it, where it becomes motive for the alteration of willpower. Man can’t act directly on it, but indirectly, by way of thought acting on its own disentanglement¹⁴⁴. Thinking begins to live to the extent that it’s animated by pure will: an “individual” will, transcending individuality. It is as if natural willpower were imbued with a novel force, transparent and luminous.

The secret nature of will lies in an imperceptible, alien region, akin to the texture of dreamless sleep. Man wills something through a representation: it plunges into the ill-defined region of feelings to disappear in the unknown zone of organic life and resurface as gesture or motion, which in turn becomes perception and representation. And yet, the power of pre-sensible will is directly called upon to act in “sense-free thought”, to the extent that the latter unfolds as will outside nature: as thought that wills before the moment or level of reflected reality. This pure will, arising as thought, can tread the path of spontaneous will, extinguishing its automatisms, and flowing as new ability to act. It’s

¹⁴⁴ Svincolamento

the path of Solar Magic that discloses man's future, as it frees the *I* from nature and restores nature to its original principle.

The movement of limbs within the spatial world is freed, at a certain point, from its instrumental, mechanical meaning, and is experienced as earthly projection of universal thought. In truth, we don't really walk or gesture or move about for daily work: we think, and thus pave the way for the power of future thought, now entangled in the representation of movement through space. As metaphysical movement, it tends to free itself in the physical world: beginning of willpower's magical disentanglement from the earthly life in which it's mired and with which it's one. Willpower inevitably remains an instrument of nature's will-to-be, as long as it fails to be rectified by knowledge of the occult opposition between man's solar and telluric forces, and of their potential conscious synthesis, thanks to the motion of pure thought within instinctive will: a reconnection of the solar with the earthly element. Nature continues to rule the disciple's will, especially by way of irregular initiation paths and attempts to restore spiritual practices belonging to extinct traditions, but also indeed through inadequate interpretations of Spiritual Science, on the part of those who strive to turn it into a system, or academic teaching.

Man now realizes that the perception of *maya*, the finite world's appearance of illusory power, is experience of the will, arrested where it becomes lust; urge that escapes the *I*, forcing the *I* to face it as world of spatial-temporal forms. As we have said, the world created, fixed in its exterior objectivity, can no longer be seen as the original act of "creation", but as fallen entity, bound to a form and become ghost of space: quantity.

Creation faces us as an immense cosmic being, torn asunder, shattered as objectivity and abandoned from the Divine, even where life is reconstituted in organic forms: in them, supersensible powers act on condition of becoming bound to sensible structures and states of consciousness, corresponding in man to dream and deep sleep, thus feeding an extroverted existence. All things created lie already in the sphere of necessity. Even the most perfect¹⁴⁵ form should not mislead: one must find in it the echo of perfection, not perfection itself. To retrace the creative word from the echo is a different task: condition of a novel human creation according to the Spirit.

¹⁴⁵ [sic] piu' perfetta

The creation appears “outside”, but what lies externally was once internal. Now, the Initiate knows that this materialization is the picture of man’s fall, and that the fall required the sacrifice of “being” as “existence”, of original willpower as lust, so that the individual principle could, by virtue of standing opposed to it, enucleate itself: thus do the mineral, vegetal and animal world stand before man, bound to the forms of their appearance as symbols of a history that unfolded for man through different steps of appearance, so that “appearances”, mistaken for “reality”, could elicit in man thought, consciousness, and individuation by their power of attrition.

All creation has been abandoned by the Spirit. According to Tradition, even Paradise, as created entity, is a prison for the Initiate: he can’t be satisfied with a created beatitude, as he strives to reach the very spring of creation. What has been created is “fact” and, as such, necessary imposition. It tends to take hold of conscience as nature, existence, and exterior becoming, clad at times in transcendental values. Even by turning to Tradition, and especially to metaphysical doctrines of a monistic kind, such as the *Advaita Vedanta*, he who faces the world can’t extinguish, by a mental act—interpretively correct as it may be, a condition that doesn’t require being thought of as unreal, but to be solved by the very thought-power that conjures it up. This is man’s novel creation, the call of the Grail.

The world of appearances can’t be extinguished and replaced with reality by simply acknowledging its illusory character, but only by nurturing a value, whose very birth spawned the game of appearances in the first place. It’s possible, through an in-depth understanding of “fall” and material necessity, to transform lust into pure will: which in turn becomes “creative power” and emerges from man’s *I*, soaring to the level of self-consciousness and freedom. In essence, appearance is expression of a certain kind of existence and knowledge that are set in their ways, so long as they require the projection of this type of “unreality” before them. The unreality engenders a contradiction that the intimate principle of consciousness will want to overcome.

Overcoming unreality is motion of pure willpower, initial act of inner freedom; as such, it may also not occur, to the extent that man is so caught up¹⁴⁶ in this contradiction as to subordinate the possibility of freedom to it: engendering what we referred to as “freedom against itself”. A free act can’t occur by necessity, or else it would bear a mechanical character: it’s a contradiction in terms, which nonetheless shapes the thinking of some “Spiritualism”, bound to the rational soul. Such Spiritualism ignores that its power, if one can call it that, stems from Earth-bound willpower, mediating the kind of nature, even inner nature, that had an evolutionary function for man prior to the birth of abstract thought. It therefore ignores that this willpower, even if magically or ritually conjured up, is now a “power that binds to the Earth”, opposed to “Sun” powers: it only conveys the element that identifies conscience with the ego, a provisional earthly formation.

Inadequate knowledge prevents this Esotericism from recognizing as telluric those powers that, by trying to cast man in the mold of involution that led to *Kaliyuga*, ended up opposing him. Entrusted with the cosmic task of molding the lower ego form—the foundation of personality—these powers now appear as organic will, bound to animal life; and tend to rise in man, disguised as thought, to subdue soul life. They are triggered and strengthened by practices that ignore the extent of their dependence from them. The powers of involution demand as much detachment and asceticism as is required to preempt the real *I*’s birth, thus cooperating in depth with the process of human ahrimanization. That is to say that they operate in man as a higher Materialism of sorts, instinctively adverse to the Grail Science, which in contrast aims to summon up man’s “pure will”: a will that can only be wanted outside nature, ego, or the support from which the *I* draws itself as ego.

It’s rightly taught that this is akin to “creating from nothing”, annihilating the lower *I*, or dying in view of resurrection. Therein lies the meaning of conjuring up a will that is able to spurn, in nature’s processes, cosmic forces endeavoring to shape him in the mold of an ancient direction: which has turned will into nature, appearance into a value onto itself; and Earth, in its finiteness, into a world arranged according to a “new” that is not

¹⁴⁶ La contraddizione ammala l’uomo

different from the one aspired to by Materialism. The latter wants to turn the transient nature of material experience into a way of life, under “hierarchical” or “ecclesial” supervision, replete with transcendent values, next to the mastery of material reality. This can never be mastered, as long as it plays out as “matter”, because it represents the naught of the Earth’s mineral entity, assumed as base of earthly existence and foundation of a power pyramid that, despite its yearning for the heights, will inevitably convey earthly tensions. Knowledge alone can free their power, as intimated by the teaching “My Kingdom is not of this world”: which doesn’t mean eschewing the world or fleeing the battlefield; it indicates a shady link to the Earth and its appearance that is to be severed for deliverance to occur. It points the way to victory over the “rational soul”, and thus over material necessity.

In some esotericist quarters, it is held that freedom should spring into action by sheer evolutionary drive and that man should fatefully ascend to Spiritual spheres: but as an automaton, whose willpower is not free of nature. This is as naïve a concept as any that assumes man’s evolution or salvation to be a foregone process. Man must approach the essence of thought as mystery of freedom, for it to arise as real power: fortified by a sense of absoluteness of its function, he can advance to the point where freedom erupts in the soul as creative power. The alternative is either the rising *I*, or nothing; either the center of man’s entity, or a decay that continues to be called existence.

The human can be overcome, on condition that man endeavors to. Today, it behooves the very few to initiate this experience. Having awakened their faculties, these individuals will likely face life’s decisive trials; they will have to remember that these trials have no meaning of their own and should not be endured as such, but only as signs of the limit forced upon the *I* to awaken its strength. They must summon the essence that makes man eternal and can behold any trial as a hurdle to be overcome, and thus to be shorn of its power, which flows back to the *I*.

There is no hindrance, no adverse Heavenly or Earthly Power that should be viewed as a real limit, and thus forestall the willpower of the man acquainted with meditation and its fulfillment. The world’s appearance changes before the void consciousness: for those

who nurture the technique of freedom, this promise is fulfilled. At issue is a call to action for the power that can be victorious, to the extent that it acts from the center of the self; a power that fails to act when, in its stead, man believes to be able to lean on any support, habit and consolation provided by ancient nature. The human state can be overcome, but only by the man, that feels the super-human origin as his intimate principle.

Nonetheless, nowadays man thinks and acts as if problems should evolve of their own accord: spiritual investigators behave as if a higher impulse should, at some point, become active from the center of the individual and lead him to overcome the self. It would be the enterprise's failure, as it would imply a spiritual function for something that excludes real spiritual activity, by replacing the individual principle, i.e., the Spirit acting within conscience. The *I*'s refusal to rise and the restriction of its function to meeting natural necessity explain humankind's current predicament. Exterior experience lacks a spiritual counterpart, is unmoved by the call of freedom or knowledge, and thus uninterested in overcoming this condition.

If man wanted to identify the inner condition that sidetracks him from the freedom path, he would find fear: the subconscious power that confines him to nature's established boundaries. But it's difficult to seize the meaning of this situation, as this fear drives man's every thought and action; and organizes his life and spiritual quest, making the freedom path appear as heresy, individualism, or exoteric pursuit. In this sense, those who follow the Spiritual Science founded by the Master of the new times, face trials from all directions, in a world that merely embodies "past", necessity, habit, mechanism, exteriority, dogmatism, false renewal: i.e., fear. It's fear of freedom, assuming its subtlest shape in those who presume to follow the Spirit's path as an association, bestowing a substantive and material meaning to its teachings and minting dogmatic codifications and academic expressions, in which little flows of the liberating knowledge to which they appeal. Thus, despite the fastidious terminology and outward orthodoxy, the opus is divorced from its Author.

For those who have attained its experience, pure thinking becomes the element to distinguish the *I* from nature; and provides the bearings of independence from any anguish or fear rising from the instinctive being as incoercible forms of its undaunted

power. Anguish and fear swirl in the air and pollute the Earth’s inner climate; at an ordinary level, man tries to fob them off with all kinds of evasions, from drug addiction to pathologic exterior hyperactivity. To the psychic chaos ensnaring individuals and communities, the practitioner of meditation can oppose firm bearings that are not only helpful to him, but especially to others. He can aim to a condition of calm as an objective foundation of power for the many, but also as the harbinger of spiritual work required by the world.

The first consequence of liberated thinking is the dawning of an unsolicited calm, conducive to a meditative climate: an essential calm, shorn of inertia and tension, self-generating as hue of the awakening and expanding *I*-life within the soul. It’s at once fundamental reality of the being and instrument of the inner individual’s foundation on itself: it begins to consider objective the inner world with which it used to be identified. In some moments, it’s the being that plunges into its foundation, dissolving the bonds of appearance: man ceases his efforts and actions to exist, because he is free from the usual actions, to be what he secretly is: a condition—mediated by freed thinking—enacting an “action without action”, similar to the foundations of ancient far-Eastern ascetics.

This state of aware transcendence and lucid spontaneity could not arise as a result of learning Zen metaphysics. Approaching the latter with a modern state of mind is missing the mark: it’s one thing to know about it, and another to reawaken its secret. For present-day man, whose inner activity is necessarily subordinated to the brain, it’s inevitable to turn Zen ascetics back into a world of sensations, a quieting of the nervous system mistaken for the “void”, which at most can give rise to mystical tension, unrecognized as such, and buoyed by an interpretive intellectual counterpart. It can’t go beyond the mental domain¹⁴⁷, even as it longs for representations of the “non-mental”, which will never yield the non-mental or super-mental, as even the mental substance of representation that makes them flash in the conscience and conceives them as possible, remains unknown. This limit can’t be removed, except through “conversion of thinking”,

¹⁴⁷ Il mentale

a technique unknown to traditional doctrines that fail to contemplate the possibility intrinsic to abstract thought.

A superior calm sets in for the modern investigator, not as consequence of inert contemplation, but as fitting climate of conscience, a necessary background to the inner quest. A quest that does have its tensions, trials and harsh paths, to an especially profound extent, but of a “cathartic” kind, meaning that they ultimately aim to cleanse the powers involved in their process. Sorrow, anguish and fear no longer rise as such: their motion—now focused on a different object—is immediately recognized. At that point, their motion rises again as purified soul power, if man can establish with them the same subtly objective¹⁴⁸ relationship as with the motion of thought: calm arises from the possibility of detachment and transmutation.

Every passion, feeling, and instinct reveals itself as alienation of the “central entity” in actions and reactions of an egotistic nature, bereft of its metaphysical foundation, and thus lacking even the ancient, rightful spontaneity: indeed, their residual ancient spontaneity confers onto them an urgency that can forestall the *I*'s actual expression. The manifestation of passions, feelings and instincts affords the *I* a chance to concentrate on itself, keeping its distance from a motion to which it was earlier irresistibly drawn, in order to feel and alienate itself in a subjective impression of pleasure or sorrow. It can now keep its distance by homing in on itself, by sheer will to be the “experimenter” and not the “experimented”, the one that knows and not the one that gets lost: to this end, it resorts to an aptitude of detached beholding, acquired through the practice of pure observation.

Converging on itself provides the *I* with the possibility of pure vision. The *I* can behold events, to the extent that it doesn't become blurred in them. It's unmoved by events, doesn't suffer from or rejoice in them, and generates an inner space around itself that is original relationship with the being: it engenders a “void”, in which the powers of conscience tend to coalesce, rather than plunging into the usual psychic level. Thus, the instinctive motion—regardless of whether it's triggered from the outside—is delivered from the sentient-affective component, through which the *I* confusedly identifies with it: it

¹⁴⁸ Relazione di alterita'

rises again as pure perception, experienced as vision or inspiration. The *I* experiences a pure power, with its own defined character, and ceases to get lost in it, altering its function in order to feel the corporeal ties¹⁴⁹, thus eschewing knowledge of its content. Now, the world reveals itself to him through a series of inner contents, drawn from impressions that cease to brand the body-bound soul as lust or repulsion. The *I* can enact the essence of powers that, freed, begin to pivot around a center: the *I*'s self-foundation. It's founded upon the Immensity: motionless within, because unfurled over the Infinite. There is no other possibility to be in the center: pleasure and sorrow rise again as the *I*'s organs of knowledge.

Having mastered an inner activity, the void arises from the possibility to extinguish it and yield a higher essence. It's a means, not an end. If man turned to this experience without having achieved thought control, he would disclose an ambiguous subconscious world, because he would still be confined within nature. The first extinction, in fact, is nature's.

The ability to exert control over ordinary thought gradually enables man to “silence” it, as a preliminary experience to the “void”. Whereupon super-individual thought surfaces: the same thought that, in other fashion, unfolds as pure thinking activity, capable of experiencing thoughts and sensations' inner content. As the ego and its echoes fade away, an inner space unfolds, in which the spirit can flow as pure ideation and become the “thinking” shape of Cosmos, i.e., be transformed into imaginative vision.

When this condition has been attained and buttressed—no longer hindered by a daily life that, unaffected by supersensible experience, goes on according to its necessary balance—man can gain access to a higher grade of conscience through the experience of the void: now effectively “negative”, vis-à-vis the categories of manifestation, and thus foundation of a purer self-perception. It's the stage of “inspired consciousness” (*buddhi*), a level at which nature is extinct, up to the boundaries of mineral life, which remains the densest layer of the physical organization and thus limits—obviously from an inferior

¹⁴⁹ Literally, “its own corporeal ties”, i.e., the *I*'s. In the original, the gender difference between “*I*” (masculine) and “*funzione*” (feminine) clarifies the possessive pronoun. I opted to omit it for clarity.

standpoint—the descent of a pure spiritual Principle and the relevant cosmic communion. The imagery that necessarily mediates supersensible essences, independent of form, is extinct: form is usually a necessary guise of pure being, negative power of existence, and in this sense authentic reality: a reality inverted and negated by exterior life and world, which are assumed as reality. Gradually, the experience of the void requires that nature’s own domain¹⁵⁰ be in that state of non-ego, non-existence and simplicity that are generally associated with sleep. The states of imaginative and inspired conscience are possible to the extent that daily life—even as it remains unchanged—be consciously separated from metaphysical activity and nature led back to a state of quiet: such that knowledge alone arise from external experience, because every sensible perception is integrated by an inner act, as its spiritual counterpart. Every sensory perception or inner motion that fails to be immediately transformed into knowledge—thus rising as *I* expression—becomes destructive to the inner fabric of the incipient experience.

The “void” can be experienced in different gradations: from those disclosing “imaginative conscience”, to those yielding loftier forms of conscience. Along the path to the inner supersensible element, the void gradually aims to “negate” the extroverted element, which in reality is stepwise reintegration of the original consciousness that has now become individual. The extinction of existence, which in ordinary life is the path of sleep and death, in the Supersensible is instead the path of reawakening and resurrection: the Initiate’s autonomous act. Any bond with nature that man failed to isolate and make objective can assert itself during this experience, representing its deviation and failure.

Once upon a time, man acted on the body to unshackle its subtle principles: he engaged in practices at times painful, deprivations, ritual postures; resorted to breathing techniques, acting rhythmically and sacrificially on nature, in order to find again the Spirit in it. Man’s inner form has reached the present constitution to express the logical-abstract conscience, and can no longer extract Spirit from nature. It can only draw a sub-conscious element that, by supporting powers of hindrance, can even imitate the spiritual,

¹⁵⁰ Literally, “the element that belongs to nature”

when the constitutive unity¹⁵¹ is upset by practices or behaviors that ignore the current relationship between the Supersensible and the physical and psychic worlds.

The current Initiate path requires a pure inner activity that leaves the physical body absolutely untouched, eschewing the engagement of the breathing function. Along the path to the “void”, as nature is restored to its original quiet—a path to the restoration of a metaphysical foundation—breathing progressively partakes of this quiet, becoming rarified and curtailing its motion to a minimum, up to a point where it becomes extinguished, while a pure inner element begins to tread the vital body’s subtle paths. It’s here that nature, flowing through breathing, normally subdues the psyche. It’s a change of polarities, compared to traditional methods that required a departure from the physical to reach the Spirit; whereas, Initiation today is only possible by finding a way to maintain waking consciousness outside physical conditions, to thus operate within the sensible. Any direct action on the sensible, aware or unaware, yogic or mediumistic, is a relapse into nature that indeed provides nourishment for the animal element. The history of thought throughout the centuries—even as reflected thought—portends its enactment of the freedom element whence it rose, as the only one that can lead from sensible to Supersensible. Man must not act obtusely, as if this “thinking” were an impediment to be delivered from, while at the same time he relies upon it to choose a “path”.

Lucid annihilation of natural categories and extinction of breathing accompany the experience of the “void”. It’s no ecstasy or dimming of waking consciousness—rather its opposite. Those who tend to introduce breathing—through westernized “yoga” methods—into the meditative practice, should be keenly aware of this. As meditation grows more refined and transparent, the revitalization process that ordinarily requires breathing increasingly takes place as unintended physical consequence of the metaphysical act: in essence, man stands at the wellspring of life with the pure conscious Principle. Pure thinking represents its emanation, abstract thought its lifeless reflection; and ordinary thought is this reflection enlisted by nature, i.e., by the element that belies the very spring of thought.

¹⁵¹ [of the powers of conscience]

Extinction of breathing should not be confused with a western interpretation of tantric *pranayama*—arising from a purely intellectual understanding of the *puruka*, *kumbhaka*, *rechaka* sequence—i.e., with an effort to get rid of breathing. In the context of the Initiation discussed here, this extinction is akin to being released, freed from the vital necessity of breathing—without directly calling on it, indeed by forgetting about it—insofar as man, through the inner act, drinks from the very spring of the vital entity, whose outward form tends to feed off the etheric element flowing through breathing. This was the erstwhile spring of “men’s life”: its loss marked the end of the original beatitude and androgynous structure, as well as the incipient necessity of death.

From this, it’s evident that the extinction of natural conditions and breathing, by an inner route, consciously overcomes the ordinary vital limit that man experiences through fatal traumas, disgrace, disease or heroic acts: overcoming which, a new life arises in moments imbued with a super-human quality.

IX. The tree of life and the light of the Grail

If we look at man as a spiritual¹⁵² being bound to animal functions, born with and fighting against lower instincts, despite his spiritual essence; and want to make sense of this paradoxical configuration, we need to stop quibbling about it and understand the need to move from dialectics to supersensible experience. We ought to hark back to an age when the “regular” human condition, true to Universal Law, was superseded by an “irregular” element, expressing something of a “rebellion” against the Law. We must go back to the moment when man was not yet mired in this contradiction.

Ancient traditions and modern Spiritual Science describe an original “golden age”, *krita-yuga*, an Earthly Paradise from which man was expelled; they hint at a superior kind of man, not yet “fallen”, whose body was not physical, but etheric and immortal. His constitution was univocally woven into archetypal forms, characteristic of states of consciousness experienced in pre-terrestrial phases, and referred to by Spiritual Science Cosmogony as “Saturn”, “Sun” and “Moon”: different living stages of the same celestial body, Earth.

In man, the physical body was to rise from the etheric body as consequence of the loss of immortality. This event takes place at some point, due to the intervention of cosmic powers of hindrance, named Lucifer and Ahriman by Spiritual Science, according to their function. Their task was to take man’s fall, terrestrial dimension and attendant inability to articulate the eternal, to their extreme consequences. The necessity of evil and death stakes out the fall’s limits and represents a superior help. It’s engendered because the outward element, always present in man’s secret entity, can only destroy the bodily life, altered in supporting at once lust and Self-consciousness; this destruction will only cease, as Self-consciousness finds again its eternal foundation and no longer depends on corporeal mediation.

In the “Lemuric” epoch, and still at the beginning of the “Atlantic” epoch, man was not yet confined to the physical body; he was clad in an etheric form that was neither

¹⁵² Interiore

densified, nor fallen within the “physical” limits, and indeed imperceptible to senses. His blissful immortality was enrobed in etheric life that allowed him to express his nature¹⁵³ and uphold the communion with the divine: nonetheless, he had to become alienated from it and, in the process, alter its form. Because of the precipitation or densification of this form, man now experiences his self as outward world¹⁵⁴ and begins to have the sensible perception of this exteriority: whose immortal element survives in the etheric or vital body, now ruling man’s physical constitution from a level imperceptible to ordinary conscience.

The invisible texture of the physical world is the etheric cosmos, outside which the physical world is nothing. The etheric can be viewed as supersensible power with executive character, immediately perceptible beyond physical-sensible limits, as the living’s non-spatial foundation. Because the root of man’s spiritual vision arises from the assumption that the physical dimension is founded on itself, knowledge of the etheric world is to be the foundation of future science, if man manages to disentangle the act of knowledge from the obligate vision of a finite and multifaceted world: an act occurring by virtue of the etheric body. The foundation of this Science has been laid by the Initiate of the new times.

The ethers of warmth, light, sound and life are different degrees of the vital etheric being, simultaneously active in man and cosmos beyond the perception range of his normal conscience. The ether of sound has in itself the intimate form-giving power of physical nature; at a certain point, it can be recognized as projection of a “harmony of spheres” outside the metaphysical echo and its limit, the point where every physical echo falls silent. Material substance can be experienced as fallen sonority¹⁵⁵ of a primordial cosmic harmony that persists beyond time, behind the appearance of the Universe. When we hint at the “music of spheres”, we refer to the function of the ether of sound, animating man’s etheric body from a super-human level. From an earthly standpoint, the secret substance of being is imbued with the supreme ether of life.

¹⁵³ Si articolava

¹⁵⁴ Esteriorita’

¹⁵⁵ Sonorita’

Man can recognize physical creation as an array of sounds plummeted from a transcendent harmony, the Cosmic symphonic texture, expressing as being an element that, as “principle”, antedates the being. Here man can see, in any given element, a determined sound, frozen and bound to a special mode of being. Every metal, crystal, and thing is solidified expression of a determined sound of sidereal-cosmic nature. Only he, who can utter the sound, or original name of things, can make them rise again from the tomb of earthly existence: their virtual unity is present as everlasting Music of the Spheres.

Further beyond, the ether of life works on earth; its essence is more secret and farther from human conscience, because it’s the very foundation of its existence: essence of a constantly lost immortality that man fails to possess and can, for now, only destroy, insofar as the process of his cosmic life and existence are ruled by lust.

The Tree of Life was shielded from man’s lustful gaze after the “fall”, in view of the potential “resurrection” of the spiritual man. The Tree was protected against any possible abuse¹⁵⁶ and its virtue preserved beyond space and time, waiting for events to ripen. It represents the *I*’s celestial power, kept intact by invisible Masters throughout millennia, until the day when man will reawaken: when, having surveyed the conditions of the “fall”, a newly found awareness of his origin will set in–incipient embodiment of the *I*’s motion. It’s the power of immortality, the eternal nourishment of life, whose custodians, next to the invisible Fortress of the Grail, are Initiates that follow man’s journey from a time preceding physical time, when his spiritual body was harmoniously imbued with the ethers of warmth, light, sound and life, as stages or forms of his bliss¹⁵⁷.

At a certain point—as we stated—deviant forces, empowered to act on man, intervened in this process, so that he turned his willpower away from the transcendent essence and became bound to the “object”, by way of lust and blind identification. Nature and sensible relationships, identification with the “finite” and opposition amongst its different aspects arise from them. The being’s physical experience becomes the limit

¹⁵⁶ Guasto–rot

¹⁵⁷ Beatitudine dell’essere

within which man feels himself opposed to a world that gradually rises before him as “objective”, insofar as he experiences himself as “Subject”.

A consequence of Lucifer and Ahriman’s early influence can be recognized in the split of the original androgynous being into two sexually differentiated beings. After losing his original etheric constitution through the physical body’s transition to a dense state, man had to split his external constitution, his vital-physical garb, into male and female forms, because he had lost the power to generate his kin from within. Identified with the vital-physical form by the loss of supersensible potential that was necessary to feel the physical boundary as other, man can now only contribute from without to projecting the archetypal power of generation. The latter, having become transcendent, must exploit the physical germ to operate within this supposed limit: it thus reproduces the necessary form within the mystery of the maternal womb. Man must accomplish reproduction from “without”, by reconnecting what was split into two externally complementary polarities, deeply yearning to reconstitute the primordial unity. The urge to recreate superhuman harmony is thus experienced as human love. This yearning, constantly resurfacing as longing for the original unity and its germane bliss, will inevitably fall within the world of senses, so long as man fails to find the essential, sense-free element that discloses the endeavor’s ultimate meaning: the Grail.

The misunderstanding consists in ascribing the “bliss” to an act that, while taking place as sensible experience, ought to be translated into knowledge: which alone could engender bliss. In other words, bliss belongs to the interiority, which is in itself independent of sexual duality: erotic attraction belongs not to sex, but to the soul, insofar as it’s asexual. The excitement of sexual pleasure, in its variations, is but deviation of a pure pleasure toward perceptions that don’t demand it in their objective process, and whose essence is every time tainted and tied to states of mind devoid of reality and falsifying man’s entire life. From the different shades of excitement associated with an ever-identical perception, arise various forms of surrender to erotic instincts, for which perception is but a pretext, outside its real meaning: which would require a totally different soul motion.

Any dependence of soul life from sexuality, experienced as image, lust and sensation, is a deception that the Spiritual researcher must experience in order to overcome. Dependence is error and “sin”, to the extent that it upends a hierarchy: soul powers become bound to a sensible fact, which is certainly necessary to nature but—for man’s evolution and deliverance from natural necessity—doesn’t require consonance and enslavement of the soul, but should be experienced in its objectivity, through pure inner activity. This is its only resolution, as of any sensible experience, which remains phenomenon, nature, brute sensation, until it gets integrated by the inner act.

For those resolved to follow the Initiate path of this age, it’s fundamental to acknowledge that an androgynous power lives on in man’s inner being: a being that knows nothing about itself, except through the mediation of the physical-etheric body. The latter, having endured the separation, expresses the duality of sex. The secret of erotic experience can only be comprehended when man understands where the necessity of sex arises. The teaching of the Master of the new times provides the key to understanding this issue. The dual polarity of sexes doesn’t involve the inner man, but only its vital-physical garb, which he nonetheless mistakenly identifies with, to the point of feeling existentially determined in a male or female nature. Moreover, from the standpoint of occult typology, the male etheric body is “feminine”, just as the female is “masculine”. If we now consider that the physical body is imbued with life and form by the etheric body, we can understand the real basis for the attraction between sexes, as well as the deception inherent to any sexual deviancy. It’s the belief to seize as sensible perception—to some extent necessary—something that befits only inner perception. It’s the constant attempt to experience this perception in a domain whence it can’t arise, chasing yet further forms of the same deceptive experience: systematically thwarted, and smoldering always again in its illusion.

The double polarity of sex conveys an etheric-physical tension existing within an individual self, whose spiritual resurgence is predicated upon the achievement of

independence from the duality of form¹⁵⁸ and, at the same time, the recovery of a primordial synthesis. Both begin with freed thought that kindles the etheric body's original light. As we have seen, Initiation alone allows the righteous action vis-à-vis a process that can't be seized by intellectual or psychological means, because it represents the simultaneous convergence of powers of a transcendental rank with instinctual motions, deviating human nature toward animal behavior.

With respect to the theme of the "fall", it must be remembered that not all of man's etheric body was overwhelmed by the influence of Lucifer and Ahriman. One of its higher functions was shielded from Lucifer's seduction: its symbol is the Tree of Life, whose fruit the "fallen" man was forbidden from eating. It corresponds to the ether of immortality that vouchsafed through the ages man's potential for reintegration, and was restored to man by the Sun Being of the Christ. The everlasting content of this myth, as disclosed by spiritual investigation, reveals that restoration is only possible if man freely endeavors to rectify eros's decayed energies and free the inner androgynous being from natural necessity, i.e., to transform the willpower entangled in nature. The secret of this rectification is the same as the Grail endeavor's. It beckons the present-day investigator that feels the responsibility of supersensible knowledge as radical task of deliverance. Such is the mystery of freedom: that the endeavor, to the extent that it represents victory over lust and death, might also fail. And failure is inevitable when lust of life is empowered by forces of individuality innocent of orientation, as it's currently happening.

The mythical intimation of a "Fountain of Youth" or "Tree of Life" outlines an endeavor allowing the life ether to flow again through man's constitution, as he experiences the sensible world with pure inner powers, and carefully negotiates between the two extremes of either escaping from or plunging headlong into it. This endeavor unfolds within, as a succession of pure inner acts, and can be envisaged as blazing the Grail path: man encounters the real Guides of humankind and begins to be creator according to the Spirit.

¹⁵⁸ Dualita' formale, literally formal duality, but I prefer the rendering duality of forms, as the form is what engenders the duality

Man can approach the Tree of Life through knowledge awakened by liberated thought: the birth of pure thought is essentially the beginning of a transmutation acting on the roots of lust, and is at once streaming of the ether of immortality through the soul. It's the new greening and blooming of the wood of the Cross: the attainment of the initiate event, aspired to by all spiritual traditions, even when their doctrinal formulation is unaware of it, and fails to explain that their accomplishment grants access to the Grail. In truth, we must emphasize that no initiate preparation is authentic, unless it unfolds in view of this event, even if initially unaware of it. Every ascetics or inner practice, unless intended as subtle means of strengthening human egotism, is linked at its own level with the Grail's content by appropriate mediation. The Grail vision is the foundation of human reintegration: its character being essentially Christic in nature. But man doesn't have to presuppose this nature to realize it: even if he knows nothing about Christ, or calls him by another name, the rightful experience of transmutation leads to Him.

The symbol of the Holy Spear, if correctly interpreted, can shed light on the double meaning of the enterprise: the offending weapon has the potential to also heal. The spear that yields sorrow, disease and death, in the hands of the impure knight, can yield life, heal, and bestow immortality in the hands of the knight without stain, because without fear. The essence that makes it deadly and healing at once also makes its wielder invincible. Likewise, "individuation" arises as principle of annihilation of the original light and inexorable thrust toward death, but is the same force that, freed, rises again as center of light and wellspring of life. Aroused by thought-freed-from-senses, "pure willpower" becomes healing power within man's depths: it acts as the "Holy Spear", healing the wound that no earthly medicine can soothe: sensible experience is imbued with light, flowing from thought that is no longer shadow and abstraction, but life.

The executive power of nature yielded minerals, plants, animals and men; it culminated in the generation of thinking activity, within conscience, capable of experiencing the forms of creation in their reflected state. Thought arises as the ultimate process of *natura naturans*¹⁵⁹; but, behind thought, is the *I*. As long as thought unfolds in a reflected manner, it's expression of nature, whose very appearance is a result of being

¹⁵⁹ [sic] Loosely translatable as "the process of nature"

clad in thought. As we have seen, only when man introduces will into thought, according to the kind of concentration described in this book, the thinking willpower begins to be independent of nature and, being truly independent, can get to know it beyond appearances: enter the *I*, vanquisher of nature. The world begins to be imbued with the Logos, acting as individual power.

Esotericism would lead the present-day investigator astray, were it to ignore the path of “knowledge”. This path can also be effectively intuited by beholding the essence of great symbols and myths, shorn of feelings and intellectualism. Man should indeed experience the opportunity of straying from the path, to the extent that choosing the right path is the *I* and free man’s living act. The eventual meaning is that nature’s course unfolds spontaneously, and sets man up for a clash between *I* and nature. It’s the point where thinking is born, albeit almost as nature’s product, even when disguised as the *I*’s initial, reflected activity. Because of the inevitable identification between the *I* and its initial support, what happens in essence is that nature takes up the *I*’s garb, subtracting it from the *I*: thus engendering egotism, materialism, or “being-for-the-body”. An inevitable condition indeed, until man builds up an extra-corporeal support for the *I*, corresponding to its metaphysical essence. This support is initially the etheric body awakened by freed thought, i.e., extra-sensorially active within the etheric domain. Through it, man begins to mold the “body of resurrection” and the *I* recaptures the power of immortality for its further opus.

Knowledge of nature’s domain, acquired by way of thought, is part of overcoming nature, even though it’s still steeped in it. Here man understands the consequences of having tasted the fruit of the “Tree of Good and Evil”, but is still deprived of the possibility to come anywhere near the Tree of Life: reintegration of the original being. Interrupted by man’s “fall”, the Universal opus can be viewed as awaiting its completion at the hands of man, by virtue of his decision to seek his own liberation, and not by the intervention of an alien power. The Spirit flows again as power in man’s freedom. At this very point, the higher ether is born again for man: the same ether that he had only been able to behold, without identifying with, in the Garden of Eden.

If—based on the knowledge outlined in this book—man turns again to beholding the world, he no longer sees an abstract and alien nature, whose only offerings are sensations and, at most, esthetic feelings. The mineral world, plants, and animals now rise before him as projections of an existence, once contained within him and now seeking to rejoin the being through him. A liberating correlation awakens among rhythms of the soul-vital being and Creation: which thus ceases to be outward world. Among the different phenomena, man recognizes forms of a universal harmony that resonate within him as revelations, if he can engender “silence”: they resonate within the intimacy of the soul, conjured up by their original center.

Man goes beyond the level of physical knowledge, as he penetrates occult correlations of earthly life, thanks to “pure observation” and contemplation of the element springing forth in its wake. In moments of ascetic elevation, he begins to experience the radical thoughts of creation, Archetypes rising in him as fabric of the being paralyzed in appearances. This “cosmic thought” frees any thought that tends to bind man again to ordinary ego, necessity of sorrow and pleasure: it amplifies his vision and frees him in the contemplation, to the extent that it can flow within his soul, with its intrinsic power of impersonality. The ability to ease into it, and await the streaming cosmic thought with calm receptivity, has to be prepared with abiding and tenacious dedication to thought-freed-from-senses, by finding its light and transparency always again, beyond unrelenting human sorrow.

The act of knowledge that—freed of abstractness—prepares human interiority for cosmic thought, occurs simultaneously in the soul and world’s heart: it relates to the awaited orientation of man’s history. It opens the way to deliverance and to a human order, expressing the celestial one to a greater extent than a thousand moralizing books in their theological, philosophical or political incarnations; much more, indeed, than ethical and religious norms, now bereft of inner nourishment. “Only when man will understand that he belongs to the whole world; that his *I* is not merely confined to the limits of his physical being, but extends to sun, stars, and every being on Earth; and that within the limits of his skin, the *I* simply finds an expression; only after having recognized that he is

so intertwined with the world complex, can he understand the real sense of the admonishment *know thyself*" (Steiner).

In the wake of the "fall", man gradually experienced self-awareness and individuality, independent of Hierarchies that support the world, and thus eluded their influence. He stuck in blind identification to the vital-physical being—the original form of his immortality—more profoundly than if the luciferic urge had not acted on him: because of the identification and consequent loss of primordial conscience, he became an individual and imposed the ego form on the soul, believing to recognize himself in it.

Man would have remained pupil of spiritual worlds, had he not identified his "I" with the vital-physical garb beyond the limit envisioned by the original *dharma*, by virtue of the Luciferic impulse. By letting himself be "tempted", man escaped the Law; in a way, he broke it, thus laying the foundation to become an autonomous entity, acting by virtue of impulses rising in him. Among these, he will one day be able to distinguish the Spiritual alienated in nature from the element that he can freely draw from the rediscovered, intact inner Principle.

Had man remained pupil of the Spiritual World, he would not have "fallen", he would have developed perfection by gradual transmission from the Gods, but without really possessing it. Like a child who imitates taught behaviors, faithfully mimicking them without being their author, man would have ruled his psychophysical nature, without alterations and contradictions, but not as an individual. Had nature been imbued with the power flowing through him, man would never have known separation, struggle, aversion and egotism, nor disease and death; but he would not have been, as an *I*, an individually free being.

Man's entire history paves the way for his self-conscious *I*, whose freedom unfolds by opposing the original *dharma*, and thus becoming unable to nourish nature with spiritual vitality, or draw from it rightful support for its being. Cut off from the supreme stream of life, the physical-corporeal being will conjure up the necessity of death. It will become the *I*'s overarching contradiction: on the one hand, retaining the memory of immortality as obscure yearning, while at the same time feeling that it must suffer the

annihilation of its vitality¹⁶⁰, not knowing how to recognize or support itself, except through the corporeal being. Disguised as tainted memory of the original condition, impulses will act through nature—severed from the stream of immortality—along with forces of death. They will endeavor to set man back by inspiring in him inner faith, dependence, superstition, fear of freedom, and quest for a Divine to unload his responsibility on.

Luciferic influence endowed man's entity with decision-making ability, even as premature development warped his powers of self-conscience. Spiritual Science teaches that *kali-yuga* is the "dark age", in which the ultimate consequences of the "original sin" unfold. Man will be freed from it by Christ: it's up to him to acknowledge this incipient deliverance. A new power acts within man; operating with his *I*, he now can achieve an element, whose implementation has thus far been sought in mysticism, *yoga* and religion. The power that he had earlier sought in the "other", can now be found in the center of individuality¹⁶¹: not in the soul, but in the Spirit. He must open up the *I* to the Logos, before opening up the soul.

The secret is to acknowledge the presence of a Power, rising from the profound entity that, in earlier times, sought support from the other. No more can be said on that. In the contrast between Spirit and matter, in the exercise of a choice between good and evil, man's *I* reaches a point where it can positively realize this newly tasted freedom through willpower: it can enact the Power of origins, awaiting on the threshold of sensible experience, and lead it to further creation. Further, he will be able to consciously experience that Christ laid the foundation of the new, creative Power¹⁶² through the Golgotha sacrifice. What derives from this event is, nonetheless, neither free nor foregone: it's an element that can only be had by summoning up freedom: only the *I*, standing at the center of being, can enact the Power flowing from the being's center. Man is free to turn down this possibility: freedom is such that it can decline its own enactment. But the power that inevitably unfolds in this refusal ought not to stop half-way, by enduring new enslavement and dependence (changing dependence being no deliverance);

¹⁶⁰ Annientamento vitale

¹⁶¹ Al centro di se'

¹⁶² Forza ricreatrice

it ought to experience itself, in order to convey its own content: creative freedom. For now, though, man has turned down this positive possibility, and this may represent the meaning of his current history.

If deliverance and resurrection were something predictable, fateful, beyond man's decision, freedom would cease to make sense. But men, entangled in a mechanical vision of the Universe, transpose it onto a metaphysical plane and unconsciously dream about a salvation that should arise somewhere, somehow, by a sort of transcendental automatism: even the best informed await a solution coming from the outside. Were it so, deliverance would be devoid of meaning because, born of a gratuitous providence, it would bear no relationship to the Spirit. No salvation or reintegration can begin without man's free decision, because Grace can only respond to such decision. The current world situation requires the intervention of free beings that, knowing the value of the sensible sphere, can rouse in themselves the willpower to reach its limits: the only point whence the rectifying power can arise. The technique of "sense-free thought" is the path to it.

Any other path, as we have seen, is unrelenting yearning for the world, hidden attachment to the product of senses in the form of appearances. This yearning and attachment today appear even under the false pretense of spiritual quest. In this regard, such confusion reigns that even spiritual investigators can be misled. For this reason too, it must be acknowledged that humankind is late with respect to the task posed by the present-day "path" to the supersensible. Ensnared in transient forms of daily existence, freedom eludes man.

The urgency that these thoughts be realized can be envisaged, if man understands that the current moment and those preceding the end of the century¹⁶³ are decisive for man's future. There is no awareness of it, just as there is no awareness that the conditions for a rebirth are nonetheless at hand. We have shown that, acting with the normal means of thinking and will, educated according to Spiritual Science, present-day man, as "son of his time", can lucidly attain a vaster consciousness, and thus find again the wellspring of life in himself: he can recognize the Logos power awaiting him beyond the threshold of earthly deception.

¹⁶³ The XX century

Nothing will happen gratuitously. By rousing the pure willpower of meditation, man can embrace his own and the world's essential reality and recognize Christ as its bearer. The human element, long sullied by the passing of time, can be healed by the power seminally restored by the Christ, not as conveyed by the usual narrative of his history, or the machinations of theology, but through the very nature of the action He carried out in the reality of the Earth.

Error, mendacity, disease and necessity of death gradually arose through the ages. If, owing to consecration of the few, the Christ-power can be awakened in the individual as essence of a Higher *I*, these negative forces will turn again into superior faculties, along a newly ascending path. It will be realized that man's history unfolded for their formation: through them, the *I* attains its essence eternal. Qualities that feed human error by their constant alteration, are awaiting restoration to their eternal dimension. This is the sense of the novel blooming of the Tree of Life.

Just as the Lucifer-impulse¹⁶⁴ spawned man's inferior qualities, commonly mistaken as "human", so will the Christ-impulse become streaming power of transformation, working in the soul as the very impetus of his free act—and stirring every pursuit of inner freedom. Egotism will be transformed into individual power of dedication; disease will become the harbinger of superior health. And when death is gradually assumed as darkness waiting to be transcended by superior soul powers, it will become principle of Resurrection. Dying will cease to be the inevitable conclusion of Life. Death will first be solution of rhythm, in view of a return to the supersensible homeland: then luminous transmutation into immortal life. The Tree of Life will bloom anew for man.

¹⁶⁴ Seduzione luciferica

X. Contemplation

1.

If, free of dialectics, man beholds the world and observes the birth of his relationship with it, he finds that the immediate element of consciousness, the object of experience, arises without cohesion, as does the array of perceptions of inner life: unless thought is called upon.

Thought comes into view at first as one in a series of “existing”, immediately available elements. But, if one endeavors to behold it, it can reveal its own streaming, synthetic process and emerge as the element endowed with an essential self-cohesion: at the same time, it bestows cohesion onto a world that—as immediate experience—is devoid of it.

Within the range of existence, without knowing anything about it, we now have an element that:

- a) The individual contributes to create;
- b) By offering essence and existence at once, unveils its inner laws;
- c) Provides, if one wants, every possible connection among inner and outer experiences.

Such is thinking, if one can observe it.

2.

Until now, thought has been directed to the existing man, world, appearance, and becoming, by way of Culture, Philosophy and Science, without awareness that the relationship with the world and its becoming has already unfolded. It has been frittered away in images and reflections on the existent, i.e., in the inability to grasp that it was already ours from within while, as abstract thought, it's bereft of life. Man's impeding opportunity, related to a new course of his History and rectification of Civilization, is the resurrection of thought from lifeless reflection: the possibility to experience thought and its essence, as world essence.

3.

When man beholds the thought process, he can recognize conscience as the inner “space” in which thoughts become individual, whereas their principle, or pre-formal being, lies in a universal, transcendent domain. Ordinarily, man lacks awareness of how thoughts are drawn from “universal thinking”, and of the constant warping of its laws, perpetrated by the cerebral organ to the advantage of an “ego”, striving to express itself in thoughts.

When we give rise to a train of thoughts, we don’t preemptively determine the connection amongst them: which would be in itself a train of thoughts. Waking consciousness allows the synthetic series of thoughts to unfold according to their inner dynamics: because their essence is immanent to their content, and their essence alone objectively connects them with one another. Freedom is the *I*’s ability to will thought: its super-sensible principle is aroused by the experience of the essence of thinking: normally ignored.

By way of conscious thought, man has not only existence, but also essence as thought: not only individual thoughts, but the individuating power as well; not only the becoming, but also the original being.

4.

If thought is moved by its principles, the latter can’t be subjective. The principle that, for the world exterior, must be sought through investigation—which is thinking—is immanent to thinking itself. The demonstration is the experience to be had, by letting the principle express itself according to its being. It’s the meditation experience.

The principle is the essence to be had, not as reflection or dialectics, but as pure content, with the same immediacy with which physical senses experience the outer world.

Then one has the world essence.

The world, experienced through a series of disconnected perceptions, can reveal its original unity through the thought-essence. The concept that, by way of concentration, can rise within conscience, pregnant with incorporeal life, reveals itself as belonging to the object and rising from it, just as perception rises from the object’s appearance.

The concept that, as freed thought, encounters sensible perception, appears within the soul as an independent element in its objectivity: it unites itself with perception, giving it completeness, as essence of the perceived object, which nonetheless fails to appear in it. It appears in it as collection of finite elements and motifs that can be experienced by way of discontinuous sensations. The discontinuity arises exclusively because of the current human sensorial organization. It is overcome by the connecting power of thought that can experience essential contents as well as their synthesis, to the extent that it can experience itself.

The very essence of things rises within the soul and, according to its objectivity, can encounter perception, untroubled by psychic interferences. The Initiate knows that, in experiencing living knowledge, nothing is inaccessible to inner experience, if he can catalyze the encounter and synthesis of two powers converging on him from two different directions: thought and perception. Not thought and perception as beholden by abstract schemes of theoretical knowledge, but rather as the two elements of supersensible knowledge, restored to their pure function by the meditative discipline. If man didn't exist, the world scene would make no sense: it would be sleep and obscurity; no knowledge of the inner content of being and things would be possible, because there would be no vehicle for it to unfold as reality.

5.

Knowledge is no stranger to the world, as impersonal, living synthesis of the being's interior and exterior polarities, mediated by pure thought. It's born as living element, necessary to the world economy, by overcoming self-contained subjectivity: it relates at once to the individual and to the universal history, in which he is cast.

Today, a further rhythm of world history—intended in a cosmic and transcendent sense—is only possible if man implements such knowledge, by dint of free decision. It begins as an event taking place in the investigator's soul, if he is able to will it beyond the limits of an ancient spiritual nature.

The new human cycle depends on individual decision. Knowledge, as hinted at here, can only be implemented by virtue of freed thought, and not by a natural path or

through dialectic thought. Such free thought is not only the harbinger of individual deliverance, but also initial substance of the Cosmos to be.

6.

This “solar” knowledge brings about an event that could not possibly occur in any other state of the manifest being: man lives in his own self the Universe’s creating thought: the Cosmic becoming projects its own being as the individual’s inner act. If this projection failed to occur, universal history would remain unknown, constantly paralyzed in its extroversion: which occurred for man’s sake. And such it remains for abstract thought: interpretable according to infinite dialectics and erudition, sentimentally translated in all kinds of possible mysticism as the image-garb of a “divine” from which man believes to be dependent and on which he constantly unloads responsibility.

7.

“Living” knowledge is the first form of restoration of the original reality. It demands a thinking activity unshackled from psychophysical conditions: something more, in this sense, than simple thought: synthesis of soul powers.

Thought-essence arises to the extent that it’s untroubled by arbitrariness: it can only act when the inner space of its manifestation has been rendered transparent, while its own presence, aroused, engenders such space. It’s now an independent stream of willpower.

As man lets pure thought act on him, he beholds ideas in their metaphysical birth and learns that there is no transcendent will in them, nothing external to which they must conform: they rise as free entities, from the spiritual sphere in which he is rooted. As he freely opens up to them, they act in him as inspirations and formative powers, by virtue of their content, penetrating the psychic world on their own strength and seeking the path to action: whose enactment and shape therefore depend on his creative capacity. Their moral sense is born after they manifest in him, not before. Moral is their result, not their origin: the latter is supersensible.

8.

Pure thought delivers the experience of freedom to the investigator, by beginning to bring about a conscious distinction between the domain where the soul is subject to exterior or interior conditions, and that where it lives as luminous entity, whose every thought and act of will are born as self-determinations, shorn of psychic, logical or moral assumptions. It's the initial element in which the free being is articulated, and can look at the unfolding soul-psychic nature as other-than-self: thus providing support for the higher *I* expression.

An *I* activity independent of nature is born from pure thinking, and endeavors to enact sensible experience, otherwise destined to remain an end in itself, i.e., error, nourishment of the daily existential degradation.

9.

The initial task is rectifying thought: making it autonomous, freeing it from any psychic influence and bond to the corporeal domain, so that it may flow from its essence. This practice implies, without direct determination, the action of a pure willpower. By willing thought, man wills outside his nature. What is needed is decisive insistence and calm capacity to wait, and they can only arise from absolute dedication. Thought can manifest its objective strength, if it can first converge through pure attention (concentration) on an object, or theme: subsequently, man can experience thought's objective strength in the enlivened concept, with the same immediacy as the physical world perception.

The physical world transmutes before the inner being that rises as beholder of thought. The power of magical ideation takes over the function normally carried out by the rational intellect¹⁶⁵, if man lets the inner object rise on its own strength as thought: it reveals its principle within the soul.

10.

It's decisive for present-day man to turn the faculty of observation, as developed for physical investigation, to the thought process. Typically, thought can't be beholden as

¹⁶⁵ L'intelletto giudicante

an outer world object or motion of psychic life: normally, beholding an object occupies the thinking conscience fully, so that thought—if one so wills—can be experienced only after it has been diverted from the object.

Thoughts must first arise to be beholden. But beholding them is productive only if man can have a “synthesis” of thoughts before him. A real thought is always synthesis: it’s idea. The experience of this synthesis allows man to discern supersensible entities, living in thoughts.

When man directs thinking to an object—and the object becomes a “synthesis” of thoughts—he can’t think of himself. As this synthesis is willed, the inability to think about oneself is the beginning of inner independence. The independent *I* can arise to the extent that the ordinary *I* falls silent.

Feelings and urges don’t concern the world, but the individual, to the extent that he is confined to the ego’s limits. Sorrow and pleasure are born in the subjective domain, which is constantly projected onto world, beings and events. This truly prevents man from knowing the world, and letting it live in him, finding himself in its foundation, which is the *I*’s secret.

Man is oblivious to himself as he thinks, because normally thought alone grants the possibility to be outside the subjective limit, not to worry about the self, and be steeped in the “other”. As this obliviousness is willed, the silent witness to obliviousness rises.

“Unseen seer, unheard hearer, un-thought thinker, unknown knower: outside it, there is no other seer, hearer, thinker, knower: it’s your *atman*, the immortal, eternal regent” (*Bṛhadaranyaka-upanishad*).

11.

The *I*, as arouser of thoughts, can never be thought. Whereas thinking can never prescind from the *I*, the *I* can experience itself independent of thought. It can do so by letting a series of thoughts flow before itself with the same spontaneity enacted by consciousness, when totally focused on the object (as in concentration), so that it can

think about it: oblivious to the thinker. Here, a superior type of conscience becomes possible: it lives by virtue of its ability to unfold beyond the series of thoughts. It's the *I*'s concrete enactment. It no longer needs, in order to be, oppositions, or physical and mental supports: having activated its power through thinking, it's now independent of it, insofar as thinking now flows before it according to its own law. It no longer needs to lean on thinking.

12.

Who in me is conscious of my existence? I¹⁶⁶ say: "I".

But if my existence were limited to being conscious of existing, it would be one with the consciousness of it, and the latter would not arise in me as need. I must realize that the arouser of the consciousness of existing is the same that can cast doubt on its own existence, or deny the validity of thought, even as it relies on it to express such thought; or can set itself up dialectically as self-conscious principle, without actually experiencing its own self-consciousness; or call itself an "I", without ever experiencing it.

Someone, unheard in its essential voice, but potentially at the center of conscience, suggests to me that I exist, even as it appropriates the unfolding act of my existence, extinguishing my identity—which is its identity—in an inner mystery: this is what I experience as I think, as thought frees itself.

I think, then I know that I have thought, then I think that I know that I have thought, but these consecutive thoughts rise in me separated by the subtlest intervals, in which a connecting power operates by tying one act of thought to the other. It's the being of thought.

Despite every new, arising thought, the essence of the subtlest intervals is the real thread of thought: they exist for rational conscience, to the extent that I can think about them in their negative value, when they no longer are.

If I manage to experience thought as a streaming power, beyond its discursive expression, the subtler life that emerged with levity within conscience, underlying

¹⁶⁶ This is the only chapter in which Scaligero makes conventional use of the first person pronoun, so I have used "I" without bolding or italicizing (See note 21). This chapter represents the first written form of Scaligero's inner experience, which accounts for its somewhat different layout and style.

thoughts as unquenchable flashes of its light, can reveal itself and conjure up quiet as a further “path”: it’s the connection of interval with interval, the “duration” of the unique interval.

I know that I realize self-consciousness and recognize myself as thinking, because from an essential source someone summons up the constant, unfolding tide of thought; but at any point where I recognize myself as an “I”, yet a new tide of thought flows to confer that consciousness on me. Constant tides of thought allow me to know that I exist at any point in time: and any time I reach into the origin of the tide of thought that sustains my I-consciousness, a new thought arises from that source. This is the point in which one can constantly turn from the instant to the Eternal.

I can recognize myself as “I”, insofar as a thought flowed in me from the essential source: I am born as consciousness of myself in the moment when thought takes shape. And because thought only makes sense for me when it’s imbued with consciousness, i.e., when it acquires an “individuated” form, the task of seizing the “individuating” power implies a further motion, capable of untangling thought from the “individuation” necessary for me to call myself an “I”.

When I turn to the wellspring of thought, the element that I intend to retrace is already acting in my motion; I find myself in the condition of someone who wants to reach for the center of a circle, but can only avail itself of a centrifugal force, and is thus constantly thrown back around the circle. The task is to will the motion, through the source of willpower flowing as thought, by focusing thought on a point of the circle, a theme or an object.

13.

Whenever thought mediates itself, thanks to a consciously implemented extinction of subjective thought, it conveys pure ideating “which is in itself”, and can be experienced only insofar as the normal support of consciousness is removed, while the awareness acquired for sensible knowledge is retained with respect to it.

The value of concentration becomes clear at this point, as integration of the dynamic function normally carried out for thought by the logic-mathematical aptitude of the physical investigation.

Further still, the inner process of perception allows thought to follow the intimate process of its own intuition, as it contains—in the spatial present—the temporal past and future, so that the creative essence lives again through it. For this to occur, thought must be preventively re-educated according to its superior nature, and freed from the necessity to be molded exclusively according to sensible perceptions, psychic needs or deep layers of ethnic memory.

The thinking activity that flows unknown in the interiority, denying its own essence in the form imposed by series of emotions or abstractions, can become the mind's rectifying power by stanching, at a consciously decided moment, the dissipation on which temporal consciousness is based. This activity animates the mental sphere¹⁶⁷ with its warmth and light.

When an order, arising from the extinction of dialectics, has been established, one can realize that one had never truly thought prior to this integration: one feels that thinking begins only when the domain of sensations and abstractions can be considered “other” than self. Prior thinking was nearly illusory, a concatenation of words presenting as thoughts.

14.

Dialectic thinking can initially represent a “direction” toward conscious thinking: the two are not a duality; they are different gradations of the same power.

If we let a series of thoughts flow—initially by turning them to an object—the intensity becomes manifest, if we can retrace its origin: the very process can be beholden. But the I is the beholder. At first, the task can't be achieved by acting on thought itself, but by committing thought to a univocal activity that catalyzes the manifestation of its secret energy. At a later point, attention can be turned to the spiritual content thus manifested.

¹⁶⁷ Il mentale

15.

When we observe the world, we can gather knowledge of its becoming, but the thinking applied to know things remains unknown, as the flowing¹⁶⁸ image-garb of their knowledgeability. If we manage to behold thought, we can have it in itself, and at the same time get to know the liberating identity, never before experienced, because now the energy of knowledge¹⁶⁹ is of the same nature as the known object.

This activity knows itself in its dynamic moment, before its abstract paralysis; through this activity, thought lives no longer as mere image-garb of an object, but as entity with its own validity. Thought shows its cosmic reality by being prevented from descending into the “reflection” domain, even as it becomes experience.

16.

As pure thought blossoms, one can experience it¹⁷⁰ as soon as it rises within conscience: it needs to be, in order to be known. By knowing it, we live in it.

The investigator’s constant task, regardless of the kind of thoughts he has about thinking, is to know the unknown: knowing being unknown, until it becomes knowable, through new unknown knowing. Unknowledgeability, in its constant reemerging, indicates a superior limit, the threshold of the Absolute.

Observing this phase implies, among other things, the solution of speculative dualism between being and thinking: it becomes clear that, until now, man wasn’t, because the constant response of conscience to the series of sensations was mistaken for being: existing was mistaken for being; and thought, as dialectics of existing, was set in contrast to existing. Man now realizes that he lives in resurgent thought: being is thinking.

Pure thought is born as a creative process, whereas normal or “reflected” thought can only have an image of creation, a reflected repetition. By opening up to the stream of thought and embracing living thoughts, so as to be in them, one behaves according to the

¹⁶⁸ Continua

¹⁶⁹ L’energia conoscente

¹⁷⁰ Sapere di esso

cosmic rhythm that acted at the world's foundation, appearing as "fact", or "event"¹⁷¹. The world essence is resurgent and resumes its work in liberated thought.

17.

One has pure thinking when one lets flourish—within the soul—an autonomous activity of thinking, unlike that usually summoned up to reflect on sensible reality, and yet having the intensity of life. By relinquishing the self to this thought, one feels its essence rise in him. This is identical to the intimate source of being, such that one has the impression of being born with it: to have, in it, the beginning of one's own existence.

18.

I can achieve concentration on a pure content of thought, independent of automatic cerebrations and arbitrary associations; in a second moment, I can let go of this content and let the arisen thought-power work, as an inner stream of life that rises not from subjectivity—indeed at its level transcends it—even as it manifests in me.

I can sense that it isn't me thinking, but that the superior life¹⁷² of the Universe manifests in me as thought: my willpower enables a process that continues the world process within my inner life. Through my initiative, the world process resumes its motion in my soul. Only when thinking manifests as objective power, can the *I* be independent of thought and converge on itself, to the extent that it experiences the identity of its being with universal thought.

He who raises the question regarding man's mission, can at this point find an answer: that it won't be dialectics.

19.

In the concentration, thought is turned to an object until pure ideation becomes active: proceeding further yet, the object is removed, and only the aroused ideal content is left: thus does the stream of thought attain transparency. Pure thought acquires a rhythmic

¹⁷¹ Divenuto

¹⁷² Vicenda

or blooming quality, along with a constant unfolding of the eternal about to become, and still demanding an “absent” witness to the process, a silent knower of this transparency.

Man experiences how the supersensible world tends to manifest as thought-power within the soul, but is preempted by the ego limits. Man has the sense that the power urging on the threshold of conscience is the principle of reality.

Pure thinking is the first conscious manifestation of supersensible Reality.

The soul perceives it as the eye perceives light and colors. Just as color is the appearance of the sensible being to the soul, so is pure thinking an opening up¹⁷³ of the Supersensible to the further life of the soul.

At some point, having mastered stability in the contemplation, the secret is to let the process unfold on its own. Respite arises in this motionless quiet as the basis of contemplation, while the “relationship” between beholding and beholden is a texture of love, acting yet unbeknownst.

20.

Through the mastery of concentration, man can let thought rise on its own, untainted by personal interferences: it can express itself according to its principle, while the soul is open to its flow.

Thought rids itself of the ancient mental spell and uncoils thinking motion from thinking motion. It lets it be in its purity: on the verge of becoming, it reverts to being, thanks to calm, inner silence: while appearing to vanish, it’s reborn and blooms again, livelier, always new, as motion of the Infinite: message of mighty, universal thought.

This thinking spawns devotion that gradually reveals its lofty musicality: the series of thoughts is encountered in its pure unfolding, while its metaphysical immobility persists untainted, such that every thought is, flows and asserts itself from the depths: so that it can be had as pure form, and at the same time as world essence.

“I let every thought be as life, I let it descend to feel it as life, so that I may feel its life as the *I*’s garb”.

Thought takes the shape of its being.

¹⁷³ Il darsi

It's the world of pure ideas, through which the soul comes alive.

21.

As the *I* heralds its presence, man can feel that time is ripe to let go of meditation and concentration, to the extent that they represent spiritual forms bound to individual conscience, expression of an element to be overcome by the very thought-essence thus aroused. But the essence is the "void": it's no longer thought. Meditation is replaced by an inner movement toward the transcendent origin: the *I*. Concentration is resolved and rendered transparent by an aptitude to behold, at every passage, calm and silent lightning forms of creative Imagination: the threshold of inspired conscience.

XI. Initiate synthesis

Conventional thought is the passive instrument of sensations, instincts, feelings, urges, and reminiscences: i.e., of nature. “Sense-free thought”, unshackled from the central nervous system—the mediator of passivity, escapes nature and erects a different foundation for conscience. It unfolds as pure thought-Power, impersonal in its universality and keystone of extra-sensible experience.

Ordinarily valid as guise of an object, theme, or human goal, thinking now becomes vehicle of the Spirit’s manifestation and supersensible substance of its action. Man discovers that the experience of thought makes only sense in this regard. Self-contained rationality is but the systematic nature of impotent thought. In ordinary experience, objects become goals by being conjured up as such: mostly, thoughts arise as ultimate limits. In every-day life, the individual can’t avoid forming opinions by thinking about things, events, and his relationship with them. With the beginning of supersensible experience, man acknowledges the provisional nature of opinions and thoughts, even the most important ones from the usual standpoint, and gets to experience, in their stead, the value of pure Thought-Power—routinely estranged in them. From an absolute perspective, opinions and thoughts don’t arise to confer value on the contents they enrobe, but to draw man, fortified with understanding and unconditional willpower, to the essence of which they are provisional expression. Ultimately, man has to rid thought of its automatic projection into usual thoughts, and experience it in its pure vitality. The Spirit’s reality then manifests in it.

The subject—and his core being, for whom all internal and external perceptions arise—experience the Thought-Power, freed of thoughts, with the same immediacy experienced by physical senses in the external world. Knowledge arises now from perception, and no longer from arguing or reflecting: it’s an event, not dialectics. This experience can be defined as “Spiritual thinking in the individual interiority”. The latter perceives thinking-before-thoughts, which is one with the thinking fabric of the universe,

direction of celestial intelligence: it will be recognized as the power capable of overcoming the present telluric intelligence and integrating the world according to “solar” logic. This power nourishes the soul of the man who experiences meditation.

Thanks to this initial deliverance, it’s possible to experience directly the unshackling “subtle” and “vital” powers of thought: the way is open to knowledge of the etheric cosmos. No intellectual or mental resolve can act in this direction, because their level has already been superseded. It can only be the ultimate result of concentration, freed from residual, tenuous ties with the subjective, rational-sentient world; i.e., activated through internal rectification, mediated by the objectivity of the thought-essence. At the same time, it’s possible to experience Macrocosmic thought (Hierarchies) acting in man’s being, and giving rise to birth and death. These can be envisaged as alternating moments in the rhythm of an identical, superior Substance of Life, already present in freed thought, and aimed at overcoming death. (Macrocosmos = Universal *Shakti*; Central etheric stream = *Kundalini’s* fire.)

Vital energies, which provide the physical underpinning of inner activity, are continuously squandered in the underlying process and constantly ensnared in the pathological processes of thought’s abstract activity by different feelings and urges, and especially by egotistic thought (intellectualism, rhetoric, and fancying). In essence, by tying itself and being confined to the corporeal being—the initial condition of self-consciousness—the *I* is wedged as ego between Spirit and world, and severs nature from the Spiritual. Nature becomes outward and lifeless, so that man’s self-consciousness can arise: life is outwitted by death. The world and lesser realms of nature are sacrificed, so that the *I* may be born: while those worlds await their deliverance at the hand of man.

Simultaneously with mental quiet, a vast calm unfolds within the realms of feeling and willpower. The *I*-Purusha beholds this quiet’s light, as it descends into the individuality: the astral being, restored to its pure quiet, becomes the foundation of conscience’s communion with the etheric domain. A profound transformation, enabled by supersensible Power along with imaginative vision, is possible for the disciple who is open and consecrated, thanks to meditation.

Usually, thought burns vital energies that are restored by the etheric during sleep, because soul-spiritual powers put limits to the destruction necessary for the rise of ordinary conscience during waking life (In man's etheric body act Hierarchies, bearing—to various degrees—the primordial power known in Tantric Yoga as *Shakti*). The initiate's task is to unshackle thought from the cerebral system, to experience freed thought and let the experience live within conscience, until its transcendent content begins to act on its own. In essence, the task is to let the mind manifest its divine-spiritual order, as it unconsciously happens during sleep.

By insisting in this contemplation, man feels ever more imbued with the Power from which the ability to behold emanates, and can seize the Subject of this motion. The *I*'s self-perception begins to be real, and ceases to be a philosophical theme or vague feeling: the Sat-Purusha surfaces. It's similar to a sunrise in the mental quiet: "A sun shedding light on the plant ...". In other conditions, sleep would ensue. In essence, man realizes a condition in which brain rests as if asleep, but the *I* remains conscious.

As freed thought-power begins to flow, it can be directed to encounter perceptions, according to the technique of pure observation: here takes place the synthesis of inner and outer polarities of existence; through it, the *I* is freed at once from the soul and sensible world's bonds. The *I* experiences itself as essence. As the Mystery of the sensible world is unraveled, knowledge of the perennial event alluded to in the Grail myth unfolds, along with its enlightening function for present-day man.

Knowledge that leads to the achievement of this clear conscience and to the liberation of the etheric within the physical, is connected to the cosmic regency of the spiritual entity, traditionally referred to by the name of Michael. By following this path, man is connected with the magical-solar impulse of the age: he is therefore in communion with the "Ancient of Days" or "Spirit of Time". This commitment runs deep and confers a revolutionary function—in the present time, among humankind—vis-à-vis the ancient world that endeavors to look modern, under multiple disguises.

The ordinary thought process unfolds conditioned by sensible experience, expressing itself without mediation (Ahriman's influence) or as abstract transcription of

the same limit (Lucifer's influence). When thought rises as pure willpower, enlivened through inner practice by its freedom from sensible bonds and abstractness, it lifts the *I* from the luciferic-ahrimanic domain to the sphere of metaphysical freedom. The extra-subjective element of willpower begins to operate in pure thought: willed by the pure *I*, willpower begins, as contemporary expression of the world of origins. The substance of this pure willpower draws from an intimate, perennial wellspring that, present in man since before the "fall", was subsequently taken from him, to be restored by the Custodian of this Mystery, the entity named Michael. Its mission is to rejoin the free man with Christ. For the real seeker of the Christ, there is no other Eucharist.

The path of Michael is the path to man's communion with cosmic willpower: man frees the mind¹⁷⁴ from the luciferic-ahrimanic element, by opening himself up to this willpower and making it individual by way of thought. Thought rises again as pure power: becomes harbinger of action, secret of a renewed existence: beginning of the possibility to establish a center for the world of instincts, to reengage and let them blossom again as spiritual powers, fortified by their gestation through the Earth's deadly ferment. The initiate is now bearer of a loftier and more fecund earthly balance, that acts through the coming together of its individual expression with the flowing super-individual power: to which he is open through an unqualified capacity of dedication, arising from profound willpower. Freedom and clarity of conscience, thus experienced, are communion with the Logos: the reason for the Christ's sacrifice: still unrecognized in its real sense and cosmic import. Thus far, man has experienced a human adaptation of His figure or has fought against it, in either case under the illusion of following or opposing Christ.

The path of the seeker of earthly powers, or those who measure the Supersensible according to their own dependence from vital or earthly values, is the path of the weak who are trying to find a quick method to become strong, or rather appear strong, and fail to make the decision to overcome themselves. They simply develop a beginning of conscious thought and subordinate the first results to their own personality, leaving nature's limits intact, strengthening the ego's life and managing at most to clamber on the

¹⁷⁴ Il mentale

world scene with a smattering of originality. Were man to conquer freedom for the purpose of mastering and identifying with it, he would indeed fail to master it. He can only be free insofar as he is free from this category as well, having overcome the attachment to freedom. He masters it to the extent that he is able to emanate it and dedicate it to the Great Game for further conquests, and for the deliverance of additional worlds. This emanation and offer are in reality creative abnegation, i.e., Love.

The reality of freedom can only be an essentially individual, inner motion, insofar as it conveys, through an act of intuition, a super-individual essence, i.e., man's essential, pure spiritual foundation. The inexhaustible irradiation of man's "core" element becomes consciously spontaneous through freedom: lust-free donation, through an overabundance of serenity and comprehension for other beings. It's the Sun-path, as opposed to egotistic identification with a given "freedom", which is still collusion between the being—agitating to become free—and nature: it's neither freedom, nor Sun-path, nor Logos-path.

Clear conscience, brought to bear on feeling, reveals the unreality of human tragedy or comedy. It disentangles the vital experience from personal feelings, enabling them to flow unaffected by the ego, and manifest their cosmic origin: spawning a freed world history. As long as one is upset by human injustice and passions, by men's attachment to lower *prakriti*, "egotism", and untruthfulness, he's still bound to *maya*, whose domain—instead—ought to be valid only as the site where the disentanglement is experienced. The task is to seize the powers at play behind passions. Facts, events, daily contrasts, and wearying impressions have no other sense: they have no meaning of their own, but only as tools to seize the powers of which they are expression, and only insofar as they can reveal to what extent is man still maneuvered by natural necessity. These powers always lead back to the subject of this movement, to the investigator possessed of an intact self-centeredness¹⁷⁵ and, in it, of the independence principle. Beyond every perception, the perceiver comes of age.

Man experiences a sense of wonder and compassion in realizing how needy beings are in their bonds, caught up in the game of *maya*: he feels that acting on their

¹⁷⁵ Punto di partenza in se'

behalf means to continue the opus begun in us. Our deliverance is accomplished in them: indeed, by looking beyond their appearance, man can glimpse the unaccomplished “principle” in them, the Logos, articulated in their fictitious individuation and transcending them. A sense of the vanity of subjective feelings arises by beholding the existent: feeling is recognized as a cosmic power, waiting to be freed from personal deformations. Man should not endure its usual forms in human relationships, such as love and hatred. He should recognize that feeling manifested in these forms to enable its transmutation or resurrection: which is our commitment. There’s no need to feed someone else’s sentient necessity by passively wallowing in others’ feelings and passions: man must be open to, but unhurt by them. Every individual, so long as he is unaware of the path to freedom, is bound to his “provisional being”¹⁷⁶; he is who he is, has his own path, *karma* and, true to the law that rules him, develops the typical urges of the form with which he is identified, according to a necessity, not unlike that of natural processes. Man’s ability to hurt others should not engender a feeling of hatred toward him, just as it wouldn’t make sense to hate nature’s destructive wrath. In this way, the soul world, constantly upset by obtuse feelings, is freed from the *ego*’s paralyzing motion. No longer corrupted by their flowing through the soul, spiritual powers manifest in their pure state: with nothing supporting the soul but adamantine void, they are conveyed as forms of a new, magic life, and no longer as subjective emotions.

The disciple’s ability to achieve this state is determined by his independence from the world of senses and integral control over the world of thoughts. The very experience of thought becomes different: man sees how normal consciousness, instead of being nourished by autonomous thought, constantly absorbs and echoes more profound energies flowing from organic life: these energies he can now experience directly, beyond cerebral mediation, i.e., before they become alienated in corporeal processes and seized by the “ego” for its own expression.

¹⁷⁶ Esserci

The attainment of this state is signaled by the identification¹⁷⁷ of the “I am” consciousness with the essence of what rises as reality, beyond the stage of appearances. The inner state of truth becomes experience: a judgment becomes true because it’s experienced arising as objective thought-essence that doesn’t have anything preceding it, and represents the initial motion of reality as idea within the soul. If man proceeds up to the point where the essence of something rises as idea, he experiences the “*I*” as the central point of this process; an *I* that doesn’t need any other justification, except being itself, having the pure foundation of itself, now emerging from the object.

Within the soul, the world essence is identified with the essence of individuality. To the extent that man proceeds toward this identification, a world of freedom arises: it begins to express itself as pure intuitions, or perceptions of essences. The sphere of action lies now wide open¹⁷⁸, insofar as willpower can mediate the inner force rising when conscience is illuminated by these essential intuitions. Freedom can become creative willpower, and resolve the precipitation states, through which powers have been ensnared into the physical domain. Within the fabric of creation, willpower can be perceived as unfolding, radiating idea: bewitched by Ahrimanic powers to focus on the sensible manifestation, and thus paralyze their inner form in the obscurity of existential necessity. Man realizes that the inability to will himself unaltered, through the tension directed to the exterior form, through a-temporal continuity, overwhelms the principle of manifestation, the subject, in the object: such that the essence is alienated as appearance, becomes unconscious motion, instinct, blind force—mechanically sought in its objects. Such is the texture of nature: it’s the set of the “fall”, where the degradation of the essence into existence becomes evident: precipitation of celestial beings in an identification that leads them to automatically insist in the act that blinded them in the first place. Thus is the supersensible spellbound by the physical world; physical nature is experienced only in the ultimate, inexplicable stage of its drama, as external matter: man’s task is to restore it to the Supersensible.

¹⁷⁷ Coincidere

¹⁷⁸ Puo’ essere liberata

Man now undoes the lust that ruled thought-feeling-will, and unshackles the power of the will from the inertia of nature: the will that failed to be awake during the "fall" is now roused. It rises as overcoming the inadequacy before the being, through which Spirit decayed and became nature. The surging *I* finds again and beholds the being's primordial forms, whose central essence he failed to hold: by connecting himself again with the reality of Archetypes, he experiences the world in living imagery, rising from the grave of physical matter.

At this point, the disciple can experience the rise of lust: he recognizes within himself a psychic element through which lust treads. If ascetics of thought-freed-of-senses can lead him to the origin of fluctuating lust, he discovers that it, in its pure state, is the same will that created the world. To the extent that he is now able to take it up and will it in himself, he can implement the *I* as his being and existence's center.

He doesn't make a stand with his will against the series of automatisms, instincts, and passions that prevail on him, but recognizes in them unique and provisional alterations of the will: yearnings linked to objects. From here, a long and difficult reintegration task begins, through which an element-intertwined with the being as intoxicating lust-can rise again in its reality, as pure will. Pure will is the *I*'s power fabric. Will bound to an object is lust. Objectless will is the emasculation of lust: it reveals itself as self-will. It begins to live through the resurrection of thought and feeling: it carries itself forward, each time reaffirming itself as self-will, tending to undo every desire at the origin and to recapture it in its essence.

The task is difficult and long because it confronts the drama of daily existence—a drama in which man ought to remember that he is only a character, cast in a certain role. At any time, the relapse into an inferior identification is thus possible, and it isn't grave, if one is aware of it: it can indeed be motivation for a deeper resolution. But because the task is to converge on the wellspring of existence—whose fabric, as lust, necessarily continues to constitute the vital basis of the being's experience—it's inevitable, at a certain point, to experience the contrast between being and non-being as between the power of life and that of death. It's difficult to overcome this contrast until man has summoned up the power of a higher Principle than life and death in the center of the self: until man has

experienced that death is constantly conjured up by a superior life, which he can't avoid destroying as long as life's shape fails to conform to its content.

The disciple now senses that he doesn't exist because he wants to, but because he willed it in a state that transcended the existential one. He now retraces the power of will, from which until now he has been estranged, to the origin of his being; he recognizes it operating in vital processes, with respect to which ordinary conscience is dormant.

The task is to meet this will at the source, by conjuring up and identifying profound thought energies, constantly squandered in their dialectic form. Pure will can rise through thought, activated as a power uncalled for by nature: were the same power perceived as such, man would experience in it super-individual willpower, whose wellspring is the very power of the Logos.

The human state can be overcome, the ego known and delimited, the will found again: the entire existential endeavor, daily sorrow and joy of being have no other sense. The secret is to acquire and nourish this awareness: without which, life between birth and death is only obscure existence, meaningless endurance of good and evil. Man needs knowledge, shorn of misleading hues, and able to convey its truthfulness, right where man reaches the end of human, ethical-religious and psychological justifications. No doctrine belabored by the ego, or derived from a desire to excel, can heal man. Spiritual Science grants this healing power, to the extent that it allows man to work ascetically on himself using the immediate powers of consciousness, and thus to overcome the limits imposed by the ego-corporeal nature.

A sure sign of the validity of this inner formation can be had by verifying that it doesn't occur for us, but for the Divine; not for us, but for what we recognize as "other". The "other" is the *I*'s true abode: ours. This is the ultimate secret: to which man can gain access not through mystical sensitivity, but thanks to precise perception. When there is consecration and impersonality; when it becomes possible, through proceeding, aware lucidity, to be independent of the identification, to behold thought and soul motions, and to experience the self in the world; we then realize that ascetics is not for us, but for Man; not for us, but for the Eternal that sustains Man, and in this sense for an absolute *I*: to be

conveyed to everyone in its wholeness, even as individuality remains intact. As foundation of the self—once the ego has been extinguished—man finds the individual's sustenance: the Logos. Man, at last, understands the expression: "Not I, but Christ in me", which is to say: "Not the *I*'s illusory form, but the *I*". It's the *I* Eternal, to which the sacrifice of a provisional "*I*" provided an individual form.

XII. The modern path to the supersensible

Man's path is the "path of thought", which he has just begun to tread. We endeavored to show, based on Spiritual Science, that man's experience of thought is nowhere close to what thought can be: it's harbinger, unaware effort, and first tenuous sign of a power that can be experienced in itself. It would be grave if, conditions being ripe, this power were to be squandered in expressive ramifications or refined speechifying, and remain harbinger, talk, abstractness, dialectics, i.e., shadow of its essence.

It can be said that a new organ of knowledge is being honed through rational experience¹⁷⁹, and that their relationship is akin to a principle's with its manifestations. It's possible to seize the sense of current History, provided that it be understood not as the Spirit's ultimate goal, but as provisional consequence of the process through which the Spirit manifests its will. The Spirit unfolds not through History, but through individual forces that—experienced—result in the array of events through which man beholds History: which, therefore, is not the real one, even if it derives from it.

Our surrounding modern civilization, even if it meets the calling of collective consciousness, can be envisaged in its logical fabric as a product of the intellect: as culture, science, technology, social organization, and politics. When viewed in the context to which we endeavored to direct the reader, this is not the goal of the human journey, but an instrument for the formation of a spiritual organ that is for now primitively shaped as intellect, and can't be conveyed yet as true awareness, because it demands a more lucid and vast awareness than currently possible.

The opposition of ancient nature to the birth of this organ can explain man's problems: it's their real reason. To be molded, this organ must be unshackled from ancient form-giving powers that still tend to operate as foundation of existence, even though their function has long ceased. Not only the ordinary vision of the being, but its vital basis must be overcome for this formation to be accomplished.

¹⁷⁹ Ragione

The birth of this organ requires various events and spiritual crises. To complete their process, they¹⁸⁰ expel a fabric, whose spatial-temporal form represents events and facts. These facts, as a consequence, are not valid in themselves, but as signs of a supersensible reality implemented through them, yet independent of and irreducible to them: the very substance of history that can be accessed only through the motion of pure ideas rising from the same level, and not with abstract thought modeled after the facts. This history can't be known as long as its appearances are assumed as real and self-sufficient, and the cycle of passions and individual or collective instincts clings to them with the immediacy and intensity required by absolute values.

If man wants to shed light on this state of affairs, he will have to realize that these values relate uniquely to the birth of a novel organ of knowledge. Its formation requires individual transformation and is opposed by a hollowed out world that tenaciously survives, disguised as “law”, “norm”, “tradition”, “progress” and “social evolution”; it engenders certain occurrences, contrasts, and phenomena as indirect and provisional means of its expression. Its unfolding is the call of History; which, seen in its external value and secondary fabric, is not real History.

An archetypal form of this organ of knowledge was the beacon of the archaic man. The very scientific investigation of the ancient world, when beholden as a whole with its different hues, provides a presentment thereof. The greatness and breadth of vision of the superior type of pre-historical man can be explained by the presence in him of a “Light-Principle” which, as we have seen, did not belong to him. It led and transcended him: human action was creative to the extent that it conformed to it.

The signs left by the great pre-Christian civilizations suggest that man's inner constitution was so different from the current one as to be wholly incomprehensible outside a reductionist scheme, necessary for current man's historical representation. If we set these schemes aside and consider the facts independently from those signs, a vision of original humankind transpires, for which communion with the Divine was immediate and the psychic world exclusively a mediator of the spiritual, next to the physical domain.

¹⁸⁰ [sic], it must be referred to spiritual crises

The latter was able to partake of the higher principle, but at its level and within appropriate limits. It's necessary to distinguish the three dimensions¹⁸¹ to be able to behold, without confusion—as did ancient traditions, patristic Christianity and currently Spiritual Science—the decadence of these luminous cultures and of this human type. The soul was receptive to metaphysical inspirations and clung to them—through wise men and priests—through a system of knowledge codified as social structure. To the extent that this happened thanks to a spontaneous communion of the “psyche” (soul) with the super-individual principle (Spirit), moral and social good did not constitute a problem, nor was it object of rational investigation. The Spirit operated within man's interiority, expressing an order that could manifest directly in his life as moral order, when the necessary conditions were ritually and culturally present.

The age of spontaneous communion with the Spiritual ends with the period corresponding to Mediterranean proto-history: a period in which “knowledge” is no longer direct communion, but “imaginative vision”, which will later be reflected as myth. The latter will have its sensible version¹⁸² in cosmogonic poetry and epos, while a millennial process will be completed: a detachment of sorts of the soul, or psychic world, from the supersensible domain (the term has only an indicative value, as manifestation of the Spiritual). It will be a loss of relationship between “human” and “divine”, which cannot be, for humankind, but regression or fall into a lower state. Following this event, which occurs over epochal time spans, man is forced to elaborate his knowledge within the psychic limits of individuality, whose loftiest possibility unfolds as rational faculty.

The Spiritual that used to be identified with man's personality, and from which he drew inspiration by impersonally conforming to its law, now becomes external world—from the standpoint of man's “fall”. Now separated from it and no longer possessed and inspired by it, man in essence fails to see the spiritual and curtails it to his current, limited vision; he is forced to turn to it as an object of investigation, such that only its name and concept will be left at the end. In the religious sphere, it will become hollow ritual form;

¹⁸¹ The psychic, spiritual and physical world

¹⁸² Sensibilizzazione

and, in man's soul, unconscious urge to turn to a fateful or providential power that continues to act *in lieu of* the burgeoning individual *I*.

The achievement of this process of humanization and individualization can be seen concretely in early philosophy, when man looks at the created world as if he saw it for the first time.

Supersensible vision no longer comes to man's rescue. Before man's gaze, a finite world rises: which he can only temporarily reach through means at his disposal in the psychic sphere: rational knowledge, mediated by sensible experience. The birth of a finite world vision marks, in essence, the beginning of philosophical experience and scientific thought.

The early philosophers felt in their investigation that rational thought—which enabled speculation on the origin of creation (*arche*)—was a novel faculty, beyond the dwindling possibility of encountering the world in an “imaginative” form, and beyond sense experience. The recognition of this value arose when Greek philosophers arrived at the concept, in their search for a general objective element of experience¹⁸³ that made knowledge possible. The psychological premise of rational activity had been laid.

The birth of Greek philosophy coincides with a rising individualism that unravels the inner collective unity, maintained—in a state of obedient spontaneity—by ancient mythical conscience that, as foundation of a general, objective knowledge emanating from superior worlds, did not need rational mediation, which in any event laid outside the realm of possibilities. When this knowledge fades, rational activity becomes necessary as the psyche's connection with reality, now seen as external world. At that time, it didn't have value as means of knowledge of this external world, because it began to express itself as new function of individual interiority, whose ethical sense was embodied by lyric and gnomic poetry, as well as “science” of the Seven Sages. As ancient mythical visions and residues of a cosmic-symbolic consciousness—drawn from theogonic literature and orphic-Pythagorean moral and religious reforms—were torn asunder, Philosophy was born as the first form of rational knowledge, and gradually proceeded from the questioning

¹⁸³ Sapere

contemplation of Cosmos to the scientific elaboration of concepts. The lost inner power was transferred onto the world exterior, empowered by its newly acquired otherness.

We have seen, however, that the necessity of drawing the *I*-consciousness from a lower level—conditioned by sensible exteriority, and appearing as fall—ultimately aims to realize the “human state”. Man tends to reconstruct spiritual life within the individuality, using means that consciousness, forced to draw its own meaning from the finite world, gradually acquires to shed light where ancient spirituality has become nature. It’s the experience of freedom: which can’t be at the beginning, because at the beginning there is only necessity, metaphysical as it may be. Between the original enlightenment and the possibility of conscious enlightenment, there lies a dark age: a long one, in view of vicissitudes, crises and mutations that occur within man’s inner constitution. Conscience is torn asunder from transcendence and entrusted to an individual dimension, so that it may conjure up transcendence within itself. It’s inevitable for the investigation to suffer the limits of abstractness and stray in various directions. But, at a certain point, it will discover that it can conjure up the “original inner power” at an individual level, to overcome the limit: it will recognize the Logos principle that at a certain point in time implemented the invisible rectification on earth: unknown, but knowable: rising as potential of freedom.

Man can reawaken the original light—the one that “shineth in darkness”—within the self, and transform conscious thought (acquired through an ostensible descent into the anti-metaphysical sphere) into an organ of spiritual perception, in a world temporarily ruled by unconsciousness and animal nature. He will then recognize this enterprise as the embodiment in human reality of the event foreshadowed in the Grail myth. The invisible seed, sown at the boundary of the sensible world by an everlasting community, and symbolically embodied by the image of the Holy Grail, can become reality: its mystery, barely hinted at in the legend, relates to the possibility of finding again the original, lost *I*, through heroic spirit and knowledge.

The detachment process implies at first, as we have seen, a darkening and a loss: using the sole powers of individuality, man tentatively beholds the idea of the being. Confined within ego limits, he will strive to summon up the divine, even through phases

of unawareness. But the divine will always act in him, disguised as yearning to overcome the self, while echoes and reminiscences of the ancient communion with the Supersensible world will assist him along the path. Acting through the mediating function of Saints and Mystics and the residual aperture of the human “feeling”, they will last up to the present moment, when every Supersensible echo, even emotional, ceases to resonate within the human soul, because “feeling” itself is now intertwined with the physical-sensible nature.

The solitude of the sensible world is now the human limit, but also the possibility of resurgence: a condition related to man in general, but especially to the most recent “individual”. More independent from the ancient supersensible experience in his agnosticism, present-day man can be considered as the most developed: the closest to the possibility of re-ascent, or conscious reintegration; but also, because of his autonomy from any transcendent theme, the most resistant to the call of the liberating experience.

As man undergoes the various stages of the individuation process, the first tools provided to complete this task are thought and senses: they alone can give him knowledge of the world and organize his life. This is the Occidental’s experience, spawning a mechanical and materialistic civilization. The characters of thought that engendered civilization are objectively reflected in it: mathematical, scientific, squarely individual thought, but lifeless: abstract thought, now impervious to any form of faith, but already bearing as independence a hitherto unknown spiritual dimension. This independence, positively assumed according to Spiritual Science, can reawaken the supersensible essence as conscious power within the soul.

Indeed, modern civilization is tasked to reflect as external world what it lacks inside: “materialistic” productions, sprung from the rational-economic man, are reflected back onto him to request that he integrates spiritually their dimension. The modern world is a mirror, in which man can behold himself and the contrast between his outward greatness and inner misery.

Man could comprehend his inability to live up to his transcendent reality, by recognizing himself in the one-sidedness of the temporary world that he created. For

instance, when he examines the relationship between his inner life and the seemingly outward world stage, he feels the absence of a moral connection between thought and life. Any moral urgency is experienced, in the best of cases, as conceptual demand, but lacks the strength to be translated into living reality. For present-day man, virtue and inner aptitude are abstract themes or concepts. The rationalistic experience affords man the possibility to create Science and its related world vision, but inevitably according to a yardstick in which knowledge is measured quantitatively, according to “information” founded on the experience of sensible facts and their abstract relationship.

The kind of “knowledge” to which we endeavored to orient the reader, discloses the difference between man’s ancient and modern experience of nature and world. Different organs of knowledge were effectively functioning in ancient man: the pre-rationalistic, pre-philosophical man did not experience thought abstractly: the life-giving stream of his will flowed in his thought. Virtue simply couldn’t be thought of as an abstraction (as, instead, is possible to modern man, who can rationally recognize the immorality of certain actions, and yet lacks the strength to eschew them): encountered within the soul as not-yet-abstract, but lively thought, virtue manifested at once its intrinsic strength.

The importance attached to *dharana* and *dhyana*, i.e., to concentration and meditation, can be gleaned from traditional texts as being related to the experience, based on which man had the sensation of being: within thought, man lived as in a subtle organism, not limited to the head, but pervading the entire body. Yoga, *chakra* doctrine, notion of *nadi*, and operational Shakti: all that Hinduism portrays as methods meant to “lend body to the spirit and spirit to the body”, can justifiably be related to the idea of ancient identity between being and thought. The ascetic felt to exist in the act of thinking: he felt that life failed him, if he limited himself to feeling his corporeal conscience. He experienced himself as maimed and annihilated by the sensible experience, whereas he felt his being as fully articulated in meditative thought. Being was thinking and thinking was being. Outside the inner activity mediated by thought, he failed to exist, while within it he experienced existence and life. The meditating man was truly alive. In other words,

abstraction was unknown to the ancient ascetic: thinking was at once willpower to him, and knowledge, *jnana*, was action.

With the birth of reflected, dialectic and philosophical thought, thinking and being became two distinct functions, constituting a categorical duality and a psychological contradiction at once. Life and idea split to give rise to a problematic correlation, Philosophy's secular theme up to the Existentialism, whose reason for being is to pose the question again with the intent not to solve it, giving rise to further dialectics around the idea of duality. During the history of Philosophy, this long-lasting polemic fleetingly appeared to have found its solution in the *cogito ergo sum*. But the latter failed to change anything, despite further systematizations: because *cogitation* and *being* were themselves expression of the dichotomy between "ideating" and "living", which they presumed to weld.

It's an ongoing question, and constitutes the basis of several current problems: because man seeks thought outside being and being outside thought, so that the fall into materialistic or metaphysical realism becomes inevitable, in a position that confirms duality, abstractness and limitation.

It even appeared possible, with Idealism and its developments, up to Actualism, that the theme of "being" had been clarified to a point where—for new, daring investigators—it could constitute the basis of "meditation", i.e., overcoming the dialectic mechanism, thanks to the intuition of the value of "unfolding thought"¹⁸⁴. It was the crowning achievement, admittedly of a speculative kind, of the rational thought process that achieved the intuition of its own unfolding. At this point, it should have been possible to overcome the dialectic limit: instead, immediately after that, a regression of sort took place to the speculative domain. This was no radical reevaluation of the problem, but rather a gradual loss of consciousness of the thought process, with respect to which the issue rises again, problematic and convoluted.

The cause of this resurgent problematic aptitude and inability to escape it, can be found in a deep, preconscious vital sphere, along with the foundation of any further, hopelessly realistic and positivistic philosophizing. Cosmic powers of hindrance to

¹⁸⁴ Pensiero pensante

human achievement impinge upon this vital sphere, bringing to bear against it the distinctive rigor and objectivity of the Spirit's motion, through any form of faith or inner power development, in thrall to earthly goals and alien objectives to man's evolution. For their ends, Hindrance powers avail themselves of "lifeless thought", lacking a dimension of depth, even when it can brilliantly argue about it; an abstract thought, free in its abstractness, but innocent of awareness of the value of being free. It's the tool of error in ordinary consciousness, just as it can be vehicle of a search for truth: which would be a search for its own essence.

The power of reasons and arguments is lost in ill-defined rationality, while the ever-darkening history of the robotic human admonishes that Spirit has to become experience, lest it would be lost as an elusive ghost. It would be necessary for Idealism and Philosophy—which are the same thing, for every philosophy is in essence idealism—to attain an essential consciousness of their process, and master the tools of knowledge, which thus far have simply been used and never known in themselves. In other words, it would be necessary to seize the supersensible essence of thinking, present in every thought. Only this possibility requires the ascent to the level of knowledge, and can justify Philosophy: which then wouldn't be Philosophy in its traditional sense. Thought thus roused would enact the universal thought fancied by philosophy, as well as the power that, manifesting in the individuality, would bring the "ego" beyond itself.

An extra-subjective function should be envisaged in thought: which is, before its subjective assumption, cosmic, super-individual Power, spiritual reality and transcendental being. It's the entity in which man could be, one without which he'll never be. Man indeed never is, because his thought is reflected, demanding its foundation from objects, myths, entities and revelations, without realizing that, as objects of representation, they are themselves thoughts, and are something only to the effect that they are thought. When man thinks, he is not outside the reality of things, because thoughts belong to things, even as they appear to arise in the mind¹⁸⁵: the soul of things speaks through thought: not reflected thought, but thought enacted as living power: the real foundation.

¹⁸⁵ Mentale

For the soul of things to rise within conscience as thought, man must not escape thought, but dwell on it, collect its flow, encounter it as ideal intensity: man must live in it, for it to manifest its real being. In this way, man begins to cooperate to the formation of the aforementioned new organ of thought. Devoid of a reality disguised as inferior content, reflected thinking jumps from thought to thought, constantly fleeting in its incapacity to control and behold, so that only the surface of ideas flows as abstraction or spiritual shade. To it, man must necessarily oppose being, or being there, existing, matter, and reality: which, deprived of the essence of thought that explains them, will never satisfy knowledge, thus effectively separating knowledge from things, existence and life.

What ancient man experienced as moral life, ignoring the philosophical meaning of this experience, was the inner guise of his “natural” communion with metaphysical-order powers. When soul life begins to be molded by the activity of reflected thought, it gains in extension, but loses in height and depth. The lost height is one of communion with the Super-mental, the lost depth is a soul-vital domain ruled by impersonal powers, whose function is to oppose the spiritual rise of individuality: the latter can only overcome them by developing consciousness apt to identifying them and, by overcoming them, realize the liberating power. Such “enterprise” can explain the sense of the “fall” and the futility of attempts to restore obsolete spiritual forms.

Man was able to mold the rational individuality, in contact with physical existence, by acquiring a sense of *I* through the impact with material reality. For this reason, he had to forswear his original nature, according to which he acted as God, founded upon the Absolute: a forswearing, “fall”, or detachment, whose consequences constitute his history, as gradual loss of the faculty to behold supersensible reality and behave according to the inspiration derived from it. Nonetheless, forswearing has only a temporary value and heralds man’s novel good—possible, not foregone—by involving the Spirit’s responsible action in a domain, in which the necessity of the finite and provisional, through impact and attrition, conjures up self-consciousness and consequently freedom. The latter can only be engendered by self-consciousness, inasmuch as self-consciousness can also deny it. These are the forms through which the Spiritual can consciously exist in the world of physical reality, tying itself to a limit that

is at once foundation and constant element of contradiction. This can't be overcome by dialectics, but only by experiencing the limit and through the conscious, individual reintegration of the act that operated in its creation.

Man's current predicament can be thus summarized: he shouldn't renege on the achievements of rational thought and individual conscience: they are expressions of the Eternal that acted in him directly at the origins and lives on as foundation of his being.

He came to radiate a power that he was earlier limited to absorb: he had to become self-conscious "outside" the transcendental inspiration to which in earlier ages he would passively entrust himself, and let the transcendental element rise again in his inner act: in a motion that remains Spiritual, immutable, everlasting, and is now conveyed as freedom. At first, freedom can only arise as denial: freedom to deny the Spiritual World from which it draws its own motion. The question then is not to "turn back", but to complete an incipient movement that man lacks sufficient awareness to sense: because it's the path to Super-conscience, which alone can explain itself.

Individuality should not be viewed as an inferior form of which man must rid himself, in order to find again the Spiritual: which could never be found again in this way. It's the principle of re-ascent, the point in which the Infinite gets a hold of the finite, of the impersonal, through personality. Dialectic thought and individual conscience can be envisaged as responding to a cosmic formative function of the human entity: to recognize them as such is already the beginning of this function.

We have endeavored to show that the task is to let spring forth the spiritual element, always immanent in abstract thought. This element can manifest as thought thanks to meditation, to the extent that its synthetic power can live directly in the conscience, having overcome abstractness. It embodies the experience of the fabric of living ideas that, as archetypal powers, sustain the world: transparency and wellspring of intuitions that support man's progress. It's the real supersensible experience; most people fail to realize that they seek it in a world of "esoteric" sensations, following doctrines that can only speak to man's nature, rather than to his Spirit. The Spirit rises again as faculty of vision when thought ceases to be mere dialectic activity. This alone can transform the

individual, as long as he makes the first move toward it: indeed, there is no other possibility of overcoming the "ego". Man thus shapes that organ of knowledge, for whose birth his whole existence, being and thought operate, even if he is unaware of it.

Spiritual Science paves the way for man's awareness of this opportunity. We have endeavored to show that it conveys an inner discipline, based on knowledge of laws and powers acting in Man and Universe. From this discipline rises the possibility of a conscious, direct hold on the inner formative process that, while founded upon a supersensible sphere, demands, for its human implementation, the rigor of responsible self-consciousness: which can only be achieved through autonomous determination. These pages are meant as an orientation to the realization of this possibility, and to the preparation provided to that effect by Spiritual Science.

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