

Panagiotis Kondylis

POWER AND DECISION

The Formation of World Images and the Question of Values

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FOREWORD

The decisionistic theory expounded here wants to be strictly descriptive. For us it is not a matter of defending the right of an existence, which is plagued by abstractions and systems, yet is continually pulsating and searching for a way to a totally autonomous and deepest personal decision, as was the case until now in respect of the prevailing variants of decisionism¹ - conversely: it is to be shown that this militant decisionism can neither be imposed in the long term or to a socially significant extent, even though it may have been or still may be a normal protest phenomenon in certain conjunctures in the history of ideas. On the other hand, it does not apply here any less that to furnish proof of the thesis and also of the thought that wants to stand out as the opponent of militant decisionism, this thought must de facto proceed decisionistically, and also be based on a basic decision, as vigorously as this must be disputed time and time again for reasons to be explained below. And finally, we shall assert that in both cases things cannot be different than what they have actually been until now, and that a corrective or a wish for something better does not promote understanding, but polemics, since indeed things (e.g. theoretical matters) are conceived polemically from the outset.

The equal distance of our theory both from militant decisionism as well as from its opponents is already provided by its descriptive character. Because in contrast to our theory, both aforementioned schools of thought are based on normative convictions. Militant decisionism sees the decision not merely as an inevitable reality but it has made out of it a duty and not seldom an emotional, dramatic ritual; that is why it could also be

¹ In Kondylis's own Greek translation (p. 9) he adds the phrase: "as they appear in the so-called existentialist philosophies".

called prescriptive or normative decisionism. According to its view, the individual OUGHT to reach existential highs and lows, while shaking off the dust of what is normal and what is self-evident from himself or while shaking off the pressure of powerful supra-personally and impersonally occurring social and intellectual(-spiritual) constructs², and while experiencing at first hand the complete harshness of the alternatives in life for one's own life. Whoever can get into this situation and take such responsibility, whoever can keep his own consciousness and conscience awake at any time and ready for the decision, he is eo ipso³ held to be more worthy than those who make do with ready-made certainties and norms. The actual belittlement of non-decisionists, which results from the decisionists' stance, is obviously founded on a certain perception of values in respect of the "true" purpose of human existence. This perception, nonetheless, inevitably overlooks how great an existential intensity a stance can be capable of, which understands and acknowledges itself exactly as dutiful or even joyful submission to all kinds of commanding authorities, and how near this intensity of this stance often is to the intensity of the personal decision.

But also militant decisionism's opponents' polemical zeal blocks them from insight into such compromising relationships, which result from the adherence on both sides to some normative element, even if these sides' content-related determination on each and every respective occasion turns out totally differently; therefore the acuteness of the content-related contrasting conceals the significant form-related similarity in the structure of the fundamental stance. Be that as it may: the specific normativism of militant decisionism's opponents comes faintly into view already throughout their description of decisionism in general. From their point of

² Or as Kondylis phrases it in his own Greek translation (p. 10): "forms of institutionalisation".

³ By that very act or quality.

view, namely, decisionism after all presents itself as glorification or at least as unleashing of subjective arbitrariness, as an appeal to the neglecting of well-meant and well-ordered thought in favour of nasty eruptions or random notions, and not least of all as direct or indirect partisanship in favour of intellectual(-spiritual)⁴ (if not also in favour of political) violence and against conversation-ready and conversation-eager Reason. The normative implication and presupposition of this criticism is obvious: thought should not only come to generally binding, that is, morally acceptable conclusions (because decisionists could also decide in favour of precisely what the opponents of decisionism likewise may hold to be the best, e.g. God or freedom), but at the same time also proceed (as regards method) faultlessly, namely to respect rules generally in force and to seem as modest as possible - in other words: to present oneself as a credible, serious servant, interpreter, and defender of objective values and truths. The inner logic and social function of this positioning which until now has been the dominant positioning and will also surely remain the dominant positioning, will engage us below in greater detail. By pre-empting these analyses, let us remind ourselves only of the partly paradoxical (for some of those directly affected) and partly (for us) piquant situation in which parties, which expressly and jointly reject decisionism, subsequently fight one another with the same fury in the name of "objective" values and truths. Precisely the general, yet as regards content, (very) different invocation of the "objective truth" eventually shakes one's faith in such a "truth" and nourishes militant decisionistic approaches - even if only for the short period of time of an

⁴ Whilst "geistig" can be translated as "mental" or "intellectual" or "spiritual", and "Geist" as "mind" or "intellect" or "spirit", the translator has opted for "intellectual(-spiritual)" for "geistig", and "intellect(-spirit)" for "Geist", so as to both convey the historically broad range of meanings of the terms in German, but to also remind the reader that Kondylis is not referring to the "spiritual" or the "spirit" as something existing at a separate ontological level in respect of the "intellectual" and the "intellect", but rather to the emotions and the subconscious which inevitably interact (to varying degrees) with the conscious functioning of the mind or intellect.

interregnum, i.e. until the imposition of a more powerful "objectivity" on each and every respective occasion.

Our descriptive decisionism therefore neither accepts the decision as Ought nor the dutiful joining of decisions with a supposedly objective Ought. Against the opponents of militant decisionism it is to be stressed that to fight decisionism and for oneself to be free from decisionism are two different things, in other words, the plastic subjectivity of the decision can very well hide behind the supposedly firm objectivity of the Ought. Against militant or normative decisionism we can again say that already the thesis that all action and thought is, in any case, based on a (not necessarily personal and conscious) decision makes totally redundant every deontological character of the decision. Only this dual putting aside of normativism can make purely descriptive decisionistic theory possible. But also conversely: this theory can remain descriptive, i.e. value-free, only through insight into the social necessity of the predominance of normativism. It may sound paradoxical, and yet in the cold light of day theoretical value freedom and the recognition of the superiority of value-bound and norm-bound thought in the practical field are inseparable from each other. Because a way of looking at things is totally value-free not already on account of it staying conscious of the subjectivity and relativity of values, but only when it, for its part, completely renounces the role of the enlightener and the therapist - in short: the role of the leader: the inclination towards normativism arises from, not least of all, the desire to play such a role. Value-free knowledge cannot set as an aim (goal) the destruction of illusions because value-free knowledge became value-free precisely through the ascertainment of the indestructibility, indeed the necessity for life, of illusions. Because of this, value-free knowledge must lead a parasitic existence and is in reality directed to

those who appreciate in practice superfluous, indeed inhibitory insights. If in certain eras it achieves greater publicity, it is really only because, in the meanwhile, normativistic thought, stuck in a crisis, wants to confirm itself anew in polemics against value-free knowledge - or simply to look for scapegoats. Since value-free knowledges's broad approval must forever be denied, its public appearance merely results in the mobilisation of its opponents and the wider argumentative refinement of normative positions. That is neither good nor bad, only inevitable. If it were otherwise, then this would no longer be the world from whose description value-free consideration emerged.

The last sentence implies that logically consistent value-free consideration is based on a certain perception of human affairs. It is our intention to underline and to elucidate this interrelation (i.e. between value-free consideration and a certain perception of human affairs). In attempting to deny this interrelation or at least to hush it up, a state of embarrassment comes into being in which some contemporary positivists or critical "rationalists", who want to pose as value-free scientists, are constantly found, in order to abruptly turn into inspired metaphysicians if it is, for instance, a question of the defence of liberal moralism or "freedom". This kind of value freedom was never incidentally intended as a final farewell to involvement in disputes between various sides or parties and to a possible leadership role, but it itself constituted a polemical act, it turned namely from the beginning against the Marxist-Leninist confession of faith in the partisanship of science and it did this from the point of view of liberal notions regarding the autonomy of the various basic sectors of social life. Such representatives of value freedom of course emphasise the ideal of world-theoretical

presuppositionlessness⁵, but they hardly at all go into the interrelation which exists between the depicting of such an ideal and certain content-related, anthropological and cultural-philosophical assumptions (i.e. assumptions in respect of content, anthropology and the philosophy of culture). And they do not do this, because their value freedom is half-hearted, and their deeper motivation is another, which happens to be norm-bound. If they openly represented immanent radical scepticism, i.e. the normative indifference of value-free consideration in its connection with a certain perception of human affairs, they would only be giving welcome weapons to thoroughly "totalitarian" foes of liberal positivism, who generously outbid others in the auction of norms. But one cannot risk giving weapons to the opponents of liberal positivism as long as one wants to somehow stay involved in the undertaking of the improvement of the world - even in the sober form of the critical analyst of illusions.

Beyond that, it is sometimes feared that the consistent all-round founding of value freedom would deprive the same value freedom of the character of a strict principle as regards the theory of knowledge and would make it a new form of a suspicious ideological interpretation of the world. Were, namely, the interrelation of value-free consideration with a certain perception of human affairs to be openly admitted, then value-free consideration would seem exactly to be afflicted by that relativity which from its point of view is only intrinsic to value-bound standpoints. Indeed, against decisionism and scepticism - whose logical common bond with value-free consideration is rightly ascertained by opponents, even though only with polemical intent - very often arguments of the following type are used: decisionism relativises everything, because it reduces everything to standpoint-bound decisions; since it itself, in accordance

⁵ In Kondylis's own Greek translation (p. 16) he adds the phrase: "in thought and research".

with its own presuppositions, must spring from such a decision, it cannot be theoretically binding and compelling (in its traditional form, the argument is as follows: how can the sceptic be convinced of the correctness of his own position if he doubts the correctness of all positions?). Such popular-philosophical arguments nevertheless have only a rhetorical, i.e. psychological, value and can be refuted already by means of formal logic. If one sets them out in the form of a classical syllogism, then in their major premise precisely what is assumed is that which is rejected in the conclusion, i.e. the conclusion contradicts the premise instead of containing this same premise in itself; however, it is logically false to approve of the fundamental assumption of scepticism in order to, in this way, be able to call into question the validity of this same scepticism. Incidentally, scepticism connected with (descriptive) decisionism has nothing to do with the possibility of an objective knowledge, but only with the possibility of the formulation of objectively valid norms. This contradistinction between objective knowledge and objective norm setting implies that the former is thwarted at every turn by the attempt at attaining the latter - in relation to which, by norm setting, not only the usual formulation of moral commands is to be understood here, but every world image which has been outlined with regard to the command of self-preservation and the increase in power of an individual or of a collective entity; only in the framework of such a world image does it seem that morals (i.e. ethics), in a narrower sense, are also well-founded and meaningful. This in turn means that only the farewell of every norm and of every claim to self-preservation and power can make the knowledge of human affairs possible. The price to be paid for value-free knowledge is life, and that is why value-free knowledge's prospects of becoming socially accepted are not good.

In the intellectual(-spiritual) atmosphere, which the dominant normativism of all shades has created, it is regarded as an unworthy triviality of refined thought or even as forbidden bad manners amongst those who are learned and cultured to pose the elementary question: why have norms and values not brought about in history until now that which they ought to have brought about according to their own promise or self-justification in the sense of the harmonious co-existence of all people? - or even: how could they have been so often and so zealously put in the service of aggression and mutual annihilation? No-one can dispute these distressing facts, and the disagreeable feeling, which is awoken in normativists, has been articulated with classical succinctness in the great metaphysical systems of the past, which except for a theoretical guarantee of the final⁶ victory of "good" seek to also offer an explanation for the hitherto absence of "good". If such an explanation could sometimes be made up, it is really only because it was expressed in the framework of a thought construction, which as a whole stood under the aegis of the (still) to be expected victory of "good", and correspondingly either held "evil" to be non-existent or interpreted it as an unconscious instrument for the realisation of "good". If one leaves aside eschatological belief and has a good look at the practical failure of values until now with the help of immanent, i.e. purely axiological criteria (i.e. criteria taken only from the theory of values), then this failure must seem like an enigma. Only a theory of human action and of the function of the "intellectual(-spiritual) dimension" in it, which is free from all normativistic postulates - that is, a descriptive decisionistic theory, can solve this enigma. A normativistically motivated and inspired theory cannot completely explain the reasons for its own practical failure without it cancelling itself

⁶ The adjective "final" is added in Kondylis's own Greek translation (p. 20) but does not appear in the German text.

as objective truth. Here lies the deeper reason why this crucial point, regarding this practical failure, is not touched upon, where possible, by normativists and moralists, although it in reality should be at the centre of interest of people toiling for the good of humanity. The following though is still to be noticed here: when we speak of the practical failure of normativism, we are keeping in mind the distance between the nominal value of its consciously set aims (goals) and real historical events; yet normativism, in this or that version, remains, despite all this, socially successful, because it fulfils certain functions totally independently of the self-understanding of its representatives, in relation to which its failure in the sense above exactly constitutes an essential precondition for the fulfilment of its objective functions and consequently for its social predominance. This apparent paradox must also be clarified below.

In this treatise we shall first of all discuss in detail the concept of the decision in general and describe the practical compulsions within concrete situations, which make (world-theoretical) decisions indispensable as a unique mode of self-preservation and increase in power of different collective and individual subjects on each and every respective occasion. Given this universality, indeed the anthropological rootedness of the decision, we must explain the reasons for which militant decisionism nevertheless must remain a marginal phenomenon and for which decisions are imposed at least much more easily when they conceal or deny their own character as decisions. Subsequently, the significance of our descriptive decisionistic way of looking at things for the comprehension of the structure of thought constructs will be set out, and the decisive polemical component of apparently pure theory should be investigated as well. And, finally, we want to discuss the already broached topic of the content-related, namely, anthropological and

cultural-sociological presuppositions (i.e. those presuppositions regarding the anthropology and sociology of culture) of consistent value-free consideration, and we shall express several thoughts on the question of Ought.

I. DECISION AS POWER CLAIM

De-cision (de-cisio, Ent-scheidung) is the act or process of segregation, out of which or from which a world image results, which is capable of guaranteeing the necessary ability at orientation for the purpose of self-preservation. Before the decision there is no world as a concretely ordered Whole in the perception of a correspondingly concrete subject, i.e. a subject occupying a certain place in this Whole; there is merely a pre-world, i.e. a motley variety, or a more or less loose sum, of in themselves equivalent materials, impressions, movements and tendencies, which in this meaningless primordial state cannot provide either a reliable framework of orientation or motivate action promising success, or, in retrospect, justify such action. Through the act or process of segregation the pre-world's constituent elements lose their equivalence and are divided into what is relevant and irrelevant, superordinate and subordinate, in relation to which whatever is relevant and irrelevant is taken as the basis of a world-theoretical blueprint. That act or process is subjective, i.e. it is determined through the cognitive and volitive perspective of the subject of the decision, first of all in the sense that, in any case, it refers to only that which often only appears transiently in this perspective. Since the pre-world of each and every respective, necessarily finite, subject of the decision does not contain all possible constituent elements of all possible pre-worlds - i.e. not everything that is or is to be,

or can be thought about -, hence the act or process of segregation is carried out only with regard to a part of the objectively existent; the remaining part is condemned from the very start to actual non-existence.⁷

Likewise, that part of the pre-world, which goes against the sketching of a somewhat coherent world image, is pressed into actual non-existence, i.e. it cannot even be placed in the lower ranks of the world-theoretical hierarchy which is coming into being. The decision is then based on a dual delimitation of the entirety of the objectively existent: it takes place from the outset on a field that is de-cided (i.e. segregated or separated) - that is why it is also, at least in part, already pre-de-cided - and over and above that it forces the ex-pelling of those elements of this same field, which preclude its endeavours from shaping these elements in the way it wants to shape them. Thus the decision means both the, at times wild, and at other times mild, violation of the disordered reality of a pre-given pre-world, as well as the, at times stringent, and at other times contingent, constituting of the reality of an organised world. Ordering and subordinating, integrating and dismembering, assimilating and repulsing, shaping and splitting, necessarily belong together in the decision. Because the finiteness of the subject of the decision allows no other path for obtaining a complete world image and hence an all-round orientation than the elevation of each and every respective known and properly processed part of the objectively existent into a true and single Whole.

The concept of the objectively existent is not to be understood here in the traditional metaphysical sense. The thesis regarding the perspectivity of the decision does not imply *ex contrario*⁸ that there is one objective world which is looked at only from each and every respective other point of

⁷ Kondylis translates "Nichtexistenz" into Greek (p. 24) as follows: "deprivation [forfeiture, loss] of the predicate [complement] of existence".

⁸ On the contrary; c.f. "argumentum a contrario (argument based on the contrary)".

view and only from a partial standpoint. It would incidentally be pointless to contrast the "objectivity of the world", as yardstick for an assessment, with the subjectivity of the decision's perspective; the "world" is always seen through a perspective, and it is impossible to consider this perspective and the world simultaneously from the outside in order to be able to compare them with each other. When we therefore here speak of the objectively existent in contrast to the perspective of the subject of the decision, it is merely meant that outside of the world from which a certain de-cision came, there are still other worlds which are reduced to different de-cisions. Were the objectively existent defined as the sum of all possible pre-worlds as well as all phenomena, i.e. worlds coming about through de-cisions, then the subjectivity of every decision's perspective consists first of all in that the decision cannot apprehend the objectively existent - and also, in accordance with its essence, it does not want to apprehend what objectively exists -, even though its world-theoretical construct in itself constitutes a part of the objectively existent. Insight into the subjectivity of the decision is not consequently founded on a metaphysical perception of "true being", but on the empirical ascertainment of the existence of a number of, more or less different, decisions and world images; as an insight it is objective in the sense that it can be obtained from every perspective, since all the subjects of the decision (can) know of the existence of other decisions, i.e. differently structured world-theoretical outlines or simply convictions, even though every one of the subjects of the decision wishes the violent or argumentative annihilation of these outlines or convictions. From merely the comparative observation of empirically existing world images, the ascertainment also results that in every one of the world images different components of the objectively existent on each and every respective occasion come to prevail, i.e. they are considered as relevant or

irrelevant, superordinate or subordinate and are accordingly treated. That is why everything that each and every respective act or process of segregation had to suppress and drive out becomes noticeable only from the point of view of different decisions, i.e. differently organised worlds. From the perspective of every de-cision, the worlds which came from different de-cisions do not at all deserve the status of a complete, true world; they are hence treated only as constituent elements or materials of their own pre-world, which can of course be possibly used for the construction of one's own organised world, but then they have to be subjected to the structure and aims (goals) of this same organised world.

If the size and the violence of the (act or process of) segregation cannot, after all, be brought to the attention of the subject of the decision, the reason for this is that after the making of the world image - precisely through segregation - an assessment of things can take place exclusively on the basis of the decision's own provided criteria and means of thought. In the eyes of each and every respective subject of the decision, the world image must be all-embracing, i.e. in its original or at least in its ad hoc processed form it must be suitable for all possible ends (goals) of orientation; whatever, therefore, for this subject is, in principle and on each and every respective occasion, relevant can be served only while exactly de-subjectifying this relevant element in the world image, as well as proclaiming the element an objective generality, so that the segregated world does not appear as a subjective part-world, that is, relative and, in this way, finally insecure, but as the only complete and consequently real world - an impression, which seems to be confirmed by the fact that this world, seen in terms of form, constitutes an organised, in accordance with immanent points of view, self-sufficient Whole. Because of that, a retrospective analysis of a world image's history of coming into being,

which would not be self-justification, is impossible when starting from a structurally more or less complete, and functionally more or less tried and tested world image, - unless the subject of the decision is on the point of betraying its previous decision for the sake of a new decision. If this is not the case, then the subject of the decision can only see its world image only with those eyes which precisely in the act or process of segregation (of the decision) learned how to see. The pre-established harmony of the world image and the concrete way of seeing of the decision is, in other words, put down to the fact that this way of seeing was shaped and refined precisely in the and through the de-cision from which the world image came. Yet the way of seeing of the subject of the decision itself constitutes nothing other than the expression of the concrete identity of that subject, from which it becomes clear that this identity for its part has been formed hand in hand with the world image in question (i.e. its own world image). World image and identity, identity and decision are necessarily most tightly connected with one another, especially since identity can be defined as the precise determination of the place of the subject inside of the world coming from the de-cision, i.e. as the exhaustive determination of the subject's relations with the constituent elements or the hierarchical tiers of each and every respective world image. Without an ordered world there is no identity. Order and subordination, however, necessarily belong together inside of the de-cision, and hence identity also grows only on the basis of segregations, exclusions and subjections. Indeed, the exclusion of what is irrelevant constitutes the precondition for (and at the same time the consequence of) the concentration of the subject of the decision on what is relevant - that is, ultimately on itself, and exactly in this way the first and most important step on the path to the attainment of the subject of the decision's own identity is taken.

A subject, which owes its world and at the same time its identity and concrete way of seeing to the de-cision, must, as it were, fuse with the de-cision. Identity means, in this respect, identification with that act or process of the de-cision, which is crystallised in the sketching of a world image. Since, however, the world image provides a reliable framework of orientation, that is why the identity is shown principally in the subject's ability at orientating itself steadily and easily, at moving of its own accord and at, in the process, acting in different situations with stable aims (goals), which have been set, and with uniform purposefulness. The world which came from the de-cision consequently constitutes the field of activity of the subject of the decision which is conscious of its own identity. And if the active stay in this field contributes to the further clarification and strengthening of the sense of identity, it is because the active stay constantly tests the results exactly of that de-cision, with which the subject identifies, in order to have an identity after all; the testing of course has to do with the suitability of the world image as framework of orientation under all possible circumstances and amounts to a continual effort at the confirmation of this same world image. Now the objects, which the subject of the (taken) decision encounters in its field of activity, are no longer those of the pre-world (neither in a quantitative nor in a qualitative respect), but are found inside its ordered world image, albeit in different positions and at different tiers, and are considered and treated on the basis of fundamental criteria which the already made world image itself embodies and puts to use. That means: as a product of a subject's decision the ordered world in itself is not the object which stands opposite this same subject and can be treated by the subject any way the subject wants; because the subject owes its identity and way of seeing not to a contradistinction with the ordered world (i.e. its ordered world), but precisely to the coming into being of this same world. The

subject's friendly or inimical confrontations with certain objects and forms of resistance take place inside of its world and are dealt with from the perspective of this same subject. The confrontations, therefore, take place on an ideationally prepared territory in accordance with the subject's needs. Because the world which came from the de-cision should grant a reliable framework of orientation, this world must be a home (i.e. habitat) of the subject of the decision; and it can be a home (i.e. habitat) for this subject of the decision only if it is constructed as such a home (i.e. habitat) from the beginning.

So the subject of the decision relies, during its friendly or inimical encounters with objects, on the reality of the ordered world, and indeed even invokes this reality of the ordered world in order to lend weight to its ends (goals) on each and every respective occasion, since it constructed the reality of the ordered world for itself and already by means of its de-cision has provided the guidelines for the reality of the ordered world's interpretation; the de-cision constructs and at the same time interprets a *limine*⁹ the reality of the ordered world, while determining the relevance and the status, even also the existence and non-existence, of the constituent elements of the pre-world. As verdict on existence and non-existence, as segregation of what is relevant from what is irrelevant and as foundation of an order, the de-cision puts aside the pre-world's chaotic variety of form and thus brings about a most welcome relieving of itself (i.e. of the tension of existence); it, namely, enables every relevant subject to not merely henceforth solve problems which have become, thanks to its own processes, concise and clear, but, in any event, to make problems solvable on the basis of permanent criteria and procedures (strictly speaking: to put to itself problems as solvable

⁹ From the outset (threshold).

problems), while it formulates them in a simplified, clear and already familiar form, i.e. the de-cision pours the problems into the (symbolic) language of the world image and it, in this way, automatically examines their meaning for its own identity which is interwoven with this world image. The ponderability of things that happen is the precondition for their permanent control, however something becomes ponderable only through its being put in order in an ensemble of already known factors, so that the curve of its behaviour can be calculated (in advance) with regard to a familiar coordinate system. Consequently, knowledge is the reduction of what has been hitherto unknown and unfamiliar to what is familiar and known, and ultimately, that is, the inclusion of all relevant (new) elements into the existing world-image-related framework, which of course is no mere receptacle for the (blind) accumulation of relevant contents, but rather a certain automatic mechanism for the sifting, evaluation and joining together of interesting data - and simultaneously is itself (as knowledge) the construct which arises from this automatic mechanism. There is therefore an intimate interrelation between orientation and knowledge, and the same applies to the relations between knowledge and identity or knowledge and de-cision. Identity, orientation and knowledge fuse inside of the same world image, which emerged from the de-cision, and ultimately supports the assumption of the world image's objectivity, i.e. of its sole objective truth, while solemnly corroborating this fusion: the more objective the world image and the summarised knowledge or crystallised way of seeing within the world image seems, the stronger does the sense of identity become and the more secure, reliable and steady does the orientation seem. The practical successes of the subject of the decision constitute in its eyes the conclusive proof of the objectivity of the world image. In the course of this, the subject of the decision has to overlook that these successes - in

so far as they interrelate with the world image causally and not merely symbolically - constitute solutions to problems, which are meaningful only inside of the world image in question and are exclusively set on the basis of this world image's own presuppositions, especially as this world image was outlined and worked on precisely in connection with the formulation of, and solution to, such problems.

As the subject's home (i.e. habitat) and field of activity, as unity of content and way of seeing, of reality and order, and at the same time as scale of evaluation, the world image enables dealings with objects (persons and things), which happen to be encountered within its boundaries. However, the fact that the world image is based on the (act or process of) segregation, i.e. on the violation of the objectively existent, even though in its own perspective it seems objective and all-embracing, gets its revenge through the necessity of searching for the solution, which the concrete case demands or commands, during the world image's dealings with those objects on each and every respective occasion¹⁰. In other words: the real, from the point of view of the world image not to be perceived, chasm between the world image itself and the objectively existent, has an imperceptible consequence in that the criteria which are provided by the world image, at least in many cases, do not allow from the outset secure, as it were, blind dealings with the objects situated in the world image. Since, however, on the other hand, the subject of the decision is completely dependent on the world image as the only possible stable framework of orientation, there remains for the subject of the decision nothing other than to interpret the steps which it undertakes

¹⁰ In Kondylis's own Greek translation (p. 34) this passage is put in the following words: "... and all-embracing, has as its consequence the existence of abstractions and gaps, so that the subject during its dealings with the aforementioned objects does not (always) have at its disposal ready-made solutions, but is obliged to search for the solution, which the concrete case demands or commands, on each and every respective occasion".

during its dealings with the objects - that is, its individual decisions or part-decisions - in light of the world image's criteria, or to justify the steps with reference to these criteria, in relation to which an array of more or less successful tricks of rationalisation (i.e. as explanation or justification) proves to be inevitable. This process must as a rule successfully take place, otherwise the world image's functional ability and thus also the identity of the subject of the underlying de-cision is in danger. Nonetheless, this subject at any moment faces the task of acting, in dealings with the objects of its world, independently, and of not always taking foreseeable steps. The subject's world image does not guarantee any automatic practical processing of the questions themselves posed every day, but first of all grants the subject only identity and orientation, that is, the world image merely makes those problems solvable. It is then necessary to distinguish the individual decisions or part-decisions, which the subject takes during its dealings with the objects of its world, from that original and decisive fundamental de-cision, which has brought this world into being, and indeed as framework of orientation during the taking of such individual decisions. There are of course individual decisions which seem to possess the status of a world-theoretical fundamental decision, since they exactly consist in an open and dynamic partisanship in favour of a comprehensive world-theoretical position. However, this world-theoretical partisanship takes place precisely during dealings with the objects (persons or things) of a certain world and presupposes the constituting of this world from the point of view of the subject of a de-cision. It becomes clear from this constituting who the foe is against whom the subject of the de-cision has to defend its own world image and consequently its own identity as well.

It has just been indicated how the relations between the fundamental decision and the individual decisions are shaped on the basis of the fundamental decision after the making of a world image (picture); below (pp. 29-31) some things are still to be said about this matter. The ascertaining of the contribution of individual decisions, and the practical steps in the formation of the fundamental decision and its corresponding world image connected with the individual decisions, is more difficult. First of all, it is clear that individual decisions, against the background of an ordered world image (regardless of whether the individual decisions consciously refer to the world image or they unconsciously appropriate and apply its criteria), are something essentially different to such fundamental decisions, which are in a world-theoretical vacuum; the confrontation with the objects of the pre-world fundamentally differs from the confrontation with the world's objects. Without the interrelation with other objects inside of an ordered world, objects are something different to what is in the framework of such an interrelation; and as long as the subject is found inside of the pre-world, it indeed has existence, but no fixed identity. Though, the more or less dull sense of one's own self manifests itself, often with elementary force, in its endeavours at achieving pleasure and avoiding pain, and these endeavours drive towards individual, not always and not totally coherent, decisions and practical steps. Throughout such fragmentary and contradictory experiences, in respect of which self-preservation not seldom may be at stake and in any case unremittingly seeks to safeguard itself in, on each and every respective occasion, different milieus and under different circumstances, a path runs from the pre-world to the world, from bare existence to the subject's identity. However, the beginning of this path remains hermeneutically inaccessible, it, after all, becomes lost in the untraceable and shimmering biopsychic structure of the subject, in the labyrinth of its

existential core, where the stirrings of organic matter turn into what we are in the habit of calling "intellect(-spirit)"¹¹ and "thought" - and also this beginning becomes lost in the plethora of every moment's barely reconstructible occurrences, which set in motion great and small actions and reactions and visibly or imperceptibly make their mark on the subject being shaped. This path to the de-cision, to the ordered world and to fixed identity can gradually unwind or else can end with a qualitative leap which takes in and makes use of all previous quantitative steps; that is why we here speak of the act or process of the decision. The scientific reconstruction of the path to the de-cision does not suffer, however, only because its beginning is empirically comprehensible with difficulty or hardly at all; exactly because it is thus, we cannot help reconstructing this path by commencing from its end, namely consciously or unconsciously orientating our research towards the question as to how the result which we see in front of us came about. In the course of this, some elements are necessarily overlooked, not recognised or disregarded, which, even before that result emerges, i.e. for as long as the outcome of the development was still open, may have possibly played a not insignificant role in order to subsequently wane or, in accordance with the new constellation in the consciousness, were reshaped and adapted. Even then, if functional consideration sometimes seems to lapse into teleology, nevertheless the course of the, necessarily only full of gaps, to be reconstructed path to the decision is not teleologically predetermined.

Be that as it may: the de-cision as act or process, from which a world image and an, inside of the world image, suitably placed identity of the subject of this same decision emerged, only constitutes the point of crystallisation or the visible summary of a long and complicated

¹¹ See footnote 4.

prehistory. In the self-understanding of the (taken) decision's subject, which is now equipped with a fixed identity - and which can apprehend and describe its own texture and situation only on the basis of the criteria which are provided by its own world image, in relation to which its reconstruction of its own prehistory is of necessity turned into self-justification -, the subject of the (taken) decision of course can hardly see how crooked, opaque, uncertain and uncontrolled or even accidental the path to the world-theoretical decision was (has or had been). If the subject of the decision admitted this, it would automatically, and precisely indeed in its very own self's eyes, have given up the demand for steady orientation and ponderability which its world image in general emphatically awaits to satisfy. Because of this, the subject of the decision prefers (and the militant decisionists gladly follow the subject of the decision by believing in this illusion) to pass its own world-theoretical decision off as the outcome of a conscious and doggedly conducted struggle, as an inevitable or at least existentially fully charged choice between (extreme) alternatives. Though it necessarily, in the process, disregards that alternatives, exactly also like good and evil, make up antithetical constituent elements of the same world image, i.e. only from a certain world-theoretical perspective are they considered as such alternatives. That applies even in the case of the choice between two different world images or even in respect of the transition from one world image to the other world image; because in this case the subjects in question only change sides, i.e. friends and foes, yet the world image which is characterised by this friend-foe-relation remains in its basic outline unchanged. The coming into being of a world image through the decision therefore is something other than the choice between already existing and competing world images, because that choice already presupposes the world image, at whose centre this competition is found.

When the subject confuses the world-theoretical de-cision and the choice between alternatives, then it succumbs to an optical illusion, and indeed this is because it wants to, and also must, preserve in its own eyes its own sovereign self-assurance and self-control, that is, its own identity as ponderable magnitude and decisive guiding principle of orientation.

Some theologian e.g., who wanted to understand and present his partisanship as the answer to a dramatic Either-Or, was nevertheless at no moment in his life just as much a convinced atheist as a religious man, just as much a refined aesthete as a strict moralist: at the moment of the decision as choice between alternatives, one cannot simply create oneself from the beginning. Even if a real change from one belief or way of life to the other belief or way of life had taken place, yet again the subject in question would not have stopped looking at the world in light of this and no other alternative, excluding in advance, at any rate, the possibility of a completely harmonic or entirely meaningless world image; as we said, the world-theoretical de-cision is already pre-decided through the delimitation of the world vis-à-vis the pre-world, irrespective of how the inner hierarchy of the world turns out in detail.

In militant decisionism's language the decision not only means a choice between alternatives, but also an act, whose motivating forces and grounds of justification lie *ultra rationem*¹² and directly expresses the deeper needs and inclinations of existence. Because we want to underline this same primacy of the existential element, we keep here and use, furthermore, the term "decision", although we mainly give it a meaning other than that which militant decisionists understand by it. This understanding of militant decisionists has in mind two cases: either one decides something in accordance with his inclinations, precisely because

¹² Beyond reason.

the rational consideration of alternatives has convinced him of the impossibility of the logically compelling preference for one of the two alternatives, or one decides from the outset in favour of something and strives for the imposition of his decision, while disdaining rational (counter)arguments as such. In both cases the contrasting of discursive Reason and existence which directly grasps certainty is decisive - a contrasting which nonetheless is perceived or even comes to the fore only in certain cultural circles and times, that is, only inside of certain world-images as such; this contrasting's emphasising then presupposes not only clear world-theoretical benchmarks, but also along with the benchmarks, a sovereign subject which possesses that identity which manifests itself in the decision. In addition, militant decisionists accept that the primacy of the existential element in actual fact manifests itself only there where the aforementioned world-theoretical benchmarks are approved. Therefore, they do not merely fall into error, but into a really rationalistic prejudice: they namely adopt the view that the subject behaves, indeed, according to its own self-understanding, and that is why it thinks that existence can only or principally then make progress if existence is imposed against whatever is alien to its essence, once it is consciously deployed for that purpose. Apart from the fact that this deployment can very well be an act of thought (we shall come back to this matter while discussing the problem of rationalism, p. 119), the elementary question is posed: what becomes of the existence of those who reject and combat the schema and the ideal of the militant decisionists? Do they stop having an existence, and indeed an active one, only because they do such a thing? Only rationalistic prejudice, in which militant decisionists are unintentionally trapped, would allow the reasoning that existence is paralysed already because the subject in question makes the claim of exclusively complying with (discursive) Reason's ascertainments and commands. We are here

dealing with an evident absurdity, which a glance at the actual life and action of those who are usually called "rationalists" can readily refute. If we, that is, want to take the connection of existence and the decision seriously and reflect on it consistently, then we must not only give to the existential element a more comprehensive meaning, but also correspondingly modify the concept of the decision so that it does not have to depend any more on such theoretically infertile, and polemically meant contradistinctions like e.g. existence vs. discursive thought. Such a broad concept of the decision is exactly that which refers to the parallel coming into being of the world image and the identity. This concept is existentially meant both in the sense that encompasses every existence (the existences of "rationalists" too), as well as in the sense of that in which all strata of existence currently are, including in the unconscious and in discursive thought. Exactly because existence eo ipso is given in all subjects and exactly because the decision means the primacy of the existential element, the decision is a universal phenomenon, which is inseparable from every subject and every decision. If the militant decisionists do not want to admit this, the reason for that is found in their (unspoken) normativism, namely in the fact that they always have in mind an existence of a certain and special quality, a "true and genuine" existence.

Existence and decision fuse inside of the fundamental stance, namely inside of the concrete practical habitus¹³ of an existence equipped with identity. The fundamental stance therefore is the visible identity in which

¹³ "Habitus" refers to the lifestyle, values, dispositions and expectations of particular social groups (and their individuals) which are acquired through the activities and experiences of everyday life. It can be understood as a structure of the mind characterized by a set of acquired schemata, sensibilities, dispositions and taste (See: Scott, John & Marshall, Gordon (eds) *A Dictionary of Sociology*, Oxford University Press, 1998).

not merely the permanent final state, that is, the subject's "character", is expressed, but also its history is summarised. The history of the existence is the history of the decision, which culminates in the sketching of a world image and in the firm outline of an identity of this same existence. However the history of the decision is acted out in all strata and at all levels of existence, which in the course of this acting out, in the meantime, is correspondingly shaped, since it is enriched by some elements while it lets other elements fall into disuse. That is why the existence, which henceforth as an in practice concretised identity in a fundamental stance completely identifies with the de-cision as its own history and with the world image created in the de-cision; "rationalists" and "irrationalists", in so far as they have identity and a fundamental stance and represent perceptions of the world, are equally outcomes, bearers, and advocates of existential decisions whose history they embody in their own fundamental stance, however they can reconstruct this history and narrate it only in the form of a self-justification - at least as long as they persist in their decision. The ascertainment is now of fundamental importance that this history of the decision, which is the history of the existence, finds an only temporary conclusion and high point in the identity and the world image; otherwise, the paradox would come into being of an ending of the activity of the decision precisely at the beginning of the activity of the organised subject inside of an organised world. In so far as schematic expression is allowed here after all, we can say that the subject's activity in respect of the taking of decisions also continues after the attainment of a fixed identity and after the sketching of a world image. Henceforth, the subject's activity is directed towards the constituent elements or the objects of the world, which are segregated from one another and are at the same time combined with each other, so that the possibility of a concentration of the

subject on an entirely particular aim (goal) or field inside of the world is offered. However, the large and small decisions inside the world constitute the continuation, the outflow and very often indeed important complementary factors of the shaping of the decision which creates the world image and the identity. The energy of this world image and identity creating decision, like its concrete shaping as well, is therefore to be hardly, if at all, differentiated from those (at least logically subordinate) part-decisions, because in every one of these part-decisions the history of the existence is partly or wholly reflected - and at the same time it is continued or diverted in accordance with the latest needs of self-preservation. From that we understand the simple reason of this continuity, interaction (mutual influence) or even consubstantiality of the world-theoretical fundamental decision and part decisions inside of the ordered world: with the coming into being of the world image and identity, that drive and struggle of self-preservation, which pushed towards that coming into being from the outset, does not also come to a standstill. On the contrary: world image and identity give to the drive of self-preservation reliable weapons in order to be able to conduct its struggles even more self-assuredly, more refinedly and more long-term than previously, in relation to which the subject, if it does not want to squander the advantages of the gained framework of orientation, must in that respect drill itself in translating its world-theoretical decision into several individual theoretical and practical decisions and thus, should this be necessary, in part drill itself in formulating anew and in part in discovering anew the world-theoretical decision. The constant and pressing presence of the drive and struggle of self-preservation in the pre-world and world therefore makes the continuity and the interpenetration of the fundamental decision and part-decisions inevitable. The part-decisions as a rule are not deduced in a purely logical manner from the

fundamental decision, but rather are joined together with it in the course of a dynamic process towards a Whole.

Now, however, times come in which self-preservation is particularly endangered and exceptional self-discipline is demanded. Precisely then does self-consciousness (i.e. self-observation and self-control) grow, namely the need for the clarification and confirmation of one's own identity inside of the world image which is interwoven with the identity - and precisely then it is attempted, to the extent of one's powers, that all individual decisions are reduced to the world-theoretical fundamental decision, with which one's own identity identifies itself, or that they are justified with the world-theoretical fundamental decision's help. This shows, of course, that the conceptual distinction between both aforementioned kinds of decision, as much as one kind of decision may regularly and frequently merge with the other kind of decision, is neither factually false nor heuristically infertile. The same can be inferred from the also often empirically ascertainable priority of the fundamental stance vis-à-vis individual part-decisions, if we namely, incidentally very often not unjustly, believe we know in advance which practical steps of a subject, whose "character" we know well, are to be expected in a specific situation. Through the fundamental stance, mediation takes place between the fundamental decision and part-decisions, however in itself the fundamental decision, as the visible identity, which does not care about the particular, but about the general, namely it cares about the preservation of the thought style and the commands of the fundamental decision in the part-decisions, so that their coherence and thus the subject's firm orientation are ensured in accordance with the world image. If the world-theoretical criteria which are embodied in the identity and the fundamental stance are fixed and incontrovertible, then the part-

decisions can be considered even as tactical or technical problems and be tackled accordingly. Precisely because in relation to the part-decisions the fundamentals are beyond debate, the dilemmatic element can here be much more distinctive than in the fundamental decision; in this way results the - conventionally called situation of the decision -, which demands a decision in the sense of a choice. If the dilemmatic element characterises the fundamental decision much less, if at all, than the part-decisions on each and every respective occasion, it is because the subject's whole existence takes part in the fundamental decision, whereby the degree of certainty of the world image and identity reaches a non plus ultra¹⁴. In reality no reasons can be adduced from the outside in favour of the fundamental decision, that is, of the existence fully involved with the fundamental decision, although this is often attempted on the part of the relevant parties in the interest of the fundamental decision's imposition; yet such reasons are actually already constituent elements of the existence, its self-understanding simultaneously constitutes its self-justification, and its existence constitutes the strongest argument for its existence.

The main feature of the fundamental decision, both in the course of its crystallisation as well as in the course of its practical unfolding inside of the world created ideationally by the fundamental decision itself, is therefore the complete existential participation of the subject in question - that means: the complete presence both of its many-branched drive of self-preservation and its unconscious, as well as its conscious and its discursive Reason, so that not only the elementary driving forces, but also the mechanisms of rationalisation (i.e. as explanation and justification) referring to the elementary driving forces can simultaneously and hand in

¹⁴ Not more beyond; the extreme or perfect point or state.

hand take effect. Now the complete existential participation of the subject of the decision ensues not only when the decision is its own work, but also when the subject of the decision is subjected to pre-given decisions. Existential intensity can therefore be the consequence both of an existential contrasting, which forces the subject into the taking of its own fundamental decision, as well as of an existential affiliation, which consists in the acceptance of decisions already taken by others; also in the latter case, there is of course no lack of a contrasting with something, only the remedy is simply sought and found in the identification with the declared foes of one's own foe - or else conversely: the subject makes foes of the foes of its friends. Be that as it may: the existential affiliation grants - and very often demands - no less than the original existential decision, it namely puts a world image as framework of orientation at the subject's disposal, and it acts in terms of bringing about an identity. Existential intensity therefore can reach a climax also during the mere defence of a pre-given world image. Because whoever decides in favour of a world image, decides eo ipso in favour of a decision and must, at any level whatsoever, at least partly repeat each and every respective act or process of the decision. The fact that full-scale affiliation can be highest existential intensity, constitutes in itself a strong argument against every romanticisation of the decision. The ascertainment that there could be no human everyday life which would not be based on a certain world image and on a certain mode of behaviour, whereby human everyday life dissociates itself more or less consciously from other world images and modes of behaviour, turns again against the romantic contradistinction between the situation of the decision and everyday life. At least in this sense every everyday life is founded on a decision. The sensitivity with which people usually react to violations of the rules of everyday life is, incidentally, a good piece of evidence for these rules' character as

decision. That people in "everyday life" do not need to decide *ex nihilo*¹⁵ on their world image and behaviour does not at all, therefore, mean that they do not orientate themselves and conduct themselves on the basis of fundamental decisions, which remain unreflected upon only as long as they are not (openly) disputed; and they are disputed in practice much more frequently than what most people would like to believe. Habituation in respect of a certain "everyday life" amounts, from this point of view, to practice in relation to a world-theoretical decision or even to the rediscovery of this same world-theoretical decision, in relation to which a sense of existential affiliation must be aroused, entirely irrespective of whether this sense of existential affiliation reached an extraordinary existential intensity or not. Against the decision's romantics, who, sometimes not without autobiographical allusions, emphasise the existentially extreme, as it were, heroic element in the decision, we must, thus, say that the decision very often can be the endeavour at adaptation of a weak and anxious existence in its search for identity and self-assertion (i.e. in its struggle for self-rule). With regard to this, the identity must be defended all the more doggedly, the more insecure and unpleasant the state of affairs was to which it put an end; here the "heroic" element actually follows the decision instead of accompanying this same decision. That which the militant decisionists call "decision", is often nothing other than such a defence of identity, namely, the decision for the defence of an already taken vital decision, which actually is borne by the whole existence, although the subject in question itself does not (precisely) know of what and in what its whole existence consists.

The subject's complete existential participation in the decision makes the conventional contradistinction between the act of knowledge and the act

¹⁵ Out of nothing.

of the will, between knowing or thinking and wanting in general meaningless, and it makes this contradistinction entirely unsuitable for the apprehension of concrete biopsychic processes. In reality, this contradistinction is not based on any empirical findings, but originally was made up in the framework of ancient-Christian metaphysics, which carried out a structuring of the psyche according to the model of its general perception of the hierarchy of the strata of the being; the supposed parallelism of mental(-spiritual) assets and the strata of the being should have here served to furnish proof that pure thought culminates in pure, true being as well as conversely. In the New Times, the primacy of the theory of knowledge of course (to a great extent) replaced the primacy of the teachings of being, nevertheless the old metaphysical structures and priorities were salvaged, in multiple ways, in the new theory of knowledge and psychology, which because of this mainly tried hard, for a long time, to bring about the determination of the relation between thinking and the senses or knowing and wanting. A scientific consideration (or way of looking at things) is not in the least obliged to accept the, in such a way, accumulated inheritance from the history of ideas, even though the scientific consideration, as things are now, sees itself forced to use the terms "thinking" and "wanting". However scientific consideration may use these terms only in order to comprehend the activities which are roughly expressed by the terms as both inseparable aspects of one and the same biopsychic act or process - even furthermore: in order to show that both these inseparable aspects completely fuse inside of the act or process of the decision. The decisionistic theory expounded here therefore does away with not only the normativistic-axiological, but also the anthropological and epistemological remnants of classical metaphysics. Now the fusion of thinking and wanting does not mean that one is, as it were, absorbed by

the other, so that ultimately thinking is completely transformed into wanting and wanting into thinking (in their conventional sense). Rather, it means that wanting, in which the drive of self-preservation stirs and is articulated, fulfils cognitive functions and indeed only as knowing wanting can it want; conversely, knowing is only possible as wanting knowing, i.e. as such a knowledge which has motives behind itself, aims (goals) in front of itself and controlling authorities of power over itself. We really mean this complex unity when we say the de-cision shapes the world image and identity of its subject. As segregation every de-cision of course stands just as much for a distinction inclusive of judgement (judging) and, since it both separates what is relevant from what is irrelevant as well as determining the hierarchy and structure of what is relevant, that is why in it there is also a conclusion with regard to what is relevant on each and every respective occasion, a conclusion which is simultaneously a re-solution i.e. verdict on the same. Incidentally, it is not the case that the subject proceeds to the formation of its world only after the exhaustive investigation and patient weighing up of all constituent elements of its pre-world; a rational procedure which is so conscientious would hardly have any prospects of ever being completed, whereas the everyday needs of self-preservation are pressing. In this way, the already *prima vista*¹⁶ relevant constituent elements of the pre-world quickly push themselves to the fore and become - at least temporary - points of attraction and crystallisation, around which the individual pieces of the world image, which is coming into being, are gathered and put in order. This seems so inevitable, since the processing itself of the constituent elements of the pre-world in accordance with the world being formed presupposes some starting point and some kind of footing; and since knowledge starts precisely with this processing, that is why already in its

¹⁶ At first sight.

beginnings it must be interwoven with certain ratings (i.e. evaluations) (even at the elementary level of the pleasure principle), of which the segregation of what is relevant from what is irrelevant is fundamental. Precisely herein does the inseparable unity of the cognitive element and the volitive element take root.

This unity, therefore, constitutes a merely different description of the decision and consequently of the, fully involved in the decision, existence. In the decision and as decision, knowledge not only contains an object, but also and above all a subject, which, again, does not e.g. function as the mere bearer of a priori¹⁷ categories etc., but indeed often as a sparsely flowing, yet never drying up, source of existential energy, which imbues knowledge. Accordingly, knowledge is a certain interweaving of object and subject, which takes place as the subjection of the object to the subject and indeed as the interpretation of that object by this subject. Organ and at the same time addressee of this interpretation is the existence in its each and every respective construction, i.e. in its texture and mixing of the unconscious and the conscious, of drive and discursive Reason, of wanting and thinking within the interpretation's scope on each and every respective occasion. That is why the consolidation of the identity of the subject or the existence means just as much as the fixing of the interpretation of the objects which appear on the subject's or the existence's horizon. Without knowing interpretation and interpreting knowledge there is no fundamental stance, and without a fundamental stance no knowing can stand firm. In the fundamental stance the wanting of he who thinks and the content of thinking flow into one another - and the (interpreted) Is (i.e. Being or To Be) and (objectified) Ought in the fundamental stance do the same. Because the decision must carry its own

¹⁷ Reasoning or knowledge based on, or proceeding from, theoretical deduction rather than from empirical observation.

normative justification, i.e. it takes place only as the creation of such a world image, in which the knowing of objects necessarily accompanies the safeguarding of the subject's identity. The decision is thus a knowledge anchored in certain criteria, in which the wanting (of self-preservation) of the subject in question is concretised. The mutual dependence of rating (i.e. evaluating) and knowing, which characterises the world-theoretical decision, is in this way only the expression of the fusion of thinking and wanting inside the subject of this decision, i.e. inside the existence bearing the decision. Once the subject of the decision comes into - albeit dull - consciousness and in this way the process of the decision has started, there can be no sole reign any more of a "blind" wanting at all subsequent levels and stages; wanting is always bound to some thought form or some thought content. If inside of the pre-world the naked drive of self-preservation or the elementary form of the pleasure principle motivates all actions and reactions, then inside of the world, existential intensity takes place only in a more or less close interrelation with cognitive achievements. As existential intensity at a higher level (whether in the form of existential contrasting or in the form of existential affiliation), the decision contains its specific thought content from the outset in itself, although the decision gives the thought content a rationally processed expression only gradually and often in a contradictory way. This fusion of thinking and wanting in the world-theoretical fundamental decision, incidentally, makes the already discussed mechanism of the fundamental decision's interaction (or mutual influence) with the part-decisions more understandable, through which the fundamental stance is converted into concrete praxis. The from the outset authoritative presence of the volitive element in the fundamental decision, namely, irresistibly presses towards the continuation of the process of the decision, even though this time in the form of practical

concrete steps in the framework of the ordered world. So the decision as Whole is not the merely in itself independent intellectual(-spiritual) or mental(-spiritual) preparation for praxis, but the praxis itself in a broader sense. The so-called unity of theory and praxis therefore reflects the fusion of thinking and wanting; as expression of a wanting, theory is a form of praxis, and this form of praxis, on the other hand, can hardly do without an - often unreflected - world-theoretical basis.¹⁸

Coming to a de-cision occurs in and through the dynamics of the drive of self-preservation, which, because of this, creates a fixed framework of orientation. Because out of the de-cision a world image emerges, in which the subject struggling for self-preservation is assigned a certain place. This is interpreted eo ipso as recognition of the right of this same subject to existence in the world, which in turn contributes to the strengthening of its elementary sense of power. The subject acquires power first of all while being able to safeguard its own self-preservation, and this ultimately takes place in the form of the attainment of a fixed identity inside of an ordered world. The sense of power and identity belong together in a dual sense, as the identity is the confirmation of self-preservation being able to be fought for successfully, but also confirmation that there is an entirely determined thing which ought to be preserved. The putting in order of the identity in the world image's hierarchy lends the sense of power an additional, highly important dimension: from now on, self-preservation does not appear as the mere temporary result of an existential effort, whose regular repetition in the future, however, no-one can guarantee, but as the function of a deeper agreement with the course of the world, as the command of the inner logic and structure or even of the meaning of the world. The subject thus

¹⁸ In Kondylis's own Greek translation (p. 58) the following phrase is added: "even if this basis here has often not constituted an object of intellectual processing".

sees its power increase from the moment it is no longer solely dependent on its own, necessarily limited powers, but combines its activity with superior forces, which prevail inside its world image. Here it concretely appears how the fusion of thinking and wanting takes effect in the formation of a world image: thinking namely rationalises (i.e. explains or justifies) the endeavour of wanting at ensuring self-preservation through the extension of power - and simultaneously thinking enables, at least ideationally, the extension of power, while it props up the demand for self-preservation on the broad basis of the world image.

The transformation of the elementary endeavour at self-preservation into a refined effort at the extension of power therefore marks the threshold at the world-theoretical de-cision, which for its part accompanies a projection of the endeavour at self-preservation to the already precisely emerging level of the world image. The necessity of that transformation now becomes understandable, if we bring to mind the immanently dynamic character of the endeavour at self-preservation. In itself the term "self-preservation" is of course misleading, because it seems to indicate a static state of affairs. And yet successful self-preservation must entail eo ipso in the long term self-intensification, that is, the extension of power. The process of self-preservation does not at all take place, of course, in a vacuum, but it means - already in a biological respect - a regular metabolism, that is, a certain relation towards a certain environment. Need (i.e. privation) is that situation which endangers the metabolism and consequently self-preservation; need (i.e. privation) can be overcome only through the effective combating of the threatening factors. Need (i.e. privation), the struggle and self-preservation, hence, belong together; whoever renounces self-preservation and self-assertion cannot find himself in any need (i.e. privation). For man, who must make up for his

innate biological deficiencies through making provision for himself, the temporary state of affairs in respect of the satisfaction of his needs does not constitute the starting point of all fundamental thoughts and acts which refer to self-preservation, but exactly the state of need (i.e. privation) constitutes such a starting point. Need (i.e. privation) appears because the available equipment against it does not suffice, which suggests the conclusion that even better equipment for the future prevention of need (i.e. privation), that is, for the safeguarding of self-preservation, is necessary. The previous level of security can obviously from now on be regained and defended only through more intensive self-preservation measures, i.e.: a new state of need (i.e. privation) can probably then only be avoided when the available equipment more or less exceeds the current and immediate security needs. This is the reason why self-preservation is not possible in the long term without self-intensification. And since self-preservation is a function of the preservation of power, that is why self-intensification must be translated into tangible power intensification. If self-preservation is understood concretely-dynamically, therefore it means a power claim, and indeed not merely in the sense of the preservation of power, but principally in the sense of that extension of power, which is able to secure the relative power position of each and every respective subject in question with respect to the power positions of competing factors bringing about need (i.e. privation).

The complex unity of the world-theoretical decision and self-preservation can now be more concretely understood as the fusion of the decision and the power claim, in relation to which the decision being reduced to the power claim finds expression in the world image. In so far as existence is

that which can use for its own self-preservation a world image apparatus¹⁹ with the aforementioned functions of orientation and functions of relieving of the tension of existence, the existence's power claims must come forward de-cisively in affecting the construction of its world image. The power claim cuts the Gordian Knot of the chaotic pre-world in order to put in its place an organised world which takes into account the power claim's own wishes. The sketching of the world image on the basis of one's own power claims amounts to the sketching of the same world image in view of that which stands in the way of one's own power claims - namely out of consideration for an existent or potential foe; in this sense the world image becomes the inverted image of a foe. In its interrelation with the world-theoretical decision the concept of the foe can include everything: inorganic or organic nature, the collective or the individual threat, the stranger, the neighbour or the brother - even also parts or elements of one's own I (Ego) which seem to constitute a burden in life's struggle; foe is, in short, everything which instils angst (or fear), out of which danger comes. The foe's various forms are mixed in the various world images in a different way on each and every respective occasion and often can disguise themselves to the point of not being recognised. However the decisive, even though negative role of the foe in the coming into being and concrete shaping of world-theoretical decisions becomes immediately visible from the simple historical fact that the figure of the foe has hitherto not been missing from any larger organised world image, even if in the place of evil spirits or, for instance, of sin we put the immoral, the anti-social, oppression or alienation - concepts, all of which are referred to by means of their concrete interpretation in concrete ("unworthy") human existences; even in the modern natural-scientific

¹⁹ Kondylis's own Greek translation (p. 61) of "Weltbildapparat" would be conveyed in English as: "sensory [sense] mechanism of [for] the formation of a [the] world image".

world image, which seems to be, more than every other world image, above such quarrels, the concepts of the necessary or the chance, the causal or the indeterminate, the mechanical or the teleological are accepted or rejected (indeed sometimes they are used) out of consideration for a dissenting world-theoretical party, so that the positioning vis-à-vis those concepts amounts to a negative projection of the foe in that world image. As subtle as the taking into consideration of the foe during the sketching of the world image may be on each and every respective occasion: the foe is incorporated in the world image in such a way that its subjugation or putting aside must appear as command (or even as certainty) in view of the objective composition of the world; precisely because of this, for that matter, not only does delimitation belong to a world image vis-à-vis the pre-world, but also a specific inner hierarchy on each and every respective occasion.

The presence of the foe in the decision - a presence which, as we must repeat, is unavoidable because of the automatic transformation of the endeavour at self-preservation into a power claim - is now connected with an essential feature of this same decision, namely its historicity. Put another way: the concrete historicity of the decision consists in its shaping, in taking a foe, who is historically pre-given and is not by-passed, into constant consideration. The foe, hence, is fate, i.e. the negative determination of him (or it) taking a decision with regard to the foe; because the decision must strive for and embody the opposite of that which the foe stands for. The foe thus pre-empts the concrete content of the decision *e contrario*²⁰. THAT existence must take its decision is, in any case, inevitable, since it wants to preserve itself, that is, to orientate itself and to act; WHAT it will make the content of its decision depends

²⁰ From the contrary view or standpoint (or decision).

on its biopsychic texture or composition and its concrete situation, namely on the factors which, as it were, prescribe its own foe. The distinction between the That and the What of the decision remains, of course, purely theoretical; in reality, the necessity of the That dawns inside the existence at the same moment as the outline of the What. Contact with the foe, and the announcement of a power claim is therefore the first de-ciding step towards the reality of the ordered world. Precisely because the decision is of its nature in accordance with a power claim, it cannot and may not constitute a solipsistic act or process, but it must confront an - of course ideationally prepared in accordance with its needs - reality. Power claims are not fulfilled in a subjective emptiness, but constitute the most pressing and, because of that, also the deepest relation with the world. Moralists do not want, as a rule, to see that one can indeed love from afar or from on high, however in those circumstances one cannot make power claims that will be taken seriously, therefore they do not see that the drive to come into close contact with the world may have motives entirely other than "altruistic" motives, and indeed that this drive to come into close contact with the world can be a command of self-preservation as power intensification. Not only do the dynamics of self-preservation push towards the decision, but also the decision drives, since it is ultimately the clarification and the world-theoretical foundation of the power claim, towards incessant practical confrontation with the ordered world created by itself for this end (goal) (of incessant practical confrontation with the ordered world) - in the constituent elements of precisely this world, the foe is also found.

The reproach often made against decisionism, that it remains caged in the imponderable subjectivity of the decision and neglects the historical conditions of action, can therefore only be made against militant

decisionism, in so far as this makes out of the decision a solitary (heroic) deed and, while not wanting to admit, as a rule, the function of the existential power claim and the existential enmity resulting from that existential power claim in overlooking the specifically historical texture of each and every respective situation in order to thereafter relate the decision to God, Freedom and all kinds of spectres. If the decision is a power claim which must be imposed against a certain alien being under certain circumstances, then the concrete historical situation is not bypassed. This binding to supra-subjective or extra-subjective factors does not however mean - as decisionism's opponents, for their part, would like to believe -, that henceforth firm, and indeed normative boundaries are set against the decision's "arbitrariness". In other words: out of the concrete character of the situation, inside of which a power claim has to be imposed, it does not logically result that the decision's normative components, which that power claim is in the habit of invoking, can even be founded "rationally"; the concrete historical situation is coercive merely in a pragmatic, not in a normative respect, namely it forces the subject in it to establish norms and to put the same norms in the service of its own power claims, but it cannot force (all of) the rest of the subjects in this same historical concrete situation to accept the general validity of the aforementioned norms. This is because the norms come into being and indeed take effect in a concrete situation, but in the way this concrete situation presents itself from the perspective of the subject in question; from this perspective, i.e. from the alien perspective, the foe however cannot even recognise himself and because of that he cannot let the norms in force in this perspective be binding on himself. So the decision's inevitable joining to a concrete situation does not mean any gain or any guarantee for its superior "objectivity" or "ponderability", in the sense the normativists are concerned about "consensus" - entirely on the contrary:

norms, in which the decision as power claim finds expression, are highly concrete in a psychological-historical respect, yet that is exactly why they cannot be generally binding, even if they - precisely because of their essence in accordance with the power claim - want to be generally binding. Accordingly, one cannot at all infer normative bindedness from historical determination, although historical determination seems to curtail the "arbitrariness" of the decision; it does it however in a completely different way to what the normativists think. After all, this curtailment does not adversely affect in the slightest the decision's existential intensity, which is given with the decision's character as power claim. On the contrary, the decision's historicity contributes considerably to the increase in that intensity, while it exposes each and every respective subject to the manifold pressure of multiple tangible factors. If the decision is a power claim and if this power claim necessarily entails a struggle, which can only be conducted in entirely specific historical circumstances, then the existence's life can unfold and intensify only in the confrontation with its historical destinies. What militant decisionists experience as the dynamics of their own extremely personal decision and existence²¹, actually constitutes only the resultant of all the forces of the concrete historical situation in which it finds itself. Since no-one can search for friends and foes or what is friendly and what is inimical outside of one's own (pre-)world's constituent elements, everyone must decide exclusively with regard to those constituent elements. The historical situation is concrete because it has bounds - and the original existential energy becomes intensity, as it bumps into these bounds; otherwise it would idly become lost in what is boundless.

²¹ In Kondylis's own Greek translation (p. 68) the phrase is: "absolutely personal and unprecedented decision and existence".

In their concrete historicity, decisions constitute the endless manifoldness of the objectively existent, i.e. of the different, more or less complete, better or worse organised worlds. These worlds are different, because they differently decided, because they came out of the different concrete-historical decisions. The ascertainment of the manifoldness of the historical whole image and the relativity = concreteness of every one of its constituent elements through a historically oriented way of looking at things constitutes, then, the pragmatic starting point of descriptive decisionism. Historicism and descriptive decisionism belong most closely together in this sense. Because only the decision, understood as segregation and as power claim, is able to explain the coming about of so many idiosyncratic worlds. No normativistic position, no - in good times open and in bad times concealed - homage to One Reason and to One Truth can do the same. Normativistically inclined thinkers necessarily stumble every step of the way over the variety of form of historical data, and because they know it or suspect it all too well, they get out of its way: if not contemptuously look down on it, at any rate covertly, i.e. with the help of constructions pertaining to the philosophy of history, which order the aforementioned variety of form so that it can be subsumed under an overarching, normatively charged idea. The assumption that only one ordered world is the true world creates at the same time innumerable false worlds, so that under their pressure the "true" world looks like it is suffocating. The worrying multiformity of what is "false" must therefore be, to the extent of one's powers, driven out and ignored, morally-normativistically inspired philosophising and consistent historical consideration are arch-foes and must remain so. Conversely, descriptive decisionism starts from the elementary, through the not to be interpreted differently, fact of the historically handed down variety of form, it spots the elementary and historically handed down variety of form's cause in

the act or process of the decision and in the act or process of segregation, and seeks to make understandable the same acts or processes with reference to the necessary transformation of the endeavour at self-preservation into a power claim.

Because the decision is concrete-historical, it can also change as soon as the friend-foe-constellation, in which it came into being, is modified or reversed. When the power claim is diverted or reformulated, then the decision which is interwoven with the power claim cannot remain unaffected by it. The changing of the decision aims at safeguarding or even strengthening the existence with the help of a new identity. Identity does not, after all, coincide with existence in toto²², but it is only the existence that has come to a certain self-understanding. The endeavour at self-preservation, in which the mechanism of the decision takes root, however lies deeper than the identity, i.e. already, even though not in the least exclusively, in the unconscious strata of existence, and that is why it can even command and bring about a changing of identity for the sake of the whole existence - unless the existence and the (existing) identity are bound, for better or worse, to each other for particular reasons (because e.g. the existence under a particular identity has reached and enjoyed such an intensity and confirmation that it cannot hope anymore to find anything else like it). The total changing of the decision and of the identity is not of course an all-too-frequent phenomenon, because as a rule existence, manages, in accordance with a law of extreme internal economy, with minor adjustments to its own identity, so that distressing ruptures and transitions, which necessarily accompany a new orientation or the creation of a new world image, can be avoided. Changes and adjustments in the decision attest to the fact, in any case, that the subject

²² Totally; completely; entirely; wholly.

of the decision and the physical subject do not coincide conceptually, although the subject of the decision cannot be anything other than a physical subject. One and the same physical subject can, in other words, at different times, become the bearer of different decisions; of course its fundamental stance and practical activity are not determined through its mere physical existence, but through its identity as bearer of a decision. The physical continuity of the subject of different decisions does not refute the thesis that in the decision and through the decision the subject creates its own identity. Because in the transition from one decision to another decision the old identity (for the most part) disintegrates, the joined together constituent elements of the old identity's corresponding world lose their coherence and fall back into the incoherent constituent elements of a pre-world, which can produce a new ordered world only through a new decision, that is, an act or process of the decision creating the new identity. In the course of this, the constituent elements of the old world must share the general lot of the constituent elements of that pre-world: either they are (also) taken on in the (new) world image (of course with changed status²³) or else they are pressed into non-existence.

There are three subjects of decisions: the genus (i.e. mankind or the human species), the group (in its extremely different social and historical forms) and the individual. These subjects' decisions and the interrelated world images coming from these decisions can, in so far as they meet one another in time and space, be mutually complemented, determined or combated. The decisions of the genus (i.e. mankind or the human species) are certainly binding in the dual sense that they make the general framework of the decisions of all other subjects and, moreover, they establish the general formal-related mechanism of the act or process of

²³ Kondylis's own Greek translation (p.72) is: "of course at another rank [tier] of the world-theoretical hierarchy".

the decision entirely irrespective of its content on each and every respective occasion. These most comprehensive and at the same time simplest of all decisions were taken during the many hard²⁴ millennia which were necessary for domination over the earth by the human genus (i.e. mankind), and first of all these decisions determined what to see, to hear, to smell, to taste and to feel, that is, what will be the human genus's elementary home (i.e. habitat). In this way, that world image apparatus developed, which enabled survival, while it shaped the world so that it would be ponderable, that is, it would constitute a firm framework of orientation. Since the world image apparatus should remedy exactly the insufficient specialisation of the human organism in general and the individual senses in particular, the world image apparatus worked so that man created for himself, through the world image apparatus, his own special world or, in other words, he became a specialist in respect of a certain world designed for, and suited to, this purpose (of creating and knowing his own special world). Dominance over this world could, therefore in other words, be realised because the world image itself was made in view of the needs of this dominance. The specialisation necessary for life consisted however, for its part, in a large-scale process of the decision or segregation, during which not only were the, in practical terms, irrelevant parts of the pre-world ignored, but even those parts taken into account were substantially remoulded, i.e. they were absorbed in more or less abstract form in the organised world image. It is only apparently a paradox that abstraction and generalisation could precisely assist specialisation and consequently improvement in performance; because the original insufficiency of specialisation at the level of the sense organs allowed the bringing off of a functionally able

²⁴ In Kondylis's Greek translation (p. 72) the phrase is: "many long and hard millennia".

specialisation only at the level of the organised world image, i.e. at the level of the world image coming about from abstractions and generalisations. This is understood more easily if we think about an elementary process, sense perception. That which we - while making a drastic abstraction for our part - are in the habit of calling "I (Ego)", is able to shake off the never easing off bewildering flood tide of the most different information only through becoming aware of each and every relevant element; if the "I (Ego)" does not want to become lost, it cannot and may not in the least deal with the plethora of the material offered by the outside world quietly, taking time with impartiality, i.e. it thus would not encounter the outside world as though all its constituent elements were candidates with equal rights as regards participation in the organised world image. That is the reason why the lower centres of the nervous system "know" many more details about the outside world than the "I (Ego)" itself. These centres, however, fulfil functions such as e.g. a first, pioneering abstraction from accidental occurrences and, furthermore, process classifications which are ipso facto²⁵ generalisations and are made on the basis of fixed criteria. The ascertainment is here important that the main achievements of linguistically articulable conceptual thought already appear in the process of sense perception, and indeed as achievements of the nervous system. That does not imply any equating of both thought and sense perception, however it probably shows how deep their parallelism and correspondingly how legitimate the attempt is to track the fundamental features of the act or the process of the decision already in all that is taking place in the unconscious, so that thereby the decision's anthropologically conditioned inevitability is kept in mind all the more clearly. Just as in sense perception, objects can be recognised only through abstraction from accidental occurrences, whereby the

²⁵ By the fact itself.

orientation needs are satisfied and the chances of survival are improved, so too in conceptual thought, ideas and phenomena do not torment the mind any longer from the moment they are installed in more or less comprehensive and correspondingly more or less abstractive meaning contexts abstracted from accidental occurrences. And in both cases each and every respective world image does not come into being by taking into consideration all data that comes into knowledge by treating that data as being of equal value in principle, but on the basis of that knowledge (i.e. data) judged to be relevant on each and every respective occasion.

The elementary world outline of the genus (i.e. mankind or the human species) is already based on some principles which also underlie every later thought form, even the most complicated, and consequently are constitutive for the logical form of every decision; what is important here is that the formation of these principles accompanies the formation of the subject in the course of the act or process of the decision. In this way e.g. the coming into being of the logical identity principle is hardly distinguished from the coming into being of a fixed identity of the subject, especially since the logical identity principle guarantees indispensable ability at orientation for the fixed identity of the subject; also, the principle of sufficient reason or causality interrelates at least partly with the (increasing) ability of the subject to cause certain effects with the conscious use of certain means. The development of the world image apparatus and the parallel crystallisation of a firm footing and firm points of reference in the course of the confrontation of inorganic and organic nature create the first great models of the decision and set the mechanism of the decision in motion. The genus (i.e. mankind or the human species) bequeaths this mechanism to the groups and the individuals, i.e. it does not - or not necessarily - bequeath to the groups

and the individuals certain contents, but a method, a by and large tried and tested procedure (i.e. way of proceeding). The contents change according to each and every respective foe and at different tempi on each and every respective occasion. Even at the level of the genus (i.e. mankind or the human species), which understandably shows the greater stability, the progressive taming of the collective foe, nature, brings about serious changes in this respect; of course it always remains the case that something relevant has to be segregated from what is irrelevant, yet now something is held to be relevant other than what was earlier held to be relevant, and as a result even the world image apparatus must also be partly modified. At the levels of the group and the individual, relatively quick change in, or even reversal of, the friend-foe-constellation brings about correspondingly faster successive modifications of the contents which result from the process of the decision. However the general features of the decision, looked at in terms of form, remain stable, and that is due to their original interrelation with the needs of the drive of self-preservation, which constitutes, so to speak, the absolute constant.

Myths, religions and ideologies are basically collective world-theoretical decisions. Such decisions are possible because certain concrete situations are suitable for forcing, as it were, a number of individuals simultaneously into a more or less unified perspective. Seeing from a certain lasting perspective, however, amounts to a de-cision, i.e. segregation of what is for the group relevant from what is irrelevant, and to the sketching of a world image on the basis of what is relevant. This world image constitutes the guarantee for the (at least morally) superior status of the group vis-à-vis other groups, especially the inimical groups, and therefore grants identity, ability at orientation and (above all in an emergency) existential intensity. Just like the genus (i.e. mankind or the

human species) in relation to nature, so too the group becomes the specialist in respect of a world prepared precisely for this end (goal) (of guaranteeing its own superior status²⁶ vis-à-vis other groups), and this takes place again through large-scale abstractions, dismemberments and violations of the objectively existent, i.e. through concentration on whatever is important for self-preservation, on what is friendly and what is inimical, under whatever rationalisations, metamorphoses and disguises all this may occur. - Things are not essentially different when individuals become the subjects of decisions. The result of the personal decision, visible at any moment as identity and fundamental stance, stands at the end of the brief or long, partly conscious and partly unconscious search of the individual existence for lasting points of orientation and guarantees of security. The latter are of course not to be understood in the narrow material sense since the taken decision in some cases can even entail death, and indeed knowingly (with intent). Under the conditions of social life, which, despite all its material rootedness, is ultimately cemented together by virtue of the broad effect of (existentially relevant) ideas, orientation and security, rather, are granted through the conviction that the practised way of life and the acts carried out would not have a merely imaginary meaning inside of an all in all meaningful life (p. 62), namely, inside of such a life in which it is worth setting aims (goals) (whatever they are) and striving for their realisation - either because the person in question believes God would bless those aims (goals) or that they would promote the welfare of mankind, or because he simply thinks that they are in accord with inclinations and wishes which he holds to be generally human and natural. The world image coming from the decision should underpin exactly that conviction (regarding God's blessing, the welfare of humanity or what is universally human or natural) and consequently

²⁶ The translator suggests the addition of the phrase: "at least in its own eyes".

strengthen the individual in his self-confidence; in this way the subject creates through the de-cision that world in which it can move itself into the centre. Nonetheless, the fact that a subject stands in the ideational centre of (its) world only seldom implies actual domination over others; as a rule this fact means the (fictive, supposed or even real) agreement of the inner law and the outer ways of acting of the existence with the general meaning of the world image; even if, in the process, the existence remains subjected *nolens volens*²⁷ to the domination of another existence: that agreement can even be a wonderful consolation for this subjection. Very often, and above all in hierarchically structured groups which have been stable for a long time, the act or process of the decision in individuals coincides with habituation in respect of the pre-given world. In troubled transitional periods in which the fundamental values and the fundamental questions are controversial, it seems, on the other hand, that the individual looks for his identity in identification with one of the (civil war) parties, in which the, just a little while ago, (relatively) unified group, in the meantime, has split. A special power claim, namely the need for recognition on the part of certain, friendly or inimically disposed persons, plays in such identifications a not insignificant role. If a decision in favour of one of the already existing parties or lifestyles and the identity belonging to the decision cannot ensure the desired recognition on the part of the desired persons, then the individual creates new authorities of recognition (e.g. posterity or the Last Judgement), which in fact have no empirical basis, yet at the same time are empirically irrefutable. Consequently, the individual is able to remain at the centre of a world, even at the price of establishing this world in the periphery of the, at present, dominant or even of all existing worlds of the decision.

²⁷ Whether unwilling or willing.

These and similar phenomena in the life of individuals can be well understood, at least in their general terms, on the basis of the conceptual instruments developed in this chapter. Though, the immeasurable variety of form of the said phenomena, their enormous ability at transformation and the inexhaustible variety of the concrete situations, in which they take shape, must bring scientific attempts at interpretation of personal decisions or life histories not seldom to awkward silence. Because we, like all the respective subjects in question too, for the most part do not know the deeper motivating forces in their ramifications at the different levels of existence, but only or principally their logically comprehensible rationalisations. Consequently, the act or process of the decision for the most part becomes lost in the unfathomable biopsychic root of existence. We can, nevertheless, empirically ascertain that no human existence can by-pass certain, and indeed as discussed above, form-related constants. In the personal act or process of the decision, as well as in the collective act or process of the decision, the entire existence participates, as conscious and as unconscious, as drive and discursive Reason. That act or process is concretised, therefore, through small or large events, through small and large steps and positionings, through small and large sympathies and antipathies - over a long period of time and at every moment. Innumerable visible and invisible chisels form the fundamental stance, which then are made noticeable in practice in the part-decisions. This existential concreteness of the decision goes by the board when the I (Ego) is imagined as a hierarchy of mental(-spiritual) assets, at whose peak stands "Reason". Apart from the aforementioned origin of this perception out of the thoughts world (i.e. system of ideas) of classical metaphysics, it expresses the normativistic wish for "rational" controllability and control of the decision in accordance with a certain value scale, in relation to which the conscious, normatively usable

identity directly or indirectly artificially conceals the multi-layeredness of the concrete, but normatively imponderable, existence. When we therefore speak here of identity, we do not want to talk about the idealistic theory in respect of the consciousness and the I (Ego), but we refer to the self-understanding of the subjects of the decision, i.e. to their belief that they would have at their disposal a firm and conscious identity, whereupon they could be supported during action or simply to invoke. It is in practice uninteresting whether the sense of identity is based on a fiction or not; even if this is the case, what remains decisive is that the endeavour at self-preservation needs such a fiction - and even if this is not the case, nothing forces us to set the I (Ego) as a binding link of representations and desires and as leading authority under the aegis of "Reason" in accordance with the way of the normativists. Perhaps we must, under the influence of a schematising set of metaphors, to which our thought has now become accustomed, accept the existence of something in which or in relation to which a coherent and stable association of representations and desires takes place; however, remaining with the set of metaphors, we can imagine this something just as well as an, at times bright, at other times dark, at times pressing, at other times fleeting, shadow, which founds its persistence precisely on its infinite flexibility, which is analogous to and copes with the likewise infinite variety of form of the possible concrete situations. In other words: the I's (Ego's) need to be expressed and to unfold inside an orientation-giving decision is not (necessarily) put down to its sharply outlined and crystal-clear character; the need can just as much be because of the I's (Ego's) originally fragmentary and contradictory composition, which must be compensated by at least a temporary balance and even external coherence. We must ask whether and to what extent the clear and continuous sense of identity stays awake under the watchful gaze of

fellow humans, who, for their part, in searching for firm points of orientation, are in the habit of looking at an individual as the same essence, notwithstanding all the changing of the accidental occurrences; because we cannot assume with absolute certainty that the individual, should he meet in the street his own "I (Ego)" as an independent person, especially in an earlier state of being, would readily recognise the "I (Ego)" as form and behaviour, and would, without hesitation, identify himself with it. At any rate, it is by no means certain that self-preservation and self-intensification are possible only on the basis of objectively true self-knowledge of a firm and continuous identity; the I (Ego) certainly does not struggle abstractly around and for itself, but it does so inside of a concrete world, and because of that, its image, which other subjects have of it and which must at least partly be adopted by the I (Ego), already for the purpose of communication with the others, is unavoidably mixed with its self-understanding, irrespective of whether this takes place in a positive or a negative sense, namely as devotion to others or as delimitation from others. Under these circumstances, to want to separate the "true" and the "fictive", the "original" and the "derived" I (Ego) from one another, amounts to the squaring of the circle. The I (Ego) is shaped in the decision as a power claim inside of a concrete situation, and no normativistic theory of the consciousness can distinguish it from multi-layered existence, which is fully involved in that decision.

II. NAKED AND OBJECTIFIED DECISION UNDER THE SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE POWER STRUGGLE

The reason, for which each and every respective subject must attribute objectivity to the world image which emerged from its decision, results from the essence and the function of the decision itself; should the decision ensure ability at orientation and consequently at acting, then it must without fail impart certainty that it would correspond with the nature of things, at least to an, in practice, sufficient degree. For that, provision, incidentally, is made already because the decision not only has concrete content, but also, and indeed in connection with the selection and the presentation of this content, because the decision expressly or tacitly determines criteria in relation to which objectivity, after all, is measured. The defence of the objectivity of the decision amounts to the defence of the prospects of self-preservation. The contesting of one's own right to self-preservation and the extension of power by a foe therefore appears *eo ipso* as the questioning of the objectivity of the world image, which should underpin that right to self-preservation - and conversely: the combating of the foe means the practical confirmation or supplementation of a world image, in which the unavoidability of this specific enmity should be demonstrated and explained with reference to the essence and the situation of things. That is why the suspicion that another decision could meaningfully make the same claims to objectivity like one's own claims, must become the source of incessant existential disquiet and insecurity; full recognition of objectively well-founded rights of the foe AS foe automatically means the selling out of all of one's own rights. In this way the existential necessity of the objectification of the decision and

of belief in the decision's objectivity can be explained in general. Though, this elementary constellation takes a more concrete and more interesting shape only under the conditions of a society organised in some kind of way, that is, a society based on general and generally recognised or at least generally tolerated ideas and norms, and which also unceasingly produces such ideas and norms; only here does the contrasting, after all, between what is objective-binding and what is subjective-arbitrary gain its true sharpness and dramaticality, and indeed for reasons concerning the continued existence itself of an organised society. We want to turn to these reasons initially, with all possible brevity.

In view of the, by definition, interweaving of self-preservation and decision, the investigation of the function of objectified decisions, i.e. as objectively issued decisions inside of organised society, must start from a detailed discussion of the way the claim to self-preservation and to the extension of power inside of this society comes into its own. The fundamental interrelation of self-preservation and society is revealed in the simple fact that no social order can continue to exist in the long term if it is unable to guarantee the collective and individual safety of the great majority of its members. Because this purpose - of guaranteeing the collective and individual safety of the great majority of its members - must be imposed against several foes (nature, other societies, splitters and deviants from one's own society's ranks), a hierarchy of all possible enmities is drawn up, in relation to which, in view of each and every respective more topical and more important enmity, the rest of the enmities occupy a subordinate position. The ability at putting aside an enmity in the face of another enmity and consequently at forming a friendship in the face of each and every respective common foe, accompanies, inside of society, the necessity of curbing individual power

claims or putting these power claims in the service of a collective end (goal), since only disciplining of individuals can secure the flexibility of society vis-à-vis friend and foe. Culture comes into being and is refined to the extent that (outer and inner) disciplining is perceived as an indispensable precondition of collective and also (at least as a rule) individual self-preservation; all cultural achievements, even the so-called intellectual(-spiritual) ones, are directly or indirectly products of this disciplining. Now, however, the elementary claim to self-preservation, which is by origin a power claim, comes into smaller or larger conflict with the necessity of disciplining, unless a superordinate level of mediation and compromise is created, such as the level of ideas and ideational norms. We do not here use the words "mediation" and "compromise" by chance. Because the fundamental ambivalence and the eternal source of disturbance in social life consists in that the power claim imbues those normative, and as to their intention, generally binding authorities, which are built up for the power claim's curtailment. The price that the power claim must pay for this situation is its disguising, namely its appearance exactly in the name of those authorities, while contesting, for its part, that subjective and self-interested arbitrariness; through this disguising, the power claim succeeds in asserting itself under conditions which demand at least the nominal sacrifice of its most aggressive components, on the other hand, however, this same disguising constitutes an admission of the boundaries of its independent strength in view of the concentrated strength of the social whole, and the concentrated strength of the social whole entangles the power claim in an often confused game of manoeuvres and rationalisations (i.e. as explanations or justifications), in which the power claim can lose sight of sometimes even the original matters of concern for shorter or longer periods of time. Obviously such complicated processes are possible only

in the framework of culture and organised society, since they presuppose the existence of ordered world images, that is, decisions, which ensure the ideational underpinning of power claims. The elevation of all the factors, which interrelate with the endeavour at self-preservation, therefore finally allows, at the ideational level, these factors' mediation with the necessity of disciplining in accordance with organised society. It can be generally and programmatically said that in culture, through culture and for the sake of culture, a transference of nature to the ideational level is carried out, but in such a way that nature, in its disguising, can both assert itself as well as turn against itself, while delimiting itself. Drives become institutions or norms and exactly because of this they can be partly satisfied and partly bridled or diverted purposefully. The fundamental ambivalence and the never easing off tension of social life is founded on, in other words, not merely the, frequently ascertained already since the beginnings of culture, fact that the controlling and satisfaction of existential needs most of the time stand in each other's way, but over and above that, on the fact that this satisfaction is carried out precisely the roundabout way, which should serve, and lead to, controlling. When organised society demands controlling in relation to a basic need, then as a rule it offers at the same time satisfaction in relation to this same need - but in the framework of an institution, a norm or an ideal. In this way e.g. the sex drive is channeled into marriage or is sublimated in (erotic) love; even killing is honoured, when it comes to a "just cause".

The general paradox in culture, that what is existentially desired or even what is urgently necessary may be striven for only in the form of the denial of its direct and unrestrained satisfaction, principally applies to the central claim to self-preservation and the power claim itself, that is, also to the decision. The decision's imposition may - and can also in view of

the concrete situation of an organised society - be carried out or become accepted only on condition that the decision emphatically rejects every suspicion that it would be a monstrous product of subjective arbitrariness, while at the same time it appears with a universal normative claim; the decision can certainly do that bona fide, since the decision was originally conceived so that it can do that bona fide, nevertheless the culturally determined fact remains that the decision can be activated as a power claim only in a disguise - even vis-à-vis its own subject and bearer. In this way, power is striven for principally as repudiation of naked self-interested power, striving for power takes the form of a struggle for aims (goals), which, at their face value, run contrary to every prosaic thought of power; power can only be maintained and extended as the other or the opposite of its own self. This disguising, sublimation and finally self-denial of the power claim begins as soon as, in the cultural framework of organised society, the disciplining of organised society's members has found expression in the prevalence of the conviction that social self-preservation in principle should and could demand the sacrifice of individual self-preservation. In the roundabout way of belief that there is something for which even death is worthwhile, something, which is loftier than naked life and more worthy than this naked life - that is, in the roundabout way of belief that there is a MEANING of life, the critical transference of the claim to self-preservation and the power claim to the level of the ideational and the normative is carried out, a transference which then becomes binding for every version of this same claim. Once society (or the genus (i.e. mankind or the human species) in toto), while struggling for self-preservation, agrees that it itself constitutes the highest value to be preserved, the individual existences or groups in it may make their own power claims known only in the form of the defence of, or homage to, that highest value. And every one of the individuals and

groups must simultaneously use the meaning of life for the highest value's own ends (goals), because the highest value, thereby, directly appeals to the collective drive of self-preservation of all members of society, and can mobilise this collective drive purposefully. If the drive of self-preservation inside of culture is raised to the level of the ideational and is turned into belief in the meaning of life, then everyone who makes power claims must stress the meaning of life; because the meaninglessness of life would also imply the meaninglessness of every power claim, and would remove every bindedness from the call to make sacrifices. In this respect, at least everyone must, rulers, subjects and rebels, equally be moralists. Whoever calls into question the meaning of life provokes the drive of self-preservation of people, and because of that, is regarded as a criminal of the intellect(-spirit), who undermines the foundations of social life as much as the criminals of action through their violation of practical social norms, who make society, as the institutional guarantee of self-preservation, useless. As the power claim entrenches itself behind the belief in the meaning of life, it obtains the greatest possible objectification, the perfect disguise imaginable. Here it becomes clear in which way the construction of an ideational level interrelates (connects) with the fundamental ambivalence of social life: the power claim may socially satisfy itself, but on condition that it is (nominally) subjected to the command of collective self-preservation, as the command of collective self-preservation is articulated (for instance) in the belief in the meaning of life, - precisely this command, however, had originally demanded the prohibition of every such claim of socially satisfying itself and every subjective arbitrariness of the decision.

The priority of collective self-preservation vis-à-vis individual self-preservation - this basic feature of social life in general - interrelates

(negatively) with the hierarchy of enmities and (positively) with the hierarchy of decisions. The collective foe, which threatens collective self-preservation, carries more weight in society's perception than the personal foe, and because of this, in the struggle against the collective foe, killing in all forms is unpunished and even honourable, although the consideration of the hierarchy of enmities from the even higher point of view of the genus (i.e. mankind or the human species) brings also here into being, at least in certain cases and times, rules of the game, restrictions and conventions, which are of course loose and become respected only as long as they can be equally invoked by the foes. Accordingly, the decision of the group is more binding than that of the individual as individual. Even when the individual rejects wholly or in part the content of the collective decision, he knows, after all, that collective decisions, as long as they are not contested or are not changed to a significant extent, are more likely to be obeyed than decisions of individuals as individuals; from that the individual infers the necessity of making his own decision out to be the one best suited to the safeguarding of collective self-preservation (or, what amounts to the same thing, the safeguarding of collective happiness or collective morals (i.e. ethics)) - an inclination, which comes not so much from cold calculation, but rather from the innate claim to objectivity of every decision. In this way, the individual in actual fact recognises, notwithstanding all possible divergence from the content of the (hitherto) dominant collective decision, the actual primacy of collective decisions. From the combined primacy of collective self-preservation and the collective decision it becomes clear that society or the group must be the realm of binding norms - at least as long as it can preserve itself, that is, it can decide. The concept of the binding norm, just like belief in the meaning of life, constitutes an elevation of the fact (according to the demand) of social

disciplining to the ideational level. Because of that, norms are governed not less than that belief in the meaning of life by the fundamental ambivalence of social life. Norms are namely disguises of the factors interrelating with the (collective) endeavour at self-preservation, at the same time they are supposed to curb the dangerous consequences of these same factors. As curbs they are generally in force, as disguises they allow such an interpretation of what is generally in force and what is generally binding that the attainment of what is in itself forbidden becomes possible after all - but on condition that the attainment of what is forbidden is realised as service to the norm with all the modifications or compromises entailed in this process. If organised society is the realm of binding norms in the sense of the fundamental ambivalence outlined above, then no better path to the imposition of a power claim is offered than the struggle for the victory of a norm, whose representation and interpretation whoever struggles on this norm's behalf reserves for himself. In contrast to power claims of limited scope, which can be satisfied through the, for these power claims, suitable exploitation of certain circumstances in a pre-given framework, absolute power claims, which refer to the social whole, can be fulfilled only in the name of absolute norms. Because the absolute norm coincides with the absolute decision, namely, with that absolute decision which makes its own innate claim to objectivity absolutely and irreconcilably against all other decisions. The absolute claim to objectivity of the decision means the same as the absolute claim to bindness of the norm, which must consequently set indivisible dominance as an aim (goal). But on this point we must come back in some detail on the occasion of the question of interpretation (p. 90).

In the framework of organised society, only objectified decisions as power claims can therefore function successfully. As the life form of a

collective entity, culture is based on collective norms - not of course in the sense that these norms would be the collective work of individuals with equal rights, but merely in the sense that they claim for themselves collective usefulness and general validity. Only with the summoning of such norms can the members of an organised society be disciplined, only as epitome of such norms, which are anchored in a world image, can, therefore, the decision do justice to its own character as power claim and force of social disciplining. On the contrary, decisions, which are self-complacently made out to be, and offer their services as, the fruit of a naked subjective-"free" will, do not have, inside of organised societies, any prospect of lasting success, although they can temporarily put the small motley universes of the salons, the lecture halls and literary coffee houses under their spell. Because these decisions, which are the fruit of a naked subjective-"free" will, seem to create the impression of subverting the recognised hierarchy of decisions and of enmities, and in this way, of destroying the foundations of social disciplining, something which must put collective self-preservation, which exactly was purchased at the price of that disciplining, in extreme danger. In connection with that, the subjective decision or "arbitrariness", entirely irrespective of its own assertions, seems to undermine in the long term the ideational basic pillar of organised social life, namely belief in the meaning of life. As most people perceive clearly enough, the unrestricted and simultaneously, exercised by all individuals, right to personal and original decisions with regard to ultimate questions and highest norms would bring into being a plethora of in themselves equivalent opinions and standpoints competing with one another, which could only leave an impression of an insurmountable and disorientated relativity of all things. However, such scepticism is incompatible with belief in the (objective) meaning of life, because, were this meaning accepted after all, it may only be one

meaning, irrespective of how it is defined on each and every respective occasion; the meaning of life can only be saved through norms generally in force and correspondingly objectified decisions. Since, now, the meaning of life and the social power claim belong together, the naked decision, in so far as the naked decision cannot put aside scepticism, cannot also found and support any firm social dominance. The dominance of the naked decision can only maintain the ban on the other decisions from claiming what the naked decision grants itself, namely, to declare, *ex nihilo* and in its own full power, a world image and a norm system, as binding. However, that violates the fundamental principle of social disciplining, whereby the highest value is not the self-preservation of an individual, but the self-preservation of the collective entity: on the basis of the hierarchy of the decisions and of the enmities, sacrifices may be demanded exclusively for the sake of the highest value, and accordingly the belief in the objective meaning of life comes into being and thrives only in view of this highest value. While the naked decision of an existence autocratically pushes aside the whole hierarchy of decisions and enmities, in order to assert its autonomy and self-sufficiency, it *eo ipso* forces every other existence to do the same, and consequently destroys society's mechanisms of mediation (as ambivalent as these may also be) and throws society back into the, in the long-term, unbearable situation of elementary, and at the same time, universal existential confrontation. To the extent the naked decision makes clear its subject's²⁸ concentrated existential strength, it must expect an increase in its foes' existential intensity. That is why firm and secure dominance are not possible for the naked decision. Conversely, the objectified decision passes its dominance off as sensible and necessary common subjection of all existences to an

²⁸ "Its subject's" is not in the German text, but added by Kondylis in his Greek version of the book (p. 99).

overarching supra-personal authority, in relation to which of course the subject of the decision reserves the exclusive right to explicate the texture of the authority in question and derive from this authority commands in respect of practical behaviour: this is also an essential form which the fundamental ambivalence of social life takes. Be that as it may: the (theoretical), without exception, subjection to an authority saves the aforementioned fundamental principle of social disciplining and grants the (in actual fact) person dominated the, as a rule, sufficient compensating satisfaction, that he, precisely while he is being dominated, serves the same principle as his ruler, and thereby remains, in the middle of his own state of being dominated, equal in rank to his ruler from a higher point of view. Fate is, as it seems to him being dominated, not borne out of (incidentally, humiliating) angst (or fear) before the power of the ruler, but out of wanted obedience vis-à-vis superior ideas or forces; this flatters his self-esteem and ensures that existential intensity does not flow into existential contrasting, but into existential affiliation. That is the reason why all steady and long-lasting dominions (i.e. regimes or systems of dominance) in history until now were exercised in the name of objectively valid principles and not of a naked decision; the ruler theoretically must serve, in order to be able to dominate in practice. In this way, the successful objectification of the decision, in the sense and in the framework of the fundamental ambivalence of social life, conceals the fact that the decision cannot be anything other than the violation of the objectively existent from the perspective of a subject.

The objectification of the decision also enables for the ruler the more or less frictionless conduct of the game of the necessary rationalisations (i.e. as explanations or justifications) of wishes and aims (goals). As a, from birth, member of an organised society, the (actual or prospective, for the

time being fighting against the former) ruler adopts the fundamental principle of social disciplining, and internalises it in a different way on each and every respective occasion, in relation to which he interprets it in accordance with the interests of his dominance. Therefore, in the perspective of the ruler's decision, the self-preservation of the collective entity, having effective priority, coincides with the consolidation of his own dominance, so he may consider himself (again in the framework of the fundamental principle of social disciplining and the connected moral perceptions) as unselfish champion of generally great aims (goals), whereas his foe's motivating forces correspondingly appear as base. The decisive practical advantage of the objectified decision consists in that from the roundabout way of such rationalisation (i.e. as explanation or justification) of power claims, the ruler can assist in an extreme intensification of polemics, during the parallel relieving of himself (i.e. of the tension of existence) and indignation of the moral conscience. The dogged and also socially necessary adherence to the objectivity of truth (that is to say: of the decision) occurs by means of the intensification of and justification of existential enmity. The subject of an objectified decision consequently finds itself in the highly preferred position of being able and allowed to criticise and polemicise from a superordinate standpoint, without being logically forced to grant others the same right, as the avowed bearer of a naked subjective decision must surely, in a purely logical respect, do. At the same time, the sense of power, which is founded in the identification with supra-personal authorities, fuses with the sense of inner peace, which stems from the consciousness of serving an objectively correct and good cause. This ambivalence is nothing other than the reflection of the fundamental ambivalence of social life in the psyche of the subject of the decision. Just as power claims, after all, unfold inside of organised societies by paying the price of rationalisations

(i.e. as explanations or justifications) and compromises precisely through what ought to curtail these power claims, so the unfolding and the curtailment of one's own power claims in the self-understanding of a subject, which has already internalised (or at least used) the fundamental principle of social disciplining and appears as an advocate of an objectified decision, are two contrasting and complementary convictions or feelings (i.e. kinds of awareness). On the one hand, the subject revalues itself, as it identifies itself with a great principle carved out in the objectified decision (since the concrete social function of great principles and ideas consists in precisely the self-revaluation of the subject invoking these great principles and ideas, hence it is to be presumed against all those who ascertain and prophesy the end of ideologies, that the production of such ideologies will never come to an end). On the other hand, the subject subjects itself to this same principle and poses as this principle's obedient and pious servant. Acquisition of power and renunciation of power, high spirits and self-denial are here two sides of the same coin. The same two-sidedness characterises action under the aegis of an objectified decision and of a supra-personal principle. In itself such action means an increase in existential intensity, but the (theoretical) presupposition of the intensity of the existence remains precisely the emphasising of its own powerlessness or even insignificance vis-à-vis higher forces, which it serves and by which it is supposedly ruled - in order, for its part, to rule other existences in the name of these same forces. This complex can explain why teachings like e.g. those of predestination, kismet or the law-bound course of history, which although purely logically seem to imply a pleading for the passivity of existence, in historical reality have been connected with movements of utmost dynamism and activity.

So inside of organised society and under the social conditions of the power struggle, existential power claims can be imposed in the long term only in connection with objectified decisions and ostensibly supra-personal and supra-partisan authorities, ideas and principles, since existential power claims must be in (nominal) agreement with the fundamental principle of social disciplining. The main matter of concern of the objectified decision, i.e. of the subject appearing in the objectified decision's name, is the concealment of its the objectified decision's character as decision, namely the fact that, either way, it constitutes a violation of the objectively existent from the perspective of a certain existence. Now however, in the history of organised societies times come in which several sides simultaneously want to enforce their own objectified decisions. The usual and understandable result of these parallel competing efforts is a general fading of objectivity, since every side tries hard to unmask others' decisions as arbitrary constructs which distort "reality" for the promotion of tangible selfish interests. Such a situation often occurred after the collapse of traditional, religiously marked and tinged metaphysics and the replacement of the primacy of theology by the primacy of anthropology, since this development had to nourish sceptical thoughts that man is the measure of all things. The disintegration of great objectified decisions and the subsequent struggle between several decisions for the imposition of a new objectivity provide an insight for certain observers into the mechanisms of the decision as well as into their existential foundations in general. On such insights are theories like e.g. the one expounded here based, which thus are ephemeral flowers of scientifically fertile times of crisis, and after the ending of a world-theoretical interregnum brought about by a new comprehensive normative system, are quickly pushed away into non-existence. Some people, who ascertain or even approve of the disintegration of the former

dominant objectified decisions, however do not want to completely break with normativism, and try in turn to hold on to a supposedly unadulterated existence as source of unshakeable certainty. We already explained why this positioning can only have passing and marginal success. In its detachment from the social conditions of the power struggle and from the game of the fundamental ambivalence of social life, the existentialists' decision gives the impression of a loud exploding soap bubble. Placed between alternatives, existence here struggles with fantasies; because freedom and alienation, God and Devil can in fact be highly concrete concepts - however not in themselves, but only in their positive or negative reference to an existential foe, whose effective combating at the social level, nevertheless, precisely demands the objectification of the decision and the denial of its purely existential character.

Pragmatistic perceptions appear just as weak, whereby the crisis of values can thereby be solved (or rather by-passed) if ideas and norms are judged in accordance with their empirically ascertainable practical usefulness and functionality, which at any rate can be independent of the empirical ascertainment of their truth. Here it is first of all held to be self-evident that "practical usefulness" can readily be clear to all sides, that is, "practical usefulness" does not constitute a function of ratings (i.e. evaluations) which for their part would involve power claims. The questions: "for whom is something useful?" and: "who should decide whether something, and in what respect, is useful or not?", are not at all posed, and the gap is filled by means of the liberal rationalistic-normativistic article of faith that all people of "good will" and "sound common sense" could easily reach agreement over all of this. Through the criterion of usefulness and social functionality, "superfluous" and

moreover quarrelsome "metaphysics" should be put aside, that is, the criterion applies to ideational constructions, which contribute to the objectification and argumentative arming of decisions. Because the pragmatists' criterion of usefulness remains vague or normativistic in the liberal sense, the pragmatists do not want to admit the tangible usefulness of "metaphysical" constructions in the social power struggle. It may be "in itself" (that is to say: from the point of view of liberal utilitarian perceptions) indifferent what perception of God someone professes, however the practical difference becomes enormous, if there are people, who are ready to die or to kill for their perception of God, since they identify their own identity with this perception of God. For such people, the pragmatists want to dispute the right to derive a moral code from such people's objectified decisions. Rules of behaviour now should, in the pragmatists' opinion, not be based on what is held to be objectively true, but on the generally useful, and "metaphysical" ideas must become accepted only according to their social usefulness and in accordingly simplified form. Nevertheless (in order to remain with the example of religion, which was used by pragmatists as well), a believer must comprehend the relationship between what is true and what is useful precisely in the reverse manner of a pragmatist: the believer's belief is for him useful, BECAUSE he holds it to be objectively true (that is to say: because he has made out of his belief an objectified decision). The leaving aside of the question of the truth would simply allow the source of subjective certainty and energy to dry up and thus would also immediately reduce the social usefulness of belief. In other words, religion would never be able to be socially "useful" or simply functional, had it not portrayed the relationship between what is true and what is useful precisely in the reverse manner of what pragmatism has done. It is true that ideas and norms are imposed because they are (objectively)

useful for a subject, i.e. they grant the subject a firm framework of orientation for its action and furthermore an identity; but it is wrong that this imposition is then carried out only when the subject remains conscious of this mechanism at all times, that is, when the subject discerns the subjective character of its own decisions and behaves correspondingly modestly. Under the concrete social conditions of the power struggle exactly the opposite must be the case. The rationalistic prejudices, in which pragmatists are trapped, block the pragmatists a view of the insurmountable asymmetry of the subjective motivating forces and objective function of socially anchored action; and their normativism wants to make out of an Is (i.e. Being or To Be) (namely out of the ascertainment of the practical origin and function of ideas) a liberating Ought, something which, however, is always prevented by the aforementioned, overlooked by the pragmatists, asymmetry. The pragmatists as well as their "critical" descendents should pose the simple question to themselves, why people did not come much earlier to such a clear prescription for the smoothing out of their conflicts and for the safeguarding of their happiness - and why people, since pragmatistic wisdom is no longer withheld from them, hardly follow pragmatistic wisdom, but are in the habit of enforcing their decisions, thereby, furthermore, objectifying them, i.e. they make them out to be objectively true and generally binding.

The objectification of the decision under the social conditions of the power struggle is expressed in certain form-related features, which must become noticeable in such an outline of the decision, entirely irrespective of its content. As we said (p. 12), the decision not only brings about a segregation of what is existentially relevant from what is irrelevant, but divides whatever is existentially relevant into successive tiers. The world

image, which emerges from the de-cision, is structured hierarchically, and this hierarchy is imprinted all the more vividly, the more energetic the power claims are, which the world image is supposed underpin. The historically most important and most effective hierarchisation of the world image has been undoubtedly its division into a From Here (i.e. This World or Life) and a From There (i.e. That World or Life), an Immanence (Immanent) and a Transcendence (Transcendental) (whether with theological or profane signs (i.e. symbolism)). With the division goes the subjection of the (visible) From Here (i.e. This World or Life) to the (invisible) From There (i.e. That World or Life), which constitutes the epitome of the "true" Is (i.e. Being or To Be) and at the same time the ultimate norm-giving authority. The world image in toto is not then the mere description of the world, but also, and above all, a blueprint for action, in it views and intentions of the subject of the decision with regard to the use, arrangement and shaping of things and of existences, which come into contact with the subject of the decision, crystallise. In this way, both the division of the world image into two levels as well as the subjection of one of these levels to the other level are the necessary concomitants of consideration for the foe. In the world image, the foe and events influenced by him appear of course only at the subordinated level, and correspondingly the superordinated level coincides with a, as it were, purified, that is, with the "true", reality, which is outside of inimical access. A reality free of the foe however is the ideal reality and that is why the aforementioned interweaving of Is (i.e. Being or To Be) and Norm takes place at this superordinated level. The level of the From There (i.e. That World or Life) ought to illustrate, indeed embody, the reasons which command and justify the subordination of the entire From Here (i.e. This World or Life) and consequently the subjection of the foe. Because of that, the "true" Is (i.e. Being or To Be) of the world image in

its interweaving with the established norm and value scale constitutes the concentrated expression of the highest power claims of the subject of the decision; since, for that matter, the foe always remains present in the total world image, for that reason the description of the "true" Is (i.e. Being or To Be) and "true" norms must also, in all its sublimation and idealisation, at least make reference ex contrario to the foe, exactly while the description props up power claims on each and every respective occasion through ultimate arguments. The interweaving of the "true" Is (i.e. Being or To Be), found outside of inimical access, with "true" norms is now meant to remove the "true" norms from every stain of arbitrariness or chance nature, so that obeying these norms is presented as absolutely binding. If norms are not merely the command and not merely the putting of a subjective will, which could adhere to chance nature, unsteadiness or self-interest, if they, that is, are entangled with the extra-subjective and supra-subjective, steadily being composed, Is (i.e. Being or To Be) itself, then they appear just as pre-given and just as unavoidable as the Is (i.e. Being or To Be) itself, which one cannot choose oneself, since one is born in it; seen in this way, norms do not refer at all to unattainable or fictive aims (goals), but they turn into the presupposition of "true" and "worthy (dignified)" human existence. Concretely this means: as "true" and "worthy" existence only that is recognised which lives in agreement with the power claim of the subject of the decision, as this power claim finds expression in the corresponding norm setting. Because the norm setting exclusively applies to the interpretation of the subject of the decision, which, such interpretation of the subject of the decision, inside of the From There (i.e. That World or Life) and the "true" Is (i.e. Being or To Be) alone sets the tone, since no foe or dissenter may go into this realm of the From There and the "true" Is. Through the underpinning of its own norm setting based on a perception of the "true" Is (i.e. Being or

To Be), the subject of the decision claims for itself an absolute knowledge as unshakeable ontological (or anthropological) basis of its normative positioning, which exactly in this way stops appearing as a mere subjective decision. Therefore decisionism (as arbitrariness of the decision)²⁹ reaches its high point: the decision passes its content-related theses off as the only objective and binding truth and then feels capable of invoking this truth in order to sharply condemn every decisionism (as arbitrariness of subjective decisions). That is the decisionistic root of all ontological criticism of (naked) decisionism. From the point of view of objectified arbitrariness, naked subjective arbitrariness appears base. The subjectivity or arbitrariness of values can therefore only be denied or concealed when a value scale is set up with reference to a higher, i.e. objective and generally binding ontological authority. That is why a certain world-theoretical-moral decision or arbitrariness, which wants to impose itself, must, as paradoxical as it may sound, programmatically and irreconcilably attack subjectivity and arbitrariness in general and as such (including its own subjectivity and arbitrariness). Exactly for this purpose is the outlined hierarchisation of the world image of use, on which the objectification of the decision is based.

The division of the world into a visible From Here (i.e. This World or Life) and an invisible From There (i.e. That World or Life) is supposed to, therefore, safeguard the bindedness and inviolability of the norms or power claims one has in mind on each and every respective occasion through their transfer to the, for the foe, inaccessible sphere of the From There (i.e. That World or Life). In itself, this division however cannot explain why the level of the From Here (i.e. This World or Life) is not (or not entirely) free of the influence of the foe. For the prospective ruler,

²⁹ "Arbitrariness of the decision" is how Kondylis renders in Greek "Dezisionismus" (p. 112).

whose power claims (still) meet with strong resistance, it is, in any case, obvious that the From Here (i.e. This World or Life) is under the influence of the foe and consequently of normative disorder; but the current ruler must as well accept the influential presence of the foe in the From Here (i.e. This World or Life) and even loudly assert that the ruler wields dominance precisely in the name of the unremitting ongoing struggle against the ruler's own dominance, which would in principle be superfluous had the ideal realm of norms been completely realised, the From Here (i.e. This World or Life) blotted out and the world reduced to only one level with the discontinuance of its previous hierarchical structure. So the foe is not only the negation, but also the reason for the existence of the consolidation of one's own power and that is why the foe must also be, as paradoxical as this may be, bridled and at the same time kept alive; correspondingly, the ideal realm of norms has to justify concrete current power claims, but the ideal realm may not be realised in a, in practical terms, relevant (i.e. feasible) period, even though its realisation at any time must be offered, since in this promise or hope does the ultimate moral, i.e. theoretically preserving the fundamental principle of social disciplining, legitimization of prospective or current dominance lie.

This now is all achieved through an additional construction which partly varies and partly supplements the division of the world image into a From Here (i.e. This World or Life) and a From There (i.e. That World or Life). It is a matter of the distinction between Being (or Is or To Be) and Appearance. Since the anchoring of those norms, which in their apt interpretation should justify the power claim, in the "true" Is (i.e. Being or To Be) must remain at any price unchallenged, so for the level of reality, at which the foe's activity may more or less successfully take

place, it is impossible to be included in the "true" (and this means: the final) Is (i.e. Being or To Be)); the level of reality therefore constitutes the level of Appearance, of (at least in a normative respect) "fake" and "falsified" life. If the "true" Is (i.e. Being or To Be) as normative epitome of the decision and the identity of the subject is settled (i.e. ontologically steady and certain), then everything which endangers or calls into question this decision and identity must be blamed on Appearance. Though the foe is not Appearance in the sense that he would be fictive and made-up, but in the sense that he (radically) deviates from the normative truth of Being (or Is or To Be); his alleged effects must constitute effects of Appearance, because were they to be understood as the result of the "true" Is (i.e. Being or To Be), then the subject of the decision, through such an assumption, would have capitulated without a fight in the face of the foe. The reduction of the foe and his effects to Appearance allows, on the contrary, the identification of one's own power claim with the norm-like "true" Is (i.e. Being or To Be) to strengthen, and consequently to seal the objectification of one's own decision. Thus, the foe leads a dual existence: he is tangible existence, when it is a matter of combating him, and he exists as Appearance, when he is measured against the norms of the "true" Is (i.e. Being or To Be). If the first version is supposed to suggest the necessity of a consolidation of the power position of the subject of the decision, then the latter version serves in justifying not only the, as it were, ontological superiority of this same subject vis-à-vis the foe, but in also consoling the subject of the decision over setbacks and failures. No world image can achieve sufficient and permanent psychological effectiveness if it is not able to reinterpret (i.e. meta-interpret), or through interpretation to neutralise, small or large defeats, while attributing these defeats to transient and deceptive Appearance. That is the most important reason why world images, which

preach the law of the strongest and extol naked power, neither come into being frequently nor do they last long. The defeat of their representatives refutes ipso facto their content and that is why they are useful only in times of victory, which however do not last forever. This makes, from an additional viewpoint, clear the existing necessity in the social power struggle of objectifying, on the broadest possible theoretical basis, decisions, with the denial by the decisions' bearers of the decisions' character as subjective power claims and with the preservation of the fundamental principle of social disciplining.

The interweaving of Is (i.e. Being or To Be) and Norm (power claim) at the level of the "true" Is (i.e. Being or To Be), and the distinction between Being (or Is or To Be) and Appearance, as soon as one abandons this level, constitute both complementary aspects of the objectified decision as a world image, which wants to make up an all-round organised Whole. Naturally, the world image is such a Whole only from the perspective of the subject of the decision, while it, from the outside (be it from the perspective of another decision or with regard to the objectively existent), must appear as the necessarily limited field of representation and ideas of a finite subject. In fact, the objectified decision depicts the part of the objectively existent, which is apprehended from the perspective of each and every respective subject, as the Whole per se, whereby the objectified decision acclaims its world image as the expression of the views or interests of the entire given collective entity or even of entire humanity. While the decision is objectivised, it aims, therefore, ultimately at hushing up, if possible, the concrete dependence of its content from the specific texture and the particular fortune of its subject, in order to exactly claim for itself generality, truth and bindedness through the concealment or denial of the unrepeatable peculiarity of its existential and

historical roots. Consequently, a particular thing is inflated to become THE general and a part is raised to THE Whole. What, however, remains here logically foolhardy, is absolutely necessary in a polemical respect. Because only on the basis of a coherent Whole can ultimate questions - i.e. such (questions) which interrelate with the legitimation of the power claim through ultimate arguments and ratings (i.e. evaluations) - be answered, and only through the answering of ultimate questions does the world image become immune to polemics, which could start from the existence of the world image's gaps³⁰ as proof of its inadequate suitability for orientation. Because of the initial connection between world image and life orientation, no world image can endure in the long term in polemics if it cannot answer ultimate questions, that is, if it cannot give ultimate³¹ orientation. The subject of the decision must, of course, reserve the right to decide what are the "true" ultimate questions; it is not obliged to answer the foe's ultimate questions - however it may do that then with impunity only when it has succeeded in establishing its own self-sufficient ideational Whole, while displacing the whole level of world-theoretical question formulation (i.e. examination of problems), and consequently making the foe's ultimate questions meaningless or irrelevant. With reference to the formulation and the answering of ultimate questions also ensues, when it is necessary, coping with individual problems and tasks. The meaning and value of the various constituent elements of the world results only from their being put in order in a Whole, which stands under the aegis of the normative positioning or the power claim of the subject of the decision, and this being put in order is, as it were, imbued with the normative positioning or power claim of the subject of the decision; in this way, that power claim

³⁰ E.g. logical flaws.

³¹ Rather than "ultimate", Kondylis in his Greek version (p. 117) opts for "full [complete]".

indirectly turns into the yardstick by which individual things and existences are measured. Aspects of the world, which *prima vista* conflict with the meaning of the Whole, that is, the power claim of the subject of the decision, are made harmless through their being put in order at the appropriate tier of the Whole and through their corresponding interpretation, namely they are taken for (at least negative) confirmations of the meaning of the Whole. Therefore, Appearance is abolished or is exposed as such inside of the Whole on the basis of the criteria which are provided by the "true" Is (i.e. Being or To Be). The idea of the Whole thus proves to be the necessary framework in which the multi-dimensional game between Is (i.e. Being or To Be) and Norm (power claim), as well as between Being (or Is or To Be) and Appearance, can unfold.

The described form-related structure of the objectified decision can be recognised in all hitherto historically known and comprehensive collective and individual normativistic world images. Its outline is already found in the animistic world image, however it was elaborated by classical ancient-Christian metaphysics and the world religions in general. Yet the described form-related structure of the objectified decision equally characterises the thought constructs which were summoned in the European New Times against that classical metaphysics. The fusion of Is (i.e. Being or To Be) and Norm (power claim) at the level of the From There (i.e. That World or Life) in contrast to the From Here (i.e. This World or Life), as well as the distinction between Being (or Is or To Be) and Appearance appear, in other words, not only in the theological description of the texture of God in his relations with the material world and with the various effects of the Devil, but the said fusion and distinction also determine the inner logic of

concepts like "Nature", "Reason", "Man" and "History". Because the normative aspect, which is connected with power claims, of these concepts lies on the other side (i.e. the From There) of immediate experience, which, in this way, is degraded anew (and not seldom in the name of experience itself) to Appearance on this side, i.e. to the level of the From Here. Hence e.g. the new-times normativists, when they talk of "Reason", they do not mean the ability at thought of this or that concrete empirical subject, but the, on the other side, i.e. of the From There, ideal epitome of a certain way of thinking and positioning, for whose binding interpretation they declare themselves alone competent; and also "Man" may not coincide with any man whatsoever - to say nothing of "tyrants", "mass murderers" or the dumb neighbour -, but he is identical with the idea of man lying on the other side (i.e. From There) of experience, which serves as source of duties and rights, in relation to which the mythology of alienation takes care of the continuation of the polemically purposeful game between Being (or Is or To Be) (Essence) and Appearance with secularised signs (i.e. symbolism). All these theological-metaphysical and profane objectified decisions equally had recourse to the same thought structures because they were all facing the same problem, namely to found norms (power claims) through ultimate ontological or anthropological arguments. Because entirely irrespective of who is the foe of whom and who is the current and who the prospective ruler - whoever inside of organised society wants to have power in the long term and wield dominance, must (naturally in the sense of his own power and dominance) be able to successfully take on certain life-preserving, that is, norm-setting functions, and indeed by invoking the known to us (p. 67) fundamental principle of social disciplining.

The apparent paradox, that foes take the field to fight one another under the banner of the same thought structures, can easily be explained, only if we draw a clear distinction between thought structure and thought content. This means that the differentiation between the From There (i.e. That World or Life) and the From Here (i.e. This World or Life), or, Being (or Is or To Be) and Appearance, is found as a structural feature in every objectified decision, even though the world-theoretical content of the aforementioned conceptual magnitudes is different on each and every respective occasion. Every decision apprehends and defines the From Here (i.e. This World or Life) and Appearance, the From There (i.e. That World or Life) and the Being (or Is or To Be) in its own specific way, every one of the decisions deduces from the From There (i.e. That World or Life) and the Is (i.e. Being or To Be) different norms and evaluates (i.e. rates) them differently - however these essential content-related differences or even contrasts by no means stand in the way of the identity (i.e. sameness) of their form-related structure, although this identity (i.e. sameness) must remain unconscious in the corresponding subjects of the decision, so that they can maintain their, in practical terms, inspiring belief in the exclusive truth and objectivity, that is, uniqueness of their own world image intact. It is now most noteworthy that precisely this unconscious identity (i.e. sameness) of their form-related structure - in which the power claim is, from the outset, laid down in the form of the distinction between the From There (i.e. That World or Life) and the From Here (i.e. This World or Life), or, Being (or Is or To Be) and Appearance - drives decisions towards enmity for one another, whereas the conscious difference or contrasting of their content serves as a means of justification and consequently intensification of enmity; in this way, identity (i.e. sameness) of thought structure contributes to the aggravation of the content-related contrasting. In other words: the identity (i.e.

sameness) of the form-related (formal) structure of decisions means, that, whoever makes power claims, must have recourse to certain thought structures like e.g. the distinction between the From There (i.e. That World or Life) and the From Here (i.e. This World or Life); and the content-related contrasting results because each and every respective concrete determination of the From There (i.e. That World or Life) and the From Here (i.e. This World or Life) must be distinguished from that of the foe, so that the said determination can serve as a weapon and at the same time as a symbol of existential contrasting. Precisely because decisions express power claims, they must, as regards content, diverge from one another at least as much as their corresponding subjects existentially differ - and precisely because decisions express power claims, they must all be characterised by that form-related structure, which underpins power claims in general and as such. Between the commonality of the form-related structure, and the content-related contrasting, exists a necessary interrelation, because both, if taken together, articulate two needs bound together in the struggle for the fulfilment of the power claim. In a historical-sociological respect the logical magnitude: "commonality of the form-related structure" means nothing other than the elementary fact that several subjects simultaneously make power claims, in relation to which they bring into being the content-related variety of decisions. The source of this content-related variety are enmity and the struggle, the source of the enmity and the struggle are however the simultaneous power claims of several subjects, as these announce their presence in the commonality of the form-related structure of their corresponding decisions. Because foes must share the same enmity, they must also share the same thought structure. And because they, as foes, are existentially different, they must

confess faith in an, on each and every respective occasion, different thought content.

Through its objectification, the decision appears as a voice of a supra-personal and in every respect above suspicion authority, which reveals the essence of things and shows the right way, whereas the subject of the decision takes on the role of mediator and executor of truths and commands announced by that voice. In accordance with the fundamental principle of social disciplining, which does not allow any (open) flouting by individual existences of certain principles at least nominally preserving collective self-preservation, the subject of the decision emerges here as a pious servant of a high lord, therefore ultimately also of the common good, whose promotion is to be expected precisely from the subjection of the collective entity to that lord. Despite all the mostly more or less sincere (because of the internalisation of that fundamental principle of social disciplining) modesty, the subject of the decision nevertheless must, with all the means at its disposal, lay claim to at least one exclusive right for itself, namely the right to interpret the voice of the lord, whom it is supposed to serve, just as bindingly as that voice in itself has to be regarded generally binding. With the uncompromising claim to or defence of the exclusive right to interpretation the, in fact, character as decision, that is, subjective character of authorities, whose supposed objectivity the interested subject invokes, is laid bare. After the objectification of the decision, that is, the act or process of the decision³² is carried out, as it were, anew and with the open action, i.e. full participation of the subject AS subject - only this time it is carried out in the form of an act or process of interpretation. The subjective character of the decision of supposedly objective supra-personal authorities is shown

³² Kondylis adds to the Greek version (p. 124) the phrase: ", in which the decision initially comes into being,".

from another aspect in the fact that none of the supposedly objective supra-personal authorities can become in practice effective and relevant in the state of an - incidentally hardly to be attained - self-sufficient theoretical purity, but always only in the interpretation by a certain subject. The interpretation is carried out in a concrete situation in view of concrete friends and foes and determines concrete rights and duties. The Ruler is whoever is able to bindingly interpret supposedly objective authorities. In the roundabout way of his interpretations, the ruler handles at will norms and ideals, which are found at the level of "true" Is (i.e. Being or To Be), and precisely the point at which he can be recognised as ruler is that he alone is capable of carrying out "tactical" or "secondary" violations of norms for the purpose of the rescuing of the "substance" of these same norms, and furthermore that he alone is capable of deciding about the extent and the period of time of the, as temporarily and in a restricted manner, described postponement of the realisation of the ideal in the name of this same ideal. We know, however, why this postponement must have a permanent character: recognition of the fact that the ideal has already been completely realised would eliminate the foe and consequently allow one's own dominance to seem superfluous. Incidentally, between the domain of interpretation (i.e. interpretive competence or responsibility) of the ruler and the structure of the objectified decision there is a pre-established harmony. Because this structure is determined by the distinction between the From There (i.e. That World or Life) and the From Here (i.e. This World or Life), Being (or Is or To Be) and Appearance, and the current or prospective ruler is legitimised exactly as mediator between both levels of the world image, whose creator or representative he himself is. The consciousness of being a servant with respect to the³³ From There (i.e. That World or Life), is,

³³ Kondylis adds the adjective "ideal" to the Greek version of this book (p. 125).

therefore, partly supplemented and partly compensated by means of the elitist consciousness in relation to the From Here (i.e. This World or Life) and all those existences which linger in the realm of the Appearance on this side, i.e. the From Here. Without the From There (i.e. That World or Life), without the realm of "true" norms and ideals, there is nothing which one could interpret with respect to others, consequently there is then also no consciousness and no objectively apparent, as to its intention, justification of the same elitist consciousness.

Concepts, which are determinative for the level of the From There (i.e. That World or Life) and consequently for the sublimated or objectified articulation of power claims, must therefore remain vague so that these concepts, as it were, cry out for an interpreter of their own accord. Their vagueness, nonetheless, is not the mere effect of the fundamental need of the current or prospective ruler to emerge as the exclusive interpreter. They are just as much the effect of the parallel endeavour to lend them bindedness in such a way that they are portrayed, in terms of content, as the most comprehensive of concepts and, in terms of logic, as the most general of concepts, so that in every given case explanations regarding the various constituent elements of the world or instructions regarding concrete action can be derived from them. Because a dual path connects the subject of the decision with the supreme concepts which constitute the axis of the world image which emerged out of the decision. During the construction of the world image the path leads upwards from the subject towards the highest world-theoretical authorities as the final crystallisations of the subject's effort to set comprehensive, world-explaining and generally in force (valid) normative, constants for its own³⁴ orientation; here those authorities are still seen as the work of the

³⁴ Kondylis adds the adjective "practical" in the Greek version (p. 126).

subject and the work of the subject's existential intensity and search. However, after the making of the world image, the path leads downwards from the world image's supreme authorities towards the subject of the decision, so that the origin of those authorities is forgotten by this subject of the decision, and the subject of the decision (indirectly) finds its way back to its dominance over those authorities only through its interpretive activity. In this way, the interpretive activity makes up for that vagueness which had inevitably arisen during the construction of an, if possible, comprehensive world image equipped with the polemical force of the idea of the Whole. The interpretive activity and the struggle of the subject over the monopoly of interpretation must gain additional significance when the content of the decision is couched in concepts which are hierarchically right at the top not solely for this decision, but also for other decisions, and indeed for inimical decisions. It depends on the concrete situation and on the, in this concrete situation, decisive polemical constellation whether a decision will develop its own conceptuality or it will appropriate an existing one in order to define the appropriated decision in accordance with the power claims of the appropriating decision's subject. In this latter case the vagueness of the supreme concepts necessarily increases and the interpretation struggle intensifies accordingly, in relation to which brilliant casuistic performances are churned out. Rationalists of good faith and eternally deceived lovers of "Reason (or logic)" are in the habit then of complaining that central concepts do not have any firm and binding meaning, that "words have lost their meaning (sense)" etc.. If we leave aside the wish hiding in this complaint for the complainant himself to take on the role of the referee or even of the conceptual lawgiver, it must be observed that certain concepts are at the centre of confrontations exactly because they are (or can become) ambiguous enough so as to be

able to provide a common battlefield to the quarreling parties. Not only is contrasting a part of a struggle, but also the meeting of foes on the battlefield. This dual character of enmity becomes noticeable in the central concepts on each and every respective occasion, which constitute the controversial and, exactly because of that, general point of reference. As soon as a concept, for various social reasons or for reasons in the history of ideas, reaches the point of dominating in language (speech or linguistic) usage, it is not rejected in principle by anyone, but is interpreted by all sides so that it can assist the imposition of each and every respective interpreter. Even those, against whom a concept initially turned against and because of that, to start with, combated the concept, appropriate it after the concept's victory and they articulate their power claims in its now generally understandable language. One is e.g. not against democracy or progress (anymore), one only means "true" democracy and "true" progress. The polemical meaning of the contradistinction between the Being (or Is or To Be) and Appearance is shown once more in such familiar expressions.

The struggle for the "true" interpretation is, therefore, the struggle for the imposition of the "true" interpretation's each and every respective representative. In the course of this, the interpreters do not dispute the objective meaning and the general validity of the concepts being interpreted, but they accept the same concepts only in their own interpretation, and consequently they aim at putting the social authority of what is objective and what is generally valid as such in the service of their own power claims. Everyone e.g. asserts the objectivity and general validity of norms, because everyone reserves the right to make his own norms out to be objective and generally valid; even those, who in the

struggle against a foe, who asserts the unchangingness³⁵ of norms, must, under certain circumstances, point out the norms' historical relativity, even they defend their own normative notions *hic et nunc*³⁶ as if they were not relative, in relation to which the theoretically represented relativity becomes irrelevant in practice for their own matter and ought to solely hurt the foe. The acceptance of the objectivity and the general validity of the highest concepts and norms remains, therefore, forever bound to the reservation of the monopoly of interpretation on the part of the person making this acceptance. Until now, no case has become known in which the subject of an objectified decision would have said that what is objective and what is generally valid indeed exists, but it has to be comprehended in the sense of the differently thinking foe and not in one's own sense. Furthermore, the acceptance of the existence of One truth brings to light augmented power claims, as seen in the fact that the representative of this acceptance simultaneously commends himself as representative of the said One truth - and indeed commend himself he must³⁷: because it is impossible to know of the existence of One truth after all without having learnt something or other about the One truth's content. The One truth as well as the One Reason therefore cannot help coinciding with each and every respective representative's own truth and Reason. In this way, the relentless inner logic of objectified decisions here unfolds and culminates.

The need for the interpretation of norms and values, namely the fact that only by means of each and every respective purposeful interpretation can norms and values become relevant for the concrete case, is in itself proof that norms and values are objectified decisions and hence hold within

³⁵ In the Greek text (p. 129) Kondylis adds: "or eternity".

³⁶ Here and now.

³⁷ Kondylis's Greek version (p. 130) reads: "and indeed his is logically obliged to do it".

themselves power claims. Incidentally, as we already said (pp. 64-65), the fundamental ambivalence of social life becomes vivid in a dramatic way for norms and values - after all, norms and values constitute the area of validity (i.e. action) par excellence of this fundamental ambivalence, whereby the power claim lives on and takes effect in what should curtail the power claim in favour of the self-preservation of a collective entity. For the vitally necessary and life-preserving mythology of normativism, norms and values are of course above the "blind" drive of self-preservation (power claim), they are aims (goals), which man taking root *nolens volens* in "animalistic" nature ought to strive after, and at the same time forces, which have to curb this same nature. However, the relationship between drive and norm or value must be looked at totally differently, if we start from the ascertainment that norms and values enable the co-existence of beings, who have a completely specific biological texture, that they are therefore interrelated with this texture (also) positively and not (merely) negatively, i.e. they constitute this texture's purposeful supplementation and meta-development and not simply its negation. Since organised society is based on an³⁸ accepted or at least respected norm and value system, anyone who wants to successfully make, and in the long term impose, power claims inside of society must invoke norms and values, irrespective of whether these are the dominant (in a new interpretation) ones or new ones. In this sense, norms and values constitute a continuation of the existential struggle in the concrete situation of an organised society. To the extent that the regulated course of life of this organised society is based on the renunciation on the part of its members of the immediate and arbitrary satisfaction of drives, and to the extent that the fundamental principle of social disciplining is internalised, it is praised as deed and spread as

³⁸ Kondylis adds "generally" to his Greek version (p. 131).

teachings under various forms, power claims can be enforced only as norms and values, i.e. only while they prove their respect for the fundamental principles of social life - a respect, which is really sincere, since dominance can only be wielded in society - and exactly because of that dominance generates and consolidates the impression of the fundamental principles' own unselfishness. Power and morals (i.e. ethics) - or more generally: "evil" and "good" - are genetically and often also functionally not as heterogeneous as the normativistic contradistinction of drive and norm or value would have us believe. From the perspective of this contradistinction, striving for power appears as ab-normal³⁹ or as anti-value, because here the existence supposedly succumbs to the pressure of dark drives and irrational temptations, whereas virtue and morals (i.e. ethics) are supposed to precisely be the victory over these same dark drives and irrational temptations. This perception, however, has very little to do with the reality of striving for power inside of organised societies, and indeed for two reasons: first, because the internalisation of the fundamental principle of social disciplining allows or forces disguises and satisfactions of striving for power, so that striving for power does not require the striving after, or the wielding of, direct dominance, and it passes itself off as life in agreement with a great aim (goal) or even with a world plan (i.e. the deeper meaning of the world), in relation to which the existence obtains its sense of power from the (higher) authority with which it equates its fate; and secondly, because even the direct striving for power under the conditions of organised society as a rule can enjoy long-term success only on the roundabout way of renunciation of the unrestrained "animalistic" satisfaction of drives, and in this respect - contrary to the moralistic-normativistic perception -

³⁹ Kondylis renders "a-normal" in Greek (pp. 132-33) as "the opposite of whatever is natural or normal (normativistic)".

hardly differs from efforts in respect of the attainment of "virtue". The path towards power does not definitely coincide with the path of hedonism, and that is why normativists err, when on the basis of the syllogistic reasoning sketched above they assume the heterogeneity of "unrestrained" striving after power and "moderate" morals (i.e. ethics). Were power and morals (i.e. ethics) from the outset and in accordance with their essence heterogeneous, then norms and values would never have been able to be put in the service of dominance, let alone in the service of aggression and extermination (i.e. annihilation).

If we again take up the thread of the problem of interpretation, we will better understand why the interweaving of power struggles with questions of norms and values must bring about an intensification of the power struggles. Norms and values claim by definition universal validity, and already because of that the struggle for them is the struggle for everything. Their universal claim however has the additional consequence, that here anyone can appear in the role of the interpreter, since everyone can feel concerned about this matter of the universal claim. The more general - both as to logical range and as to practical effect - a question seems, all the more evenly matched do the rival interpreters become. In relation to ultimate questions, everyone has equal rights. The more specific, i.e., the more irrelevant from the point of view of the social power struggle a question is, all the more is specialised knowledge respected; the competence of the shoemaker is much more undisputed than the competence of someone who wants to bindingly define freedom. Equivalence, i.e. equal competence of everyone in respect of the norm and value question extends both horizontally (amongst the "educated" of various subject areas) as well as vertically, although this of course must be disputed on the part of the "educated" in

general and some "educated people" in particular. Because the only valid legal title in this field is full existential deployment, which is unavoidable, if each and every respective existence in question remains at the height of importance and generality of the question in dispute and therefore outdoes its competitors. The analogy between the existential deployment and the theoretical generality of the question in dispute, as well as the widening of the interpretive activity and the circle of the competent interpreters, therefore here additionally exacerbate the struggle. This process can of course hardly be apprehended on the basis of abstract words in respect of the "conflict of values" etc.. There are no values and no values fight against one another, but there are only concrete existences, which on the roundabout way of the formulation and interpretation of values, seek to overturn or to consolidate certain relations between themselves. The readiness of an existence to invoke what is highest and what is most general, namely norms and values, simultaneously signals the readiness of the existence for what is extreme. From here, the (extreme) intensity of the power struggle comes into being as soon as the power struggle takes the form of the struggle for the interpretation of norms and values.

The monopoly of interpretation is, in practice, more important than the competence which determines the highest concepts, which are supposed to constitute the obligatory point of reference of all the subjects of the decision in a concrete situation, unless this competence accompanies the monopoly of interpretation; and this competence accompanies the monopoly of interpretation very often, since the replacement of the dominant highest concepts by new concepts, above all, is then sought when the subject in question has no prospect of snatching the monopoly of interpretation per se of the dominant concepts, so that the subject in

question launches new concepts exactly because of that, in order to at least be the only interpreter with respect to these new concepts.

The practical precedence of interpretive activity vis-à-vis the situation-determined, and as a rule transient, general confession of faith in certain highest concepts, points to the fact that the confusion of this confession of faith by all parties with a fundamental readiness for compromise with regard to existential power claims is an optical illusion, whose victims are above all those who believe (or want to make others believe) in the possibility of a solution to existentially important questions through consensus and discourse (i.e. dialogue). Because the fact that all sides declare themselves ready to articulate their matters of concern, on each and every respective occasion, with the help of a central concept, does not mean the existence of a basis of mutual understanding (i.e. through communication), but, first of all, only through the, in the concrete historical situation, enforced agreement that foes want or must meet on a certain battlefield in order to struggle for the monopoly of interpretation over concepts like, for instance, God, Man, Reason, Freedom, Morals (i.e. Ethics) etc.. If two or more subjects come to an understanding on the basis of a central concept, this then does not at all indicate the concept's general suitability to function anytime and anywhere as the instrument of mutual understanding, but it only proves that the subjects in question have met as friends. The existential relationship between the subjects pre-empted the result of the discourse (i.e. dialogue) and is, for its part, embryonically or explicitly contained in the already taken fundamental decisions of the subjects. The suitability of discourse (i.e. dialogue) as instrument of mutual understanding is not then to be measured against the course and the results of discourses (i.e. dialogues) between friends (or non-foes) - whose friendship, incidentally, always accompanies a

common delimitation from a third party -, but discourse's (i.e. dialogue's) touchstone are the cases in which foes meet one another. Inimical encounters, which are restricted to arguing and debating, do not of course in themselves constitute a sign of an, as it were, anthropological necessity of discourse (i.e. dialogue) for the purpose of benevolent understanding (i.e. through communication). If friends meet in order to mutually confirm their own identity, in order to deliberate over the movements of the common foe or to demonstrate their solid might outwardly, foes meet one another at the discussion table partly to sound out the intentions and the fighting readiness of the other side, partly in order to make tactically purposeful compromises and partly in order to (every man for himself) convince the still vacillating public (and also themselves) that they respect the fundamental principle of social disciplining, that is, they are ready to exercise restraint and let "Reason (or logic)" prevail out of consideration for general interests. Such inimical, although often polite encounters presuppose an at least approximate balance of power, and if they have success, then this at the very end is to be put down to the existing distribution of forces and not, for instance, to dialogue itself, which rather has technical significance. Incidentally, success at most consists in the working out of a short- or long-term armistice and has no influence on the existential essence of the foes. Precisely because of this the most successful discussions between foes are those in which the question of the existential essence and of the existential legitimacy of every one of the foes is left aside a limine. If, on the contrary, this question comes to the fore, then the struggle for the monopoly of interpretation over those general concepts (e.g. "peace"), in whose name the foes opened and conducted their discussion, is automatically exacerbated. The existential seriousness of the situation therefore makes discourse (i.e. dialogue) not only impossible, but also superfluous, unless

one of the foes appears willing to (partly) give up his identity, that is, to take back the objectification of his decision. Even in encounters, in which hardly anything, in practice, or in any case not much is at stake, like e.g. in encounters of scholars and literati⁴⁰, things are not essentially different, especially since the self-understanding of the participants forbids them from insight into the fact that here the existential seriousness is objectively slight.

The objectification of decisions and the struggles being sparked off in relation to this objectification of decisions for the monopoly of interpretation over the key concepts do not therefore leave any chance of a smoothing out of existential conflicts through discourse (i.e. dialogue). Indeed, the fundamental constellation in every discourse (i.e. dialogue) seems highly paradoxical: (mediating) discourse ought to take place, exactly because there are various or even conflicting perceptions - and the origin of this difference or even conflict of perceptions from existential decisions charged with power claims stands in the way of discourse (i.e. dialogue). The perspectives of decisions do not coincide, but partly intersect; the area, which is pegged out through this intersection, is in fact jointly seen by the subjects of the decisions in question, but not in the same way, since the viewpoint as well as the broader framework of putting things in order are different. Thus, even that area, which could have constituted an only objective basis of mutual understanding, becomes uncertain. Mutual understanding of course remains possible, but only in a certain intersection of perspectives, which aims at the same foe; universal mutual understanding is only possible in a negative reference to a universal foe, in relation to which a collectively objectified decision, whose interpretation was undisputed, would again have to be set. No-one

⁴⁰ "Scholars, artists and literati" is what Kondylis states in his Greek version (p. 139).

can elude these basic given facts, as much as he also emphasises the necessity of "rational" discourse (i.e. dialogue). Yet even this act, of emphasising the necessity of "rational" discourse (i.e. dialogue), has a polemical meaning, namely it turns against those, who in the opinion of those concerned, do not want to know about discourse (i.e. dialogue), Reason and peace, and furthermore the said act presupposes particular content-related positions, which are opposed to the positions of those who (allegedly) lack a willingness for discourse (i.e. dialogue) and the intellectual(-spiritual) merits belonging to that discourse (i.e. dialogue). Belief in discourse (i.e. dialogue) as a process towards the solution not merely of current questions, that is, questions already presupposing certain power relations, but of ultimate existential contrasts therefore expresses the power claims of those who see their own strong side in debating and arguing, i.e. the said belief articulates in sublimated form the hope of the petty bourgeois of the intellect(-spirit) that they could evade the harder forms of struggle in which they do not endure and in which their voice and existence would be completely meaningless. This belief is, incidentally, nourished quite a number of times by the age-old dream of establishing a peaceful paradise on earth (initially for the time being in the modest form of the use of peaceful processes for the settlement of conflicts) and is interwoven with the likewise age-old perception of the not merely end(goal)-rationally (i.e. technically-instrumentally), but morally-normatively meant reasonableness (i.e. rationality) of man. The, with all of that, connected anthropological constructions try to prove the anchoring of discourse (i.e. dialogue) and communication in the primal relation of the I (Ego) with the other, in relation to which they want to, on the quiet, make out of an Is (i.e. Being or To Be), namely out of the fact of this really constitutive relation, an

Ought⁴¹, namely an entirely particular normatively understood and binding form of the same relation. However the Other is not for the I (Ego) a mere "partner in communication", but basically an authority of recognition, somebody, who wants to share the self-understanding of the I (Ego) or does not want to share that self-understanding; in the first case the subjects form a friendship, which consists in the mutual (tacit) agreement over the fact that one existence will share the self-understanding of the other existence ("one will understand the other"), and that is why the agreement lasts only as long as this also actually happens; otherwise enmity comes into being. Without doubt, the I (Ego) without the You is inconceivable - but only because the I (Ego) shapes its identity in the incessant friendly and inimical confrontation with others as such authorities of recognition. Were communication an, on both sides, pleasant and touching voyage of discovery in the realm of the other, then the incontestable fact of enmity between subjects of the decision⁴² and consequently the historically attested endless variety of form of norms, values and interpretations of these same norms and values would remain unexplained. The end (goal) of such theories of communication, just as of normativistic theories in general, is not however the bare explanation of facts, but the objectification of a decision and therefore the absolutisation of a power claim, which inside of organised society must appear as norm and value.

⁴¹ Kondylis here translates "Sein" into Greek, contrary to his usual translation of "Is", as: "real given fact [real datum]", and, "Sollen" as "deontology" rather than his usual choice of "Ought" (p. 141).

⁴² Kondylis, in his Greek version, adopts "subjects of different decisions" (p. 142).

III. POWER AND DECISION ON THE FRONT OF THE "INTELLECT(-SPIRIT)"

Just like norm and value, so too the so-called "intellect(mind)-spirit" embodies in the vast variety of its manifestations, the fundamental ambivalence of social life: the "intellect(-spirit)", namely, is supposed to be the curbing and overcoming of instinctive drives and yet it constitutes only their substitute or their continuation - but in disguised and sublimated form. This common fate of norm or value and "intellect(-spirit)" is not accidental. Because the concept of the intellect(-spirit) has already since its beginnings been most tightly connected with notions of a normative character. The task of the "intellect(-spirit)" in hitherto tradition has always been not to (merely) know in a value-free manner or to (merely) coolly guide end(goal)-rational action⁴³, but to apprehend the normative sense of things and as such to constitute the proud symbol of the superiority of man vis-à-vis animals driven to and fro by "blind instincts". The same normativistic thought mechanism, which makes a taboo of insight into the interweaving of power claim and norm and value, simultaneously stands in the way of the observation that the "intellect(-spirit)" must be used with power claims precisely to the extent that the "intellect(-spirit)" fulfils normative functions and produces cultural achievements - that is, precisely to the extent that it raises man above the "purely animal element". Strictly speaking, even the genuine power claim (in the sense of the dynamic extension and safeguarding of self-preservation) comes into being precisely through the overcoming of the "purely animal element" with the help of the "intellect(-spirit)".

⁴³ Kondylis renders his Greek translation (p. 143) as: "the cool guidance of action rationally directed towards the realisation of certain ends (goals), regardless of which ends (goals)"

Because the "purely animal element" is much more undemanding than the "intellect(-spirit)", namely it calms down as soon as its immediate needs (and it knows no other needs) are satisfied. On the contrary, permanent restlessness arises from the ability of the "intellect(-spirit)" to quite earlier foresee need (i.e. privation) in all its possible forms and ways of coming into being or even to imagine emergencies of its own accord. While the "intellect(-spirit)" pre-empts future needs and privations, in reality it does not do anything other than multiply the real needs and privations to an extent that can never be comprehended by the "purely animal element", and it accordingly sets free forces in order to cope with tasks made up by it itself⁴⁴. In this way, the chain reaction of power claims is triggered in order to never stop again. Precisely because the "intellect(-spirit)" is that human element which par excellence thirsts for power, it can also endure all conceivable deprivations and force the deprivations on the "purely animal element" in order to quench this thirst it has. As we already observed (p. 93) against the prevailing normativistic perception, the ability at enduring deprivation, which indeed attests to the power of the "intellect(-spirit)", is not an exclusive concomitant of "virtue", but also, and even above all, a necessary precondition for the satisfaction of striving for power inside of organised societies.

The ascertainment, that the specific difference between man and (other) animals lies in the existence of the "intellect(-spirit)" in the former, can therefore be interpreted by no means in a normativistic sense, although precisely normativists and moralists are in the habit of invoking the existence of the "intellect(-spirit)". Because the function of the "intellect(-spirit)" does not simply consist in the domination over the "purely animal element", but in the unleashing of an infinite striving for power and in the

⁴⁴ Kondylis's Greek version (pp. 144-45) reads: "for the achievement of aims (goals) it itself set".

intensification of preventive aggressivity exactly because of "intellectually(-spiritually)" possible foresight and provision. In the course of this, the domination over the "purely animal element" is indeed put in the service of striving for power, since this domination over the "purely animal element" disciplines individuals and collective entities and therefore increases their fighting ability. Consequently, the overcoming of the "instinct" through the "intellect(-spirit)" ultimately serves the "instinct" itself in so far as the instinct can adapt itself in time to the, in this process unavoidable, modifications of its texture and its direction. The "instinct" must even approve of its own overcoming through the "intellect(-spirit)", since the "intellect(-spirit)" comes on the scene as that force which is in a position to effectively compensate for the functional weaknesses of the "instinct". If, however, the "intellect(-spirit)" is basically compensation for deficiencies of the "instinct" and of the human biostructure generally, then it can no longer constitute the opposite or the adversary of the drives, but rather makes up their supplement or their prolonged expression or manifestation in a much more skilful and flexible manner. The "instinct" is projected and salvaged in that which takes it upon itself to find the solution for the tasks of self-preservation, which have not been satisfactorily solved by the "instinct", but which have been set for itself by the "instinct", namely in the "intellect(-spirit)". And the "intellect(-spirit)" must be absorbed by the essence of the "instinct", because the "intellect(-spirit)" did not fall from the sky suddenly and ready, but it was gradually shaped precisely as the answer to the open, just as anxious as pressing, questions of the "instinct", that is, because it was positively or negatively (said theologically) "predestined" or (said technologically) "preprogrammed" by the "instinct"⁴⁵. The functional

⁴⁵ *Power and Decision* does not explore in any detail the ontic aspect of society, or in particular, the social relation, apart from touching upon culture or social phenomena (in relation to identity and

weaknesses of the "instinct" brought the "intellect(-spirit)" into being and the "weak" "instinct" imbued the "strong" "intellect(-spirit)", exactly because this "intellect(-spirit)" owed its coming into being to the "weakness" of the "instinct" and had to deal with the unsolved tasks of the "instinct". So paradoxical is the correlation of forces (i.e. balance of power), upon which culture is based. The ascertainment, that culture ("intellect(-spirit)") is the overcoming and at the same time the extension and disguising of the nature (of the "instinct"), actually constitutes only a different description of the fundamental ambivalence of social life (p. 60) and simultaneously an explanation of this fundamental ambivalence of social life. The normativistic thesis, that the "intellect(-spirit)" brings about not merely a change or meta-development of nature, but in reality an overturning of the same nature (even materialists, who dispute this overturning of nature in principle in the struggle against their idealist foes, come to the same result, when they hold the realisation of a technologically perfect, and furthermore conflict-free, utopia to be possible), the said normativistic thesis then, constitutes one of those great collective decisions which have helped the genus (i.e. mankind or the human species) to obtain an identity and consequently to consolidate the ideational underpinning of its⁴⁶ power claims against the foe "nature". In reality, however, the coming into being of the "intellect(-spirit)" has turned nature upside down as much or as little as the technical skills of the beaver. Because the "intellect(-spirit)" has not in the least changed the basic given facts of the endeavour at self-preservation, which are on the

power), the situations or "the concrete conditions of organised social life" individuals and groups find themselves in, as well as referring to society in general (or "existential and social circumstances", "the socially living existence", etc.), including the social aspect of ideas, in Chapter III. The reader should not misread *Power and Decision* as reducing human action merely or solely to biological drives, but rather to consider this book as treating one aspect of human existence overall (inclusive of biological drives manifested in culture) which fits within the more intricate and wide-ranging framework of the matters dealt with in great detail in *Das Politische und der Mensch*, especially the social relation and rationality, and of course, society as political collective.

⁴⁶ Kondylis adds the adjective "collective" in his Greek translation (p. 147).

whole already determined by the biostructure, although the "intellect(-spirit)'s" effect in the sense of self-preservation has partly broadened and partly modified the notion of this same self-preservation. The "intellect(-spirit)" namely takes care of self-preservation under the concrete conditions of organised social life. As its original and indissoluble bond with language already attests, the "intellect(-spirit)" is itself a social phenomenon; even its solitary flowers are late phenomena and live off the wealth of ideas which have been already accumulated in social intercourse (i.e. communication). With the "intellect(-spirit)" in society⁴⁷ and as product of society, self-preservation, therefore, does not merely mean sufficient participation in respect of physical goods, which make physical life possible, but, over and above that, satisfactory (according to the needs of each and every respective subject) participation in respect of ideational goods, which is absolutely essential for the existence inside of society functioning in accordance with norms and ideas. After the parallel ongoing formation of "intellect(-spirit)" and society, physical and "intellectual(-spiritual)"-social self-preservation can no longer be separated from one another - especially since, as we know (p. 61), inside of organised society the factors of physical self-preservation are elevated to the ideational level, in relation to which the drive of self-preservation itself is changed into the conviction that there is a meaning of life.

From all this it is evident why the endeavour at self-preservation does not merely rule physical life (incidentally, talk of such a "physical life" with regard to socially living humans constitutes in itself only an abstraction), but also "intellectual(-spiritual)" life. If the "intellect(-spirit)" is a further shaping of physically pre-given man and if it comes into being in the struggle over the safeguarding of self-preservation, then this its origin

⁴⁷ Instead of "in society" Kondylis renders his Greek translation thus: "as social factor" (p. 148)

must also determine its texture and function. Hence, the "intellect(-spirit)" is marked by its origin, its origin is its fate, and when it sometimes, in its own dynamics, tries to deny the inheritance of this its origin, then it comes close to suicide and must lead a parasitic existence on the fringes of society. "Intellectual(-spiritual)" life, namely the way ideas are acquired and spread, obeys, therefore, the same laws as all other phenomena of social life, and accordingly it is interwoven no less than these other phenomena of social life with the drive of and endeavour at self-preservation, with the power claim and power struggle. The same motivating forces and passions, the same considerations and, finally, the same relativities and limitations characterise "intellectual(-spiritual)" life as in the case of the rest of the sectors of the social. From its essence, the "intellect(-spirit)" cannot set up a value system and realm of ideas which would be substantially heterogeneous or "morally" superior to society, so that the obeying of the value system and realm of ideas' commands could ever "moralise" society (i.e. "reform society in terms of morals"), i.e. render society conflict-free, and raise society to a qualitatively higher state of being. As the "intellect(-spirit)" objectifies every one of its respective decisions, it must of course assert that it precisely does this or will do this, in the process however, its nominal declarations are in actual fact retracted by its origin and its texture, which determine its objective effect and function, as a rule, without it being aware of this. Just as knowledge is, in general, ultimately reduced to an outline of self-preservation during the social prohibition of every nihilistic world view, so too world-improving-moral declarations contain claims to self-preservation and power claims, i.e. their realisation hic et nunc, and indeed in the interpretation of their representative, would eo ipso entail a strengthening of the power position of the representative. In accordance with their inner logic, which is prescribed by their descent from the

"intellect(-spirit)", such declarations are turned into deployable and effective weapons inside of concrete situations, so that they necessarily perpetuate that conflict-ridden state of affairs, which they ought to terminate in accordance with the declarations' self-presentation.

As further shaping of existence striving after, in various ways, the extension of power and the consolidation of power, the "intellect(-spirit)" has a, even in the narrower sense of intellectual-theoretical activity, polemical texture, i.e. it is no less than all other phenomena of social life determined by the central friend-foe-relation. Those, who hide their own claims to dominance behind the superior authority of the "intellect(-spirit)", must of course, with due indignation, dispute the fact that the "intellect(-spirit)" is determined by the central friend-foe-relation as an unacceptable belittling of the "intellect(-spirit)", and they make the predominance of people hiding their own claims to dominance behind the superior authority of the "intellect(-spirit)" out to be exactly as the victory of an "intellect(-spirit)" loftier than every suspicion of one-sidedness or self-interest. If, however, from the point of view of the normativistically couched claims to dominance, the thesis of the polemical character of the "intellect(-spirit)" must be rejected and characterised as the debasement of human existence in general, then on the other hand, it must be underlined that that thesis does not at all imply the unsuitability (or inability) of the "intellect(-spirit)" for the shaping of social life, as the normativists intimate, who want to and can understand the concept of (un)suitability (or (in)ability) only in a certain, morally loaded sense. In reality, the "intellect(-spirit)" remains so near to life exactly because it can help to take part in struggles, to trigger off struggles and it can help struggles towards intensification and their successful waging; the "intellect(-spirit)" pulsates exactly because it is and must be "dirty" (as

moralists understand such words). In other words: "intellectual(-spiritual)" products are for "life" (in order to once again use this vitalistic abstraction) indeed directly relevant, but not in the sense their producers and representatives would mean this. And they can be relevant exactly because they are not that which they must be passed off as by their producers and representatives. The self-deception of these producers and representatives of "intellectual(-spiritual)" products of course remains indispensable for the objectification of their own decisions and for the argumentative underpinning of their own power claims. Because in their language, the purity of "intellectual(-spiritual)" ends amounts to the general validity and bindedness of their own world and value perceptions, whereas the admission that the polemical element in the "intellect(-spirit)" is decisively present refutes precisely this open or concealed equating between the said purity of "intellectual(-spiritual)" ends and the general validity and bindedness of world and value perceptions. Accordingly, what belongs to the essential self-set task of the "intellect(-spirit)" since its coming into being is to deny, to hush up or to sublimate its own polemical nature, and to appear as the only authority, which - in contrast to the inability of the "lower" strata of human existence to be raised above the particular and directly interesting and partial - can articulate panhuman matters of concern in a generally intelligible and reliable way. Nevertheless, the "intellect(-spirit)" must be and remain polemical - and not least of all then when it polemicises with particular fury against the thesis of the polemical character of the "intellect(-spirit)". The "intellect(-spirit)" is polemical because it is always tied to certain existential bearers, whom the "intellect(-spirit)" must help achieve outlines of the decision while taking into consideration each and every respective foe. Since these bearers are always found, and without exception, in a concrete situation, that is why the "intellect(-spirit)" can at

no moment be detached from the concrete situation of its each and every respective existential bearer in order to be placed above all the existing and conceivable concrete situations, i.e. in order to elude every perspectivity and hence also every polemics - although it must assert that it precisely does this. This ascertainment really becomes a form of self-evidence as soon as one is ready to radically eradicate every idealism, i.e. every direct or indirect making autonomous (i.e. autonomisation) and ontologisation of ideas. There are no ideas. There are only human existences in concrete situations, which act and react in their specific way on each and every respective occasion; one of these specific ways consists, in accordance with standard terminology, in thinking up or appropriating ideas. Ideas do not come into contact with one another, but only human existences come into contact with one another, which inside of organised societies must act in the name of ideas; combinations of ideas are likewise the work of human existences, which, when they apply themselves to this work, start from their own relationship with other existences; and, finally, ideas are not defeated nor do they win, but their victory or their defeat stands symbolically for the predominance or the subjugation of certain human existences. As one can see, the centuries-long predominance of idealistic normativism (and every normativism contains essential idealistic elements, even when for polemical reasons it comes on the scene while flying the flag of materialism), forces us towards the rediscovery and renewed emphasising of banal truths - of truths, which in a very general form could possibly today be recognised by very many people, but whose logical consequences must meet with the resistance of every normativistic thought, that is, every objectivised decision.

The radical putting aside of idealism and of ideas inspires abhorrence or even angst (or fear), because it amounts to the belittlement, relativisation and in the end, abolition of "truth" (that is to say: of all the "truths" invoking power claims and, in connection with those power claims, of all reliable life orientation). Let us leave aside, first of all, the (scientifically) infertile question as to whether there is "truth" or not, and let us look at things concretely. Even if we wanted to accept that there is "truth", the in practical terms, much more important question would still not answered: who, where and when has "truth" at his disposal? Who is, in a concrete situation, in a position to make use of "the" truth, i.e. to vest oneself the whole authority of "the" truth? Every statement about "the" truth implies (and very often expressly contains) the assurance that the person making the statement is in the "intellectual(-spiritual)" possession of that about which he states - especially as no-one can know of the existence of "the" truth without having at the same time been informed at least something of "the" truth's content. In actual fact, it is thus admitted that a purely theoretical truth statement, detached from every reference to a concrete existential bearer, is not only inconceivable, but over and above that, irrelevant in practical terms, i.e. it can hardly influence existing power relations. Every finding out and formulation of "the" truth must, however, have visible consequences for the world order, which - should "the" truth constitute something important and desirable in practice - may not remain the same before and after the finding of the truth. If now the annunciation of the truth is eo ipso a proposition to change the world, then the question is posed: how must one who has something, much or everything to lose from the emerging change in, or overturning of, the power relations behave vis-à-vis the announced truth? One certainly can die for "the" truth - but only for one's own truth, i.e. for that "truth" which corresponds with one's own identity, so that the defence of "the" truth and the defence

of one's own identity ultimately coincide. Making a sacrifice for "the" truth does not occur when "the" truth is announced by the foe, unless a change in identity takes place, which, in the meantime, accompanies a new determination of friend and foe and therefore the relation with the announced truth can also appear in a completely different light. In this way, each and every respective positioning of the "intellect(-spirit)" vis-à-vis the question of "the" truth constitutes a tangible manifestation of its polemical essence. Truth is the function of an existence equipped with "intellect(-spirit)" inside of a concrete situation, i.e. with respect to certain other existences.

The thesis that the "intellect(-spirit)" is in its essence polemical and its products, the ideas, constitute weapons, implies of course the all-round taking root of the "intellect(-spirit)" in the existence which lives socially; only such an existence has "intellect(-spirit)" and only it fights its foes with the help of ideas so that the social and polemical character of the "intellect(-spirit)" constitute two sides of the same coin. The "intellect(-spirit)" namely is social not in the sense that it reflects certain states of affairs (i.e. situations) in its products, but precisely in the sense that it lives off polemics, that is, it provides ideational weapons to socially living existences and in the course of this it is shaped, it develops and it is enriched. Ideas are not a mirror, in which a society can look at itself in its current state, but symptoms and indicators of concrete existential situations; the dogma of the Holy Trinity e.g. reflects nothing at all, its existence in the social-"intellectual(-spiritual)" universe however permits us to conclude with certainty that there is an individual or collective subject which somehow or other connects its identity and its power claim with the formulation and defence of this dogma. The analysis of ideas, when this is taken at face value, cannot, therefore, convey any cohesive

picture of society; were ideas, however, regarded from the outside, and indeed as weapons in the hands of concrete existences in concrete situations, then their constellation on each and every respective occasion corresponds with each and every respective given grouping of existences in accordance with each and every respective friend-foe-relation, and in this sense we can speak of an analysis of ideas, which, taking into consideration the polemical and at the same time social character of the "intellect(-spirit)", can lead to a concrete analysis of society. The connection of an idea with a certain identity and a certain power claim existentially and socially counts much more than the face value or the explicit content of the same idea; exactly this connection, and not the content of an idea in itself, says something concrete about each and every respective existential and social situation. Because the content of ideas is partly accidental and partly variable, i.e. the content of ideas negatively depends on the content, on each and every respective occasion, of the inimical ideas, against which it must be unconditionally set, while the connection of ideas in general with an existence and a power claim against another existence and another power claim constitutes an original and constant magnitude. Any ideational content whatsoever can be summoned against the foe if only it serves the targeted polemical end; even ideas, which came into being and were used under entirely different existential and social circumstances are very often discovered anew, to be deployed argumentatively in purposefully modified form and according to current needs. This possibility of the revival of older ideas in accordance with entirely new aims (goals) furnishes in itself a good piece of evidence of the fact that ideas do not reflect anything, but first of all are only available weapons. Were ideas a reflection of certain situations, then they would mean after all, nothing or not much, under (entirely) different circumstances, i.e. they would have died forever with the

concrete situation of their coming into being and of their original effect. But also the reverse case shows unequivocally that ideas are nimble and interchangeable weapons, not fixed reflections. It is namely not that only the case presents itself of ideas remaining in terms of content more or less stable, while their representatives change, but it also happens that the same subjects make their own, in different eras and in accordance with the fluctuations of the existential conjuncture, different ideas on each and every respective occasion, which even in a logical respect are not seldom in contradiction with one another. Movements of foes on the field of ideas must be answered, after all, in time by corresponding manoeuvres on one's own side, and this forces the abandonment of ideational positions which until then had to be held. The primary need of polemical consistency is therefore satisfied at the expense of logical consistency, as we shall see in still greater detail (p. 127).

In general it can be said that the relation between the existential bearers and the theoretical content of ideas is a symbolic one. A confession of faith in an idea does not at all entail an automatic, logically problem-free determination of the behaviour of the subject by means of the content of the idea in question - incidentally, in most cases (i.e. when it is not a matter of precise moral-practical orders), it is not possible to deduce any concrete rule of behaviour at all from the mere confession of faith in an idea or in a complete system of ideas. The behaviour of the subject therefore interrelates with the content of the ideas adopted by it not directly and logically, but indirectly and symbolically. While the subject professes its faith in certain ideas, it is thereby to be understood that in the subject's eyes this confession of faith (i.e. declaration) is connected with specific behaviour, that certain acts will follow the confession of faith (i.e. declaration). In itself the confession of faith (i.e. declaration)

does not at all constitute a definite harbinger of certain action, however, through the subject's declarations in respect of the able to be restored connection between both the confession of faith (i.e. declaration) and the action, the impression comes into being of a necessary common bond, although in reality the confession of faith (i.e. declaration) constitutes only a ritual prelude to concrete action. The words and sentences of the confession of faith (i.e. declaration) have an effect as a linguistically conveyed stimulus, which sets and keeps in motion, in an associative manner, a certain chain of actions and reactions. However, the aforementioned actions and reactions are not caused by what the words and sentences of the confession of faith (i.e. declaration) logically mean, but by their symbolic relevance and associative or suggestive force. That of course presupposes that the key concepts of the confession of faith (i.e. declaration) are understood and interpreted in a certain way. The fact that interpretation must build bridges between the confession of faith (i.e. declaration) and the action invoked by it, provides further proof for the symbolic character of ideas, in which the subject professes its faith. Were these ideas not symbols of existential affiliation, but clear and for all (i.e. for friend and foe) synonymous, logically structured signs, then every interpretation of these same ideas would be superfluous. And conversely: precisely because the ideas' character is symbolic, they can serve as catalysts of different series of acts, if only they are interpreted in a different manner. The symbolic relation of ideas with the concrete action of the subject therefore grants this latter concrete action of the subject a much greater flexibility and freedom of movement than in the hypothetical case in which ideas were in their unambiguity a static reflection of pre-given conditions. The price for this flexibility, which in a tactical-polemical respect proves to be extremely advantageous and even indispensable, consists in the unremitting striving after the

preservation of the associative and suggestive force of symbols, which is in danger of being lost in all too abrupt displacements in the ideational sector. As a rule, however, the necessary adjustments and transpositions can be undertaken inside of the existing ideational space of the symbol or of the confession of faith (i.e. declaration), and indeed exactly thanks to the fact that the symbolic character of the confession of faith (i.e. declaration) does not oblige an inflexible or a once and for all fixed stance vis-à-vis the confession of faith (i.e. declaration's) content. Because the identity of the subject is not always and not necessarily bound to the logically understood ideational content of the confession of faith (i.e. declaration), but above all to the same confession of faith (i.e. declaration's) symbolic force, i.e. to the fact THAT a confession of faith (i.e. declaration) is made after all, which is summarised in certain key words (as epitome and perceptible, easily recognisable sign of an entire world-theoretical decision). Even if the content of the confession of faith (i.e. declaration) is defended logically-argumentatively against the foe in great detail, again the primary concern is, through the detailed defence of the content, to keep the overall confession of faith (i.e. declaration), as existentially effective symbol, intact; the content is treated (i.e. it is shielded, interpreted or modified) out of consideration for the preservation of the symbolic force of the confession of faith (i.e. declaration) in its relevance for the existence and the existence's identity.

The ideational symbol satisfactorily fulfils its task when a mere reference to the ideational symbol can remind the existence of its concrete situation, its friends and its foes, in order to predispose or to motivate the existence accordingly. Ideational confessions (i.e. declarations) of faith are in this sense ritual acts, which are supposed to prepare the respective subject in question (and indirectly the foe as well) for future action with partial or

full existential deployment. The insight into this symbolic-ritual function of ideas and ideational confessions (i.e. declarations) of faith can explain the not at all so seldom discrepancy between a subject's "principles" and the subject's real behaviour. This discrepancy becomes possible for the simple reason that the declaration of principles is not in reality an annunciation of what the subject in question regards as, under all circumstances, binding for itself in practice, but rather a public notification of its identity, a symbolic naming of its friends and its foes. The complete adaptation of practical behaviour to the announced principles is not here existentially and socially decisive, but the fact of the annunciation itself - although the internalisation of the announced principles under the pressure of the principle of social disciplining can entail pangs and conflicts of conscience, if by any chance the declarations and the deeds should more or less diverge from one another. Through the public annunciation of ideas and principles, a subject maps out the symbolic framework for its existential course and for the defence of its identity and its fundamental decision. Conversely, the practical application of the ideas and principles in question play a rather subordinate role, particularly as the completeness, consistency or correctness of this application are for the most part a question of interpretation. From this perspective, the generally well-known phenomenon becomes understandable that someone e.g. preaches ex cathedra⁴⁸ love or the categorical imperative, whereas his concrete behaviour in critical cases can be mean and dishonest - in any case not essentially better than that of other people who do not preach that sort of thing. Moralists and normativists of course do everything possible to either discreetly hush up such and similar phenomena or to deny such and similar phenomena any theoretical relevance. However, precisely in this

⁴⁸ With the authority derived from one's office or position.

way, they unintentionally confirm the correctness of our analysis: because, while disregarding the concrete action and the personal morals (i.e. ethics) of a "thinker" when the moralists and normativists analyse his "philosophy" etc., they content themselves with the symbolic-ritual act, which lies in the annunciation of ideas and principles, and consequently they, in actual fact, place this annunciation higher (in their estimation of things) than the practical application of its content. Still furthermore: while moralists believe (want to make others believe) that they are eo ipso more moral than other people, who do not want to be moralists, they give precedence to what is symbolic and what is confessional (i.e. declarative).

The polemical essence of the "intellect(-spirit)" determines and shapes the self-understanding of the "intellect(-spirit)" itself, as this self-understanding is articulated in the debates over the "intellect(-spirit)'s" character. The normativistic denial of the polemical essence of the "intellect(-spirit)", which aims at making the objectification of decisions credible outwardly, is, first of all, polemically motivated, as we already observed (p. 107). Therefore, in normativistic thought, the self-understanding of thought does not in the least coincide with the thought mechanism which this same thought follows, if this thought gets ready to define thought in general, that is, to articulate thought's self-understanding. The presupposition for the apprehension of the character of normative thought remains, in other words, the distinction between the actual way of functioning of thought and the definition of the same thought, as the definition is undertaken against the background of a decision wanting to be objective. Different normativistic directions may define thought differently, however all these definitions are founded on the same positioning and thought structure. With that we come back to

the already discussed (p. 84) problem of the form-related identity of thought structures notwithstanding the difference of their thought content.

- In the light of the ascertainment that the way a thinking defines itself is in no necessary relation with its own actual texture and way of functioning, must the centuries-long philosophical-theological squabble over the primacy of thinking or of wanting in the field of the "intellect(-spirit)" also be judged. The decision in favour of one or the other was polemically motivated in the sense that here it was always a question of the imposition of certain content-related positions with obvious practical consequences - positions, which were connected symbolically rather than logically with the primacy of thinking or of wanting; whether these same positions were passed off as products of thinking or of wanting incidentally depended negatively on the foe's positioning on this question. In the face of the polemical motivation and function of such squabbles, it is for a scientific way of looking at things highly misleading to take these squabbles at face value. Whoever stands for the primacy of thinking and Reason does not become eo ipso "more rational" nor does he obey wanting (that is to say: the power claim) less than the theoretical proponent of the primacy of wanting, who for his part must deploy thinking, already in order to prove, with logical means, the primacy of wanting against the arguments of those thinking differently. Contrary to the real fusion of cognitive and volitive functions at all levels and strata of the socially living existence (p. 34), the philosophical-theological tradition has on the whole been stuck to the contradistinction of thinking and wanting - whatever the signs (i.e. symbolism) and whatever the classifications -, because this permitted the drawing of clear-cut polemical lines of separation (i.e. dividing lines), behind which all sorts of argumentative artillery could be lined up. The militant decisionists also set the living existence against "pure" thinking and its "abstractions",

whereby they simply turn the hierarchy of the "rationalists" (or the said hierarchy's caricature) upside down - and drive the polemical conflict of both positions to extremes.

The controversy over rationalism and irrationalism revolves, just as much as the related dispute over the primacy of thinking or wanting, around the question of the essence and function of the "intellect(-spirit)" and brings forth⁴⁹ variations of the "intellect(-spirit)'s" self-understanding, in relation to which each and every respective polemical aim acts to point the way forward. As far as the rationalists first of all are concerned, they organise and conduct their polemics while they symbolically bind the content-related theses, in which their power claims find expression and are concretised, to something which they call "Reason", so that those theses can be passed off as the direct logical result of "Reason". From the by definition binding of certain theses to "Reason" the conclusion is now drawn that every opponent of those theses rejects "rational" thought in general or at least cannot follow the same "rational" thought with the necessary stringency (i.e. logical coherence) - something which amounts to the assumption of the intellectual(-spiritual) inferiority of the opponent in question. The rationalists try, in other words, to monopolise thought as such and in toto for themselves, while they assert that the mere use of thought, when it takes place only logically faultlessly, must confirm the correctness of the content-related theses represented by them (i.e. the correctness of the content of their theses). This implicit equating of form and content of thought of course remains a polemically useful false conclusion. In reality, logical arguing and the answering of questions referring to certain content in themselves do not have the slightest thing to do with each other, i.e. the same form of logical argumentation

⁴⁹ Kondylis adds the adjective "new" to his Greek translation (p. 167).

necessarily leads, when there are various content-related premises, to different content-related results. While the various rationalists exclusively tie "rationalism", in the sense of the logically faultless use of thought in general, to certain (even though, on each and every respective occasion, different) content, they close their minds to the fundamental insight that rationalism, should it have a firm and verifiable meaning, can only be form-related (i.e. formal), that is to say, it can only mean the logically impeccable use of argumentative means for the explication or the underpinning of a world-theoretical decision. However, arguing can take place only inside of an organised world and through subjects, which have at their disposal an identity, that is, arguing takes place on the existing basis of a taken decision, which at its core lies on the other side (i.e. beyond the range) of argumentative Reason, but at the same time, with the help of this latter argumentative Reason, the taken decision is meant to be rationalised, that is, objectivised and accordingly become (more) effective. As an answer to ultimate questions, the fundamental decision can only be articulated as a power claim, although the rationalistic binding of "Reason" as such to a certain content aims exactly at the proof of the fact that (each and every respective) fundamental decision does not constitute a power claim⁵⁰, but the natural outgrowth of "rationally" working thought. The independence of the fundamental decision from the logical means of thought used during the fundamental decision's own rationalisation (i.e. as explanation or justification) is revealed, however, in the simple fact that with the help of the same logical instruments and procedure several diverging from one another or even contrasting fundamental decisions can be rationalised (i.e. explained or justified). In the sense of its thus understood independence from the logical means of

⁵⁰ Kondylis's Greek translation (p. 169), instead of "a power claim", reads: "an arbitrary positioning of one's own accord".

thought in general, the fundamental decision of course remains irrational, even if it contains a solemn confession of faith in ratio⁵¹, in whose framework though the ratio appears as judge and the person judged in one and the same person. We want to name that which lies on the other side of (i.e. beyond) logical founding and argumentation, the mystical-irrational element, and distinguish it from the irrational element in the logical sense or from the logical-irrational element, which consists in the fundamental refusal to depict the mystical-irrational element through the use of logical means of thought in rationally processed form, that is, to rationalise (i.e. explain or justify) the said mystical-irrational element.

The distinction between the mystical-irrational element and the logical-irrational element gives us the key for the apprehension of the polemical character of the debate over rationalism. If it is certain that both rationalists as well as irrationalists must start from mystical-irrational positions, i.e. from the belief in ratio or from ratio's condemnation, then their squabble in reality has to do with certain content, with which certain power claims are connected, and are imposed against each and every respective other side, while the struggle for or against ratio remains a sham fight veiling the true facts of the matter. This not only shows the mystical-irrational character of the rationalistic belief in Reason, but also the inability of the irrationalists to (totally) disregard the use of Reason. The struggle of the irrationalists against rational discursive thought as supreme authority of appeal does not therefore turn against thought as such and in general, but against its (symbolic) connection with certain content, which (the said (symbolic) connection) in some concrete situations seems so self-evident and plausible that the only way to distance oneself from that content is the combating of ratio as such.

⁵¹ Reckoning; reasoning; reason.

However, the irrationalists' wish to remain within the framework of the mystical-irrational element and to avoid every rationalisation (i.e. as explanation or justification) of the same mystical-irrational element, can hardly be realised, since they are forced to announce and defend their position argumentatively. Without this announcing and defending their position argumentatively, they would be unknown and irrelevant, moreover the polemic against the foe labeled as rationalist would be infeasible and irrationalism itself would be just as impossible, in so far as it becomes conscious of its own self only in this polemic. Inside of a social life based on Reason, i.e. functioning with the help of ideas and norms, the renunciation of arguing would be tantamount to the renunciation of self-preservation. When, that is, the irrationalists turn against the "dead abstractions" and the suspicious argumentative arts of Reason, then they do not mean that which they themselves do (particularly as they often argue even more elaborately than the rationalists), but only that with which the foe supports its content-related theses, that is, power claims. And when the rationalists attack both the mystical-irrational element as well as the logical-irrational element, they do not take into account what their foe actually does in the area of the "intellect(-spirit)" (which, for that matter, seen purely in terms of form, hardly differs from their own thought structures), but only that with which the foe symbolically connects its content-related theses, that is, its power claims. If the squabble was not a matter of the, in practice, highly important polemic against symbols, then rationalists and irrationalists would have to see in one another only inimical (as to thought content) brothers (as to thought structure). Because, however, it is here a matter of polemics, hence both sides cannot help erring as regards their own perception of the other side on each and every respective occasion. Just as the rationalists erroneously do not want to accept as genuine rational

achievement the often very effective and strict use of arguments on the part of their foes, so too irrationalists are mistaken when they think that the rationalists are really in a position to make the existential source of thought (i.e. Reason) dry by means of abstractions, or when the irrationalists, in order to prevent this making the existential source of thinking dry through abstractions, (theoretically) separate thinking and existence from one another, without wanting to see that from the existential source of thinking only thinking can flow, otherwise this source would remain silent and would be forgotten. An existence living socially not only hardly knows any feelings or dreams which would be entirely alien to every approach towards rationalisation and self-justification, but also it is a matter of the fact that the mystical-irrational element, whose refreshing presence and invigorating effect the irrationalists want to safeguard, is in reality never lost, rather it is continually channeled into the rational element, in order to give the rational element a soul, if we can put it that way. The protests of the irrationalists are already for this reason pointless, just as the reproaches of the rationalists against the irrationalists' alleged inability to think⁵² are pure invention. The concrete questions, which a scientific way of looking at things has to pose during the investigation of concrete cases, are: what is called rational or irrational on each and every respective occasion? What and by whom is accepted or rejected as rational or irrational? With whose truth and power claim is whatever is described as rational or irrational connected?

The polemical texture of the "intellect(-spirit)" not only determines its self-understanding, but also the - of course interrelating with the "intellect(-spirit)" - framing of theories with a certain claim to generality,

⁵² Kondylis adds the adverb "rationally" to his Greek version (p. 172).

so that in the structure of these theories with a certain claim to generality, as this structure is formed as a result of "intellectual(-spiritual)" struggles, the said theories allow the existential matters of concern of the subjects of the decision in question to be seen. In general, it is true that every theoretical position comes into being as a counter-position. False is that which the foe asserts, whatever functions as truth in the foe's decision; one's own truth must act destructively upon the foe's decision and identity. So the existential question of enmity precedes the theoretical question of truth; the finding and formulation of theoretical truth is part of the confrontation with the foe - i.e. with anyone who outlines a world image, inside of which my identity, or ideas symbolically connected with my identity, are not sufficiently taken into account or even do not come into their own at all. The interweaving of the identity and truth question (in the roundabout way of the symbolic connection of certain ideas or theoretical principles with the endeavour at self-preservation of an existence living socially), explains why one's own truth must constitute the opposite of the foe's truth. One's own theoretical truth is obtained while the foe's truth is reversed or ruined; the decision in respect of the question of theoretical truth only constitutes the flip side of the decision in respect of the question of enmity. This fact must of course be hushed up as soon as the decisions are objectified. Since the objectification aims at hiding the interests-bound perspectivity of the decision⁵³ behind the universality and the, in terms of form, supra-personal character of theoretical statements, that is why the role of enmity during the shaping of theory is completely denied, especially since enmity, partiality and perspectivity in principle belong together; in accordance with the generally accepted feeling, someone, whom no enmity presses towards a

⁵³ Kondylis's Greek rendering (p. 174) is: "the perspectivity of the decision, which is connected to the existential interests of its [the perspectivity's] subject".

self-interested positioning, can only be "objective". Because of that, inside of the objectified decision, which emerges with a theoretical claim, whatever is in an existential respect primary must appear as the necessary result of "purely" theoretical or "purely" logical factors and reflections. However, what in theory constitutes a logically well-founded conclusion or concluding demand, in reality is the existential *primum movens*⁵⁴, namely the thinking wanting or the wanting thinking, which constructs and imbues theory as a whole; the logical sequence, as a rule, turns the existential sequence upside down, but only so that this existential sequence can be based on the entire "objective" authority of "pure" logic and theory. Consequently, the existentially pre-given power claim seems to take root not in the bare arbitrariness of existence, but in the order of things itself, as this order of things is supposedly portrayed in theory in a logically clarified way.

The deciphering of the logical-theoretical order, i.e. its reduction to the perspective of the subject of the decision allows us to explain and understand not only the logical-theoretical order's genesis, but over and above that, the function of its individual constituent elements. If the total thought (i.e. intellectual) structure as such contains and yields the reversal, described above, of (real) existential and (nominal) theoretical-logical priorities, then the building blocks, i.e. the individual contents and the particular theses of this same thought (i.e. intellectual) structure, represent well-aimed answers to questions, which have greater or lesser importance inside of the objectified decision(s) of the foe(s). The point of contention, which comes to the fore on each and every respective

⁵⁴ "Prime mover" or "unmoved mover" (in Aristotle: «ὃ οὐ κινούμενον κινεῖ» "that which is not moved, moves") as "primary cause" of all motion in the universe not moved itself by any prior action. See Chapter II, 2(b) of *Die Aufklärung im Rahmen des neuzeitlichen Rationalismus* for Kondylis's compelling description of, inter alia, Galilei's and Hobbes's reactions to Aristotle's theory of motion. Moreover, other references in *Power and Decision* to the history of ideas can be examined in fully referenced detail in *Die Aufklärung*....

occasion, constitutes the symbolic summary of the general existential and simultaneously theoretical-objectified contrasting; this point of contention not seldom gives, as well, the occasion for becoming conscious of this contrasting and therefore makes up the starting point of a systematically generalising effort at thought. While the existential contrasting enters consciousness in the roundabout way of a theoretical squabble, the impression (suited to and opportune for the self-understanding of the subject of a decision striving after objectification) comes into being that we are here dealing with a "pure" theoretical confrontation, which is above prosaic interests and prosaic power claims. This impression, however, is based on a fiction, as is revealed in the fact that the individual question in dispute, as soon as it becomes serious, forks into several questions in dispute, so that finally on both theoretically competing sides comprehensive thought constructs are built up, which culminate in ultimate⁵⁵ world-theoretical and practical-moral demands while ruling out the possibility of mediation. Only in existentially relevant theoretical polemics are individual ideas and concepts thought through to their ultimate logical conclusion, only in that respect does the concrete meaning of the same ideas and concepts come to light. This of course does not take place in the sense that the argumentative confrontation unearths "the" truth by means of the complementary dialectic of the disputants, but in the sense that the situation of compulsion, to which those mutually polemicising (i.e. the adversaries) are reduced all at once or gradually, brings about a charging, in the course of this, of the ideas and concepts being summoned with ultimate ratings (i.e. evaluations) and supreme teachings of duty (i.e. deontologies). In view of this situation of compulsion, therefore, the ideas and concepts at the centre of theoretical attention are interpreted more and more extensively, so that they finally

⁵⁵ The Greek text includes "and irreconcilable" (p. 176).

grow into organised world images or at least fuse with such world images. In the polemical situation of compulsion, ideas and concepts acquire world-theoretical content and symbolic force. That, which one may call the "structure of the concept (i.e. conceptual structure)" in contrast to the mere "concept", is nothing other than the condensed inner logic of a certain positioning interrelated with a decision. The structure of the concept (i.e. conceptual structure) summarises an argumentation already previously developed with polemical intent. This structure of the concept is inferred as a structure, when we apprehend each and every respective concept in question in its polemical function and observe it at work in the fulfilment of this polemical function. A concept always becomes specific in its contradistinction with a (its) counter-concept. For a mere concept to turn into a structure of the concept (i.e. conceptual structure), it must, in other words, start moving, in order to take shape in this movement, and to gain existentially relevant implications and connotations. The isolated, motionless concept, that is, the one which does not have any counter concept, also does not have any shape and any structure, its impartiality is at the same time its amorphousness.

The decisive presence and effect of the polemical element in the structuring of theoretical constructions appears most vividly in the not at all so seldom case, in which polemical consistency outstrips logical consistency. Then the endeavour at the all-round refuting of the foe's theory brings about contradictions inside of one's own position, which however, for the sake of the achievement of the polemical aim, are either overlooked or are accepted. The choice between polemical and logical consistency becomes unavoidable, when the foe's world-theoretical decision contains different aspects, ideologically in fact complementary, but logically difficult to reconcile with one another. Since these aspects

are supposed to equally underpin the foe's power claim, even though in a different respect on each and every respective occasion, these aspects must be attacked with equal openness and insistence; because the said aspects, however, seen in terms of logic, are not in harmony with one another, hence their simultaneous combating brings into being logically contradictory thought constructs: the arguments against one aspect of the inimical position cannot, namely, match those arguments which turn against the other aspect, precisely because of the logical discrepancy of both these aspects. On the side of the party fighting (i.e. exercising polemics), the same two-dimensional, logically precarious, but polemically coherent thought structure consequently comes into being as on the side of its foe - of course with inverted signs (i.e. symbolism). While someone, therefore, gives precedence to polemical consistency over logical consistency, he unintentionally also makes the foe's logical difficulties his own. Since, however, logical consistency and coherence as a rule are an advantage also in a polemical respect (because of that, all parties and subjects of the decision try hard to achieve logical consistency and coherence's at least outward preservation), so we must presume that their actual selling out has compelling reasons. Above all, the fact that the primacy of polemical consistency eventually entails the appropriation of the inimical thought structure with inverted signs (i.e. symbolism) (i.e. with inverted thought content), indicates - in the light of the already (pp. 84-85) discussed relation of thought structure and thought content with regard to the question of power - that here we are dealing with a primary connection between a logical contradiction and a power claim, a connection which is inevitable so long as the sides in question want to simultaneously make power claims. Had, that is, one side remained content with the uncovering of the logical contradiction of the other side,

then it would have to have renounced its own power claim in order to be content with the role of the observer.

The unavoidability of a logical contradiction at least in all comprehensive theories about man and the world becomes more understandable, if we remind ourselves of the foe's dual position inside of a world image (pp. 77-78): the foe must be annihilated at the ideal level of the world image, but at the same time the foe's final annihilation at the level of reality must be continuously postponed, if the domination of the representative and interpreter of the world image in question is not supposed to be superfluous. Correspondingly, a world-theoretical position, which appears with social power claims⁵⁶, must offer both an explanation of evil and of suffering (with reference to the foe's impact) as well as prospects of deliverance, and therefore swings to and fro between pessimism (continuous active presence of the foe or of evil) and optimism (certainty of the foe's future annihilation). When these logically disparate aspects are simultaneously combated, it must cause a coming into being of thought constructs which in fact show the same form-related (i.e. formal) structure, but their content is divided into two sides, which because of their opposite polemical direction, must logically contradict themselves; then polemical consistency outstrips logical consistency. Let us mention an example from the history of ideas. Inside of the theological perception of man, man as image and likeness of God constituted the inseparable flip side of man as perpetrator and at the same time victim of the Fall of Man (or original sin). If the image and likeness relation of man with God guaranteed the future deliverance of man, the reminder of his sinfulness served to justify the current necessity of disciplining under the supervision of the Church; disciplining was indeed supposed to result in

⁵⁶ Kondylis's Greek translation (p. 180) states: "claims to [of] social power".

view of the assumed sinfulness, but it could ultimately find its plausible and comforting justification only in the hope of deliverance. Man as image and likeness of God and man's sinfulness, although they were hardly logically compatible with each other, consequently complementarily contributed towards the underpinning of the Church's claims with regard to education and dominance. The profane New Times, and above all the atheistic wing of the Enlightenment, fought both aspects of the Christian anthropological schema: man as image and likeness of God was put aside through the (complete) inclusion of man in the law bindedness of Nature, while an optimistic assessment of the immanent moral capabilities of man took the place of sinfulness. Since both these aspects of Enlightenment anthropology turned against the two logically disparate sides of the theological understanding of man, they had to also come into conflict with each other; the perception, that man is a mere piece of nature, which in itself is meaningless, could not be harmonised in the long term with the talk of morals (i.e. ethics), which are empty⁵⁷ without the acceptance of the freedom of the will. Therefore, the polemical consistency of the anti-theological (normativistic) position outstripped its own logical coherence. Nonetheless, the logical contradiction on both sides was indispensable for the founding (and justification) of each and every respective power claim. Just as the thesis of man as image and likeness of God and the thesis of sinfulness equally propped up the claim to dominance of the Church, the Enlightenment pointed out the until then dominant "unreason (i.e. irrationality)" in order to prove the necessity of upbringing and consequently of its own leadership claim⁵⁸, while the acceptance of the educability of basically unspoilt (or uncorrupted) man was supposed to exactly prove the meaning

⁵⁷ Instead of "are empty" Kondylis uses the phrase "lose their essential [substantive] content" in his Greek translation (p. 181).

⁵⁸ In the Greek version (p. 182) the words "as paedagogue [educator]" are added.

and the definite success of the effort at man's upbringing. The logical ambivalence on both sides served, on the one hand, to make the factors which after all stood in the way of deliverance (whereby the task of the educator would be revalued and legitimised), clear, and on the other hand, to put the certainty or even the unavoidability of deliverance beyond doubt, something which likewise greatly emphasised the role of the leader. The reasons why polemical consistency must gain the upper hand over logical consistency indeed become evident in this example particularly distinctly, however the same game can be observed in countless variations during theoretical confrontations, whose immediate social relevance is very slight.

The historicity of the decision consists, as we said (p. 42), in its shaping in view of a concrete pre-given foe. If we transfer this historicity of the decision in view of a concrete pre-given foe to objectified decisions, which want to appear as systematic theories, this means that such thought constructs do not emerge from some confrontation "with the things themselves", which, as it were, are seen for the first time and through innocent eyes, but from the positive or negative reference to pre-existing views in respect of "things". Theories constitute not least of all reversals and modifications of other theories or novel combinations of their constituent elements; also, the discovery and evaluation of new empirical or intellectual data takes place with regard to the confrontation with competing theories and adapts itself to the needs of this confrontation. In this sense, theories from the outset do not move at the primary level of "things", but at the secondary level of the interpretation of "things" and the symbolic descriptions of the same "things", which already contain an interpretation. To the extent that the reconstruction of the history of the coming into being of theories succeeds, the leading role of the

confrontation of their originators with the views of other theoreticians, who formerly or simultaneously⁵⁹ were active in the same sector, is revealed. If this fundamental fact is often overlooked or is driven from consciousness, the reason for this does not merely lie in the fact that a complete reconstruction of a theoretician's ordinary or sophisticated everyday life and of all the stimulations of thought contained in this everyday life is hardly possible in retrospect (especially as the theoretician in question himself can describe the path to his own theory, as a rule, only in a simplified and necessarily logically standardised retrospective account), but also and above all it lies in the fact that the deep-rooted belief, connected with the self-understanding of the genus (i.e. mankind or the human species), in the autonomous creative force of the "intellect(-spirit)" spouts the notion of pioneering theoretical undertakings, which, as it were, arise ex nihilo and, more or less without mediation, enable a fresh way of looking at the world. Accordingly, the history of ideas⁶⁰ is structured just like every other decision; it basically constitutes a framework of orientation based on segregations, in which the "classics"⁶¹ serve as keystones or milestones. In reality however, these "classics" are first and foremost the most comprehensive inventories of their time, entirely irrespective of how much in an original manner the "classics" deal with and put in order the material the era in question puts at their disposal, and also irrespective of whether the "classics" so successfully work out certain unceasingly recurring thought structures founded paradigmatically because of power claims that reversion to the

⁵⁹ Rather than "simultaneously" Kondylis writes "approximately in the same era [epoch]" in his Greek version (p. 183).

⁶⁰ Kondylis adds "as we know it" to his Greek translation (p. 184).

⁶¹ For Kondylis, the "classics" are by no means restricted to the classics of ancient Greece and Rome but, in the western context, include thinkers belonging to the Enlightenment as well as thinkers living in periods before or after the Enlightenment, regardless of who is classified as an "Enlightenment thinker" (see e.g. Kondylis's written responses to questions put to him by Σπύρος Τσακνιάς in *Το αόρατο χρονολόγιο της σκέψης*, Εκδόσεις Νεφέλη, Αθήνα 1998).

"classic thinkers'" creations is only natural. However, the "classics" live and operate no less than all other "non-classic" theoreticians or philosophers at the secondary level of interpretations and of symbols.

A symbol now comes into being as the constant, vivid point of reference of an identity of a subject of a decision, and that is why it also constitutes a theory, in so far as it is a system of symbols it constitutes the epitome of the attempts at orientation and the positionings of a subject which has at its disposal a theoretically productive identity - or at least acquires such an identity through the creation of symbols. The subject, therefore, remains existentially connected to its theory, the evidence of its theory in its eyes amounts to the evidence of its own identity. If the identity of the theoretician AS theoretician consists in the sum of his positionings vis-à-vis the theoretical positions taken into account by him, then the intellectual(-spiritual) physiognomy of a certain era results from the sum of the more or less contemporary positionings of several theoreticians vis-à-vis the central questions and concepts, which in the concrete situation of the era in question provide the common battlefield for all foes and are fought over with regard to their interpretation, confirmation or rejection. In view of the fact that theories are shaped at the secondary level of symbols and of interpretations, theoretical debates constitute an ensemble of partly overlapping and partly diverging from one another positions, which for their part came into being through the processing, rearrangement or idiosyncratic connection of pre-given⁶² magnitudes (i.e. of those pre-given magnitudes, which, as we said, are at the centre of attention on each and every respective occasion and the fight over the interpretation of them is sparked off) for the purpose of the achievement of a certain effect. These pre-given magnitudes constitute the conceptual

⁶² Kondylis adds the word "theoretical" in the Greek version (p. 185).

axes of the debate and are handled in accordance with each and every respective fundamental decision, in relation to which structures are crystallised which are contrasted with other structures and with which they can compete. Since the pre-given fundamental magnitudes are limited numerically (otherwise they could not provide the meeting place of friend and foe), hence the number of their possible basic combinations - notwithstanding all the variety in individual cases - also remains limited; from that, the relative interrelation of thoughts and ideas comes into being, which entitles us to some extent to talk of the "intellectual(-spiritual)" appearance of a certain era in contrast to that of another era.

During this game of rearrangements and combinations it occurs that contrasting fundamental decisions are represented by theoretical outlines, which are similar in a form-related-structural respect and only differ in the signs (i.e. symbolism): what is "good" for one, remains "bad" for the other. Here we are dealing with a negative agreement of foes, which lets the irreconcilability of their fundamental decisions become evident all the more clearly. The total reversal of the inimical position - e.g. the substitution of monistic materialism with monistic spiritualism - or monism in general with dualism and vice versa - brings to light the heightened polemical fighting readiness and is also basically to be understood as a symbolic indication of such a heightened polemical fighting readiness. And yet it is the case that an already carried out reversal, for its part, is reversed as soon as considerable restructurings become noticeable in the field of the inimical theory. In accordance with their symbolic character, theories can interchange representatives and signs (i.e. symbolism) after every overturning or recasting of the original friend-foe-constellation. That is why the reflection theory based

assumption⁶³ is false, materialism or empiricism e.g. were always and everywhere connected with "progressive" social trends, idealism and intellectualism, on the other hand, with "reactionary" social trends; already the centuries-long alliance of empiricism and fideism or the formation of a conservative historicism and sociologism precisely in the fight against the, classified as abstract-intellectualistic, revolutionary Reason make clear the dubiousness of such a schema in the conception of the history of ideas - to say nothing of the recent rediscovery of idealistic, moralistic and other commonplaces on the part of revisionist Marxists looking for weapons against (Marxist) orthodoxy anywhere they can find them. The extent and frequency of theoretical reversals are therefore determined by the general principle that one must support the opposite of that for which the foe stands, irrespective of whether in this way one's own position on each and every respective occasion (drastically) changes as regards content. Very many theories at least refute other theories by transforming affirmative propositions simply into negative propositions. However, the incorporation of a mere negation in an existing, already organised and more or less multi-dimensional thought construct as a rule is not immediately noticed because the theoretical attention continues to be aimed at the network of arguments and counterarguments as such, whose formal-logical complexity is not at all affected by the affirmative or negative character of the statements contained in the said network. Consequently, the negation seems that it does not slip into an already formed system of ideas from the outside, but constitutes a necessary result of the system of ideas' own texture. The selection and at least fairly coherent organisation of the material, which plays some role in the theoretical confrontation in the case we are now discussing, has been

⁶³ Kondylis's Greek rendering is (p. 187): "the supporters of the theory that ideas constitute a reflection".

done in large or for the most part in advance through the foe's intellectual work - notwithstanding all the possible debt of this foe to other theoreticians. What ought to be refuted finds itself⁶⁴ in this way completed and tangible and constitutes the best conceivable starting point for the shaping of one's own theory. While someone upsets the foe's theory, he must follow with destructive intent the path mapped out argumentatively by the foe - however by arguing, after all, he simultaneously puts himself in a position to make his negation of the inimical theory out to be the ripe product of exactly this argumentation.

Still more frequent perhaps in theoretical polemics is the attempt for the empirical or logical data which the foe is in the habit of invoking, as well as the, interrelated with the empirical or logical data, interpretations, to be put in order in an essentially different - that is, governed by a different fundamental decision - framework, in order that the empirical and logical data invoked by the foe therefore not merely be neutralised, but be able to be used even against their own original representative and interpreter. This form of theoretical polemics thrives when the inimical position can neither be simply reversed nor be ignored with impunity. By means of the change of the thought framework along with the parallel inclusion of elements, which inside of different thought frameworks served different or also opposing world-theoretical positionings, two things are managed by one act, that both the foe's fundamental theoretical attempt is unhinged as well as vis-à-vis the foe an at least externally impartial and sober, that is, "objective" stance is taken. The precedence of the general framework of putting things in order vis-à-vis all the individual facts and interpretations in every theoretical outline becomes obvious when we contemplate the fact that even knowledge of "facts" in reality is

⁶⁴ The Greek translation reads "pre-exists" rather than "finds itself" (p. 188).

knowledge of relations; namely, no-one can know a "fact" without somehow or other correlating it positively or with another fact - and exactly this correlation takes place inside of a specific framework of putting things in order (we do not here want to continue the infertile squabble over whether this framework pre-exists in the form of categories or is formed a posteriori⁶⁵ and gradually). The realisation of the positivistic utopia, for legitimate and plausible generalisations to be established on the basis of the in advance well-known and discerned facts, founders already on the road towards the collection of the necessary facts. The cutting of the Gordian Knot, which provides access to the facts in general, is not indeed an indication of power, but precisely an indication of the finiteness of the human "intellect(-spirit)" rebelling against the world's overwhelming variety of form, nevertheless the cutting of the Gordian Knot is not only the "intellect(-spirit)'s" fate - but also its chance (i.e. way out or hope). The framework of putting things in order emerges from the cutting of the Gordian Knot, which enables the constituting of facts as ensemble of relations in general and beyond its constitutive function it also fulfils a function giving meaning; the place, which a fact occupies inside of this framework, namely constitutes its meaning. When, therefore, someone summons a new framework of putting things in order, in order to dispute the foe's purported meaning in respect of certain facts and in order to adopt another meaning in relation to these facts, then he does nothing more than to activate and to confirm the general way of functioning of the theoretical "intellect(-spirit)"⁶⁶ from the point of view of his own self-preservation needs. The putting in order of a fact in a broad thought framework means that this same fact appears

⁶⁵ From facts, particulars or effects to general principles or causes, relating to or involving inductive reasoning.

⁶⁶ Or, "the way with which the theoretical "intellect(-spirit)" functions generally" as Kondylis puts it in his Greek version (p. 190).

as a link in a causal chain or as a stage in a teleological or simply evolutive process, that is, it is connected with a comprehensive perception of the world or of human things. This perception indeed assigns to the individual fact its status (i.e. value and place), however this evaluation of the fact does not always and does not necessarily precede this perception, but the said perception can ensue precisely during the attempt to dispute the meaning which the foe was able to give to individual facts, which for specific reasons are perceived as particularly relevant for the confrontation in question. The size of the theoretical contrasting and its interweaving with the question of the existential decision is comprehended here precisely in and through the squabble over the meaning and the status of individual given facts, although this squabble itself can only come into being as a result of the, to start with, latent divergence from one another of the world-theoretical perspectives of the subjects in question. It remains a question of tactical opportuneness inside of each and every respective concrete situation as to how many of those facts, which found a place in the foe's framework of putting things in order, must be interpreted or classified anew. A changing of the framework of putting things in order must of course at least drive out a few facts, which were emphasised until then, or these facts are even allowed to sink into oblivion, nevertheless a theory can under certain circumstances generally be commended exactly because it can interpretively deal with and consequently incorporate most, even though in no case all, facts, which until recently were in the foe's intellectual(-spiritual) possession. The effort regarding this may therefore be understood as the underpinning and intensification of theoretical polemics. The continuous fluctuations in the relationship between the framework of putting things in order and the (individual) facts according to the polemical conjuncture constitute after all the characteristic

concomitants of the coming into being and fading of theories at the secondary level of symbols and of interpretations.

The range, wealth of aspects and the centres of gravity of the theoretical constructs are likewise to be explained on the basis of the concrete polemical considerations of the subject of each and every respective decision. In order to be able to withstand the argumentative competition with prospects of success, a theory must first of all be just as comprehensive as the foe's theory, it must, namely, (be able to) take a position in relation to all questions which play a part in the opposing theory, even if this position consists in an emphatic agnosticism. Since the aforementioned questions for the most part encompass or touch upon everything that in each and every concrete situation is classified as relevant, i.e. as worthy of knowledge and thought, so a theory, which contains statements about all of this, can calmly call itself sufficiently comprehensive or even all-embracing (at least as to the area (or sector) of knowledge in question) and consequently make use of the polemical advantages of the idea of the Whole (Entirety) (p. 80). The simultaneous, but as a rule, asymmetrical reference to several inimical theories must obviously increase the wealth of aspects of a theory and potentially lets the same theory become "classical" in the sense that it can serve as large-scale, even though by no means merely doxographical, inventory of the most different, former and contemporary theoretical perceptions. Nevertheless, every theory, if looked at from the outside or in retrospect, seems one-sided or asymmetrical, and the reason for that lies in the, as a matter of preference, concentration on those levels or questions, which attracted the theoretical attention in the concrete situation of the theory's formation. Precisely because it is not abstract-supertemporal, but a concrete existential matter amongst others, every theoretical activity is

not shared out simultaneously and evenly at all in themselves conceivable levels (conceivable with regard to what objectively exists)⁶⁷, but it unfolds only or mainly in that sector, which in view of the concrete foe at the concrete moment is regarded as particularly crucial or, otherwise stated, is particularly suitable for the constituting of the identity of the theorising subject (i.e. theoretician) inside of the community of all other similar subjects. Although the unavoidable expansion of polemics after the announcement of a power claim in theoretical guise gradually forces a theory towards all-roundedness, nevertheless, even the comprehensive theories are constructed from the viewpoint of the original main question in dispute. If this main question in dispute in part or totally loses, for certain reasons in the history of ideas, its significance, and interest in it weakens or does not apply, then the main question in dispute also ceases to give theoretical thought stimulations - and indeed entirely irrespective of whether the main question in dispute's logical possibilities in the meantime have been completely exhausted or, the with the main question in dispute interconnected, or in its area, formulated theses are "falsified" or not. Theoretical stimulations only come from what is considered as relevant, and something can only be relevant if it is spoken about and debated over. There are no topics which in themselves and originally would be theoretically fertile (or infertile), and because of that theoretical reflection also has not until now remained forever attached to some topic (several key words indeed continue to exist for a very long time, however in certain intervals they are filled with new content and are only retained because, in the meanwhile, they have acquired irreplaceable symbolic force), but new ambitiously striving subjects have to make their decisions and identities known (too) through the discovery and putting first of new

⁶⁷ The Greek translation (p. 193) is: "at all levels in themselves which the mind (i.e. intellect) could conceive [think of] if its exclusive concern was the objectively existent".

theoretical topics on each and every respective occasion. And conversely: if a position's representatives die out, then everything that had been accumulated against the position of the representatives who have died out in terms of wisdom and astuteness is forgotten all at once, even if it filled entire libraries: because all this did not apply to "the things", but to a foe and became totally worthless as soon as the foe was out of the way and no weapons were needed against him anymore.

The growing multiplicity of polemical considerations lets the complexity of a thought construct rise in step with that growing multiplicity of polemical considerations. It is to be presumed that some theoreticians would be content with an oracular axiomatic announcement of their own position, were they not under the pressure of taking into consideration inimical theories, in order to be able to hold their own in competition with the inimical theories. Competition forces a theoretician to enter into arguments already carried forward from the past and consequently to refine his own argumentation if possible. Every argument generates a counterargument, and a pyramid of arguments compels by force the construction of a pyramid of counterarguments. If a theory emerges with a general or even a universal claim, it must put aside all conceivable objections. Nothing attests to the fact more drastically that one argues always in view of a foe's counterposition and not, for instance, with an eye exclusively on "the things" than the fact that only when one can argumentatively get the better of all inimically inclined theoreticians, does one then believe that "the things" have been correctly apprehended. The continuous argumentative struggle of theoreticians against one another and the, in the course of this, ongoing refinement of arguments and logical instruments in general has as a consequence that the world image becomes constantly more rational, since its individual constituent

elements make up the object of highly detailed investigations and interpretations, which have to stand up to close inimical examination - in relation to which certainly this rationality does not at all need to mean the predominance of rationalism in the familiar sense: because "irrationalistic" theories also rationalise the world, as they must provide explanations and interpretations for individual phenomena and given facts, if they do not want to leave the field completely to the "rationalists". Now, to the extent that the complexity of theories increases, thought becomes entangled more and more deeply in the game of theoretical construction, so that in the end the impression comes into being that we are here dealing with a presuppositionless⁶⁸ self-activating motion, which leads to purely logical conclusions on the basis of a purely logical procedure - an impression, which is not in the least accidental, but is sustained by the wish for the objectification of the taken theoretical decision. Thought can, in other words, obtain the agreeable impression of its own logical independence because it gets into theory, as this theory, thanks to the preparatory work of friend and foe, has already achieved a certain degree of complexity and abstraction and, as it were, invites the subject concerned for the continuation of the relevant examination of problems at a still higher level of abstraction. What often marks the so-called "great thinkers" is their ability at, during all the epitomes of abstraction which they possibly attain⁶⁹, posing elementary questions (exactly also) elementarily, and they consequently make their abstractions' character as decisions clear, even if the decisions here must also be objectified. However, the great motley mass of theoreticians works inside of a fixed framework and ignores the decisions, upon which that framework is based, so that it can calmly devote itself to all kinds of

⁶⁸ Kondylis's Greek translation (p. 196) is: "without external presuppositions".

⁶⁹ The Greek translation (p. 197) reads: "as abstract as their thought might otherwise be".

argumentative games and therefore also have faith in the independence of (its own) logic. That is why such theoreticians imagine themselves to be superior to every decisionism - and indeed they have nothing to do with dealing with decisions in the sense that they never reached a point of posing ultimate questions and of putting themselves to the test of ultimate questions. Just as, in accordance with a nice well-known expression, the illusion of petty bourgeois in society consists in the assumption that they stand above all classes, so too the numerous petty bourgeois of the intellect(-spirit), keen on "pure logic", swing back and forth in a state of self-satisfied self-deception that they stand above every decision and every decisionism (i.e. theory of the decision).

Now even the most elaborate logical constructions yield a meaning only from a certain point of view and on the basis of certain content-related presuppositions, whereas these elaborate logical constructions silently go to waste without having any meaning, if they are incorporated in another theoretical framework. The general, often only tacitly presupposed, thought framework determines the meaning, the function and the rules of application of logical procedures - this thought framework in itself can, however, always be reduced to a few simple propositions, which sometimes are even banal, and only through their consequent logical explication are they promoted as profound truths. This confirms that logical complexity comes into being out of consideration for⁷⁰ counterarguments, whereas the theoretical fundamental decision can actually be restricted to its own announcement of itself - and the theoretical fundamental decision would even like that, because precisely the restriction of the theoretical fundamental decision to its own announcement of itself marks the sovereign stance of the incontestable

⁷⁰ Kondylis adds to his Greek translation (p. 198) the phrase: "the confuting of (possible)".

ruler in a sector, who has silenced all competition and may henceforth express himself by means of axioms. The more complex a society and the more autonomous and extensive the stratum of the producers of theory in the society, the more complicated the theories. In relatively simple and homogeneous social groups, in which the relations of dominance are more or less clear, antagonisms are kept within limits and accordingly consideration for counterarguments wanes, there theories take, especially the for social behaviour directly relevant theories, the form of general maxims or sayings. Even for the great majority of the members of complex societies, who experience their existential intensity as existential affiliation, theories remain usable and also conceivable only in such a form. Between the great majority of the members of such a society and the theorising minority (i.e. the minority of theoreticians) a chasm opens up, which can only be bridged to the extent that theories are reduced to intelligible and easy to remember commonplaces or generalities. Above all, philosophical theories, which move at a more or less high level of complexity and abstraction, as long as they are formulated or are refuted exclusively by members of the (philosophical) guild, are turned, as soon as they attain a broader effect (i.e. influence), into general religious, political or moral statements or orders, which are basically banal and can often be translated into the language of folk wisdom ("be good and honest"). This transformation is neither a coincidence nor an undeserved fate. Because those theories constitute from the outset a refinement and rationalisation (i.e. as explanation or justification) of common human notions of harmony, wishes and hopes, which, however, are frequently not immediately recognised as such behind the finely carved logical facades. The philosophical processing of these themes does not of course take place with regard to the profanum vulgus⁷¹, but out of consideration

⁷¹ Profane (impious, unholy, common) rabble (crowd, mob, herd).

for those who are in a position to assert claims at the level of theory; in this sense philosophical theories are a means for the waging of struggles amongst theoreticians (i.e. amongst people who make and satisfy their power claims principally through the framing of theories). By making this ascertainment, we do not necessarily allude to the common vulgar-sociological perception that philosophical theories in all their theoretical complications⁷² would serve the interests of a group or class and therefore reflect or propel the social struggle. Philosophical theories (as long as they have not been translated into corresponding commonplaces) do not (merely) serve the social war from the outside, but a war also takes places inside of "philosophy"; if we, namely, regard philosophers as a society in miniature, then we ascertain that they form groups and wage war on one another entirely in accordance with the friend-foe-relation, which equally applies to other societies of theoreticians. In this respect, philosophical and other theories do not have the slightest relevance outside of the circle of theoreticians. However, to the extent that philosophical or other theories attain such relevance, the theoretical nuances and oversubtleties, which came into being inside of a concrete situation of a much narrower circle, considerably or totally lose their importance, while the (re)translation of the formed theory into clear-cut statements, whereupon this theory can also symbolically refer to the sense of identity of non-theoreticians, is the decisive factor. Since now the identity of theoreticians is connected not least of all to the aforementioned nuances and oversubtleties, that is why theoreticians feel they are neglected and overlooked whenever the broad social exploitation or application of their theories is taken on by non-theoreticians. Particularly for philosophers, the tragicomical irony in their life and work consists in the fact that they must be betrayed by their Dionysus as soon as they have found him - that

⁷² The Greek version (p. 200) states: "internally complicated texture".

namely their theories can be realised only in a sense which as a rule contradicts their self-understanding; philosophers as such can only experience self-satisfactions or substitute satisfactions and the character of their preoccupations turns out accordingly. On the other hand, and in spite of all contemporary prophecies regarding the end of philosophy, which actually only mean a certain philosophical form and technique, philosophical theories will be produced and will be spread unceasingly, as the drive of self-preservation will take the ideational shape of belief in the meaning of life. This longevity, which, as we must repeat, is not exactly the one which the philosophers themselves would wish for (that is to say: for their own each and every respective) "philosophy", this longevity then is not merely able to be explained through the translatability of complicated philosophical theories into general, often banal statements, but also, the other way around, through the fact that the aforementioned theories originally are forms of processing, sublimations, and logical-argumentative refinements of exactly such statements for the purpose of the crushing of foes inside of the narrower circle of theoreticians. As we know (pp. 94-95), the generality of a question or statement also increases with the increase in the number of those who are competent in relation to this question or statement, and that is why the reduction of philosophies to generalities or commonplaces means a growing interest in them by the public, something which of course accompanies a displacement of theoreticians in the narrower sense and the popularisation and simultaneous worsening of the problem of interpretation.

Theoretical decisions are often objectified through recourse to epistemological and methodological reflections, in relation to which the proving is attempted of certain content-related positions as being the

logically necessary result of intellectual work, if only this proceeds "correctly". But now the correctness of the methodical procedure must be judged in accordance with the validity of the results - there are no other criteria anyway -, as was, incidentally, already at least indirectly recognised in the early New Times through the emphasising of the complementary character of induction and deduction. The actual necessity of the confirmation of the procedure of (gaining) knowledge through the content-related findings of the same procedure of (gaining) knowledge in itself indicates that all teachings of knowledge or of methods (i.e. theory of knowledge and methodology) have their content-related correlates, even presuppositions. Because it is obvious that a certain way of knowledge (i.e. cognitive method) can be consciously and purposefully applied only inside of a pre-given world, i.e. on the basis of an already taken decision and of an already formed identity, and because of that the way of knowledge (i.e. cognitive method) cannot help but verify the world image, out of which it came, if it does not want to cancel itself; even in the case in which it takes up the task of discovering new things, these new things must result from the original combination or the further researching of what is already known, and they are, consequently, anticipated at least in outline. For that reason also the new-times scientific teachings of methods (i.e. methodology), which understood themselves as *ars inveniendi*⁷³, were driven by a content-related assumption⁷⁴ - and turned, incidentally, directly against the conviction of ancient-Christian metaphysics in respect of the irrationality and consequently the ontological inferiority of the material world -, that is, they were driven by the assumption that nature is structured in a law-bound manner and

⁷³ Art of invention, associated with scientific procedure or *mathesis universalis* in ascertaining the truth through the use of mathematics in e.g. Descartes and Leibniz, and prior to the New Times, with discovery and argumentation e.g. in Cicero.

⁷⁴ The Greek translation phrases "a content-related assumption" thus: "an assumption referring to the content of knowledge".

constitutes a causal Whole, so that knowledge of a and b can logically guarantee progress to (the finding of) c. And beyond that, the decision for knowledge to proceed methodically and not otherwise is itself a part and expression of a certain world-theoretical positioning and only has a meaning from the perspective of this same positioning; it is not coincidental that the methodological ideal of the New Times was formed in the content-related struggle against the (content of the) theological-Aristotelian world image. In general, the so-called scientific method is nothing other and nothing more than the belated rationalised self-confirmation of positions with certain content or of conclusions of research practice. In other words: conclusions, which research practice comes to, for the most part, by chance and eidetically in its often instinctive efforts and its own dynamics, are made out to be the yield of the well-considered application of a method as soon as the researcher wants to give to his material and his interpretations a coherent and systematic, that is, theoretically powerful form. The invocation of method aims at justifying the content-related validity of the conclusions of research with reference to a superior and independent authority. Research actually takes methodical form only after it has in essence completed its work and wants to outline its self-understanding in a way worthy and in accordance with the presumed "purely" logical character of science. Accordingly, methodological debates have a not to be overlooked polemical value, namely they articulate in a symbolic way the world-theoretical confession of faith of the subject of the decision in question and let, already before the use of each and every respective propagated method, what the results of this use will be to shine through; for research in itself, however, these debates have a rather subordinate meaning which could be compared to the discussions over poetics for the writing of poetry. In the best case, teachings of methods (i.e. methodology) merely

describe that which actually goes on in research, namely they set out how (or rather: that) a selection is made with regard to the material, heuristic fictions (i.e. hypotheses) and abstractions come into being, intermediate links and transitions are constructed etc.. Nevertheless, it would be an error to think that the general formulation of such rules would essentially influence or even improve their concrete application. Because the decision as to whether each and every respective concrete case calls for the application of this and not that rule is within the discretion of the theoretician or the researcher, and there cannot be any method which can provide for all concrete cases and at the same time expressly connect all concrete cases' investigation with each and every respective suitable (for them) rule: such a method would coincide with a final universal knowledge. The distance between the general formulation and the concrete case by case application of methodical rules can be so great that the said distance, with reference to one and the same methodical rule, which however in its application to different concrete cases is interpreted differently, can come to content-related overall results diverging considerably from one another. The method remains, in other words, at any moment in need of interpretation - and exactly in relation to that it is seen that the appeal to the method and its objectivity, which eo ipso contains the claim to the monopoly of interpretation regarding this, constitutes a means to objectify power claims and consequently to intensify these power claims.⁷⁵

Finally, it should be noted that the history of the reception and history of the effect of "intellectual(-spiritual)" products to a great extent is determined by polemics⁷⁶. An eloquent indication of this is the key role which interpretation plays in the course of this, i.e. the concrete

⁷⁵ Kondylis adds "in the area of theory" to his Greek version (p. 206).

⁷⁶ Kondylis adds "and its needs" to his Greek version (p. 206).

interpreter as subject of the decision with certain power claims. Intellectual(-spiritual) figures from the past and above all the "classics" are reactivated in certain concrete situations in order to prop up today's views and intentions, that is, today's power claims, with the authority of what once has been (i.e. is done and accomplished) and as from now of what is rather expurgated from the dust of everyday life. If the "classics" are particularly advisable for this end (goal), then the reason for this does not lie merely in the possible higher quality of their work, which is always a welcome ally, but also and above all, in their work's many-sidedness and ambiguity, which results from its character as inventory (list) (p. 132). The various sides of a (classical) work can be simultaneously claimed by several competing subjects, in order to be, in this way, split up anew into various aspects. The need for classical works originates from their suitability as crystallisation and reference points, against which those involved in "intellectual(-spiritual)" life take a position and therefore partly show and partly concretise their own identity, which helps in the formation of parties, and through that, in the clear shaping of "intellectual(-spiritual)" life in general. In respect of all of that, the original matter of concern of the "classics", whose investigation, incidentally, now becomes a question of interpretation, does not necessarily play an important role. In fact, it occurs that the theoretical interests of the classic philosopher's (theorist's) overall positioning more or less sink into oblivion during these theoretical interests' displacement which has ensued in the meantime, and only certain parts of his thinking are used as building materials in the thought structures of the (very) different architectural texture. The presupposition of the topicality of an anterior thinker is therefore here the dismemberment of the totality of thought conceived by him, the isolation

of whatever is usable in the new sense⁷⁷ and consequently the (actual) indifference towards his own overall positioning - an indifference, which is often passed off as the discovery of the "true" meaning of his work. These and similar phenomena are on the front of the "intellect(-spirit)", as we must repeat, the function and effect of polemics, the expression and the confirmation of power claims, which are inseparable from the essence of the "intellect(-spirit)".

⁷⁷ "In accordance with the new needs" is Kondylis's translation into Greek (p. 207).

IV. VALUE FREEDOM AND THE QUESTION OF OUGHT

A consistent value-free way of looking at things (or value-free consideration) only becomes possible, if one takes the thesis seriously in all its logical implications, that world and man in themselves are meaningless and valueless. In view of the culturally necessitated interweaving of the drive of self-preservation and belief in the meaning of life, a socially significant spreading of a value-free way of looking at things is hardly therefore to be expected; very many declarations in favour of value freedom do not in the least imply any will for the (logically) consistent implementation of its approach, but are to be understood as liberal polemics against "totalitarian", in the name of certain values, apparent monopolies on truth (pp. 7-8) - and conversely (vice versa): the reminder by Marxists-Leninists of the historical bindedness, the class bindedness or the partisanship of values, constitutes a polemical act against the liberal universalism of mankind and "bourgeois objectivism", and is forgotten when it comes to the setting up of the Marxists-Leninists' own value scale; also then, there is indeed open talk of partisanship, however this partisanship is supposed to at the same time express the objective course of history, which enables the objectification of the party position, and therefore the plausible sceptical conclusions are in actual fact put aside by the partisanship theory⁷⁸. Contrary to these and similar attempts, consistent value-free consideration must programmatically and a limine abstain from every direct or indirect polemics, and indeed for two reasons: because it simply

⁷⁸ Kondylis's Greek translation (p. 210) reads: "the theory of the partisanship of values".

does not know and accept any values, for whose imposition and defence it would take the field, and furthermore because consistent value-free consideration, in view of the aforementioned interweaving of the drive of self-preservation and belief in the meaning of life, logically sees the unavoidability of the social predominance of normativism (with whatever signs (i.e. symbolism)), and consequently its own practical insignificance. It is of course self-evident that only someone can look at things and proceed⁷⁹ in a value-free manner who does not feel existentially bound to any values, nevertheless this fundamental presupposition is not sufficient. Apart from the assumption of the objective meaninglessness and valuelessness of world and man, the, by no means contradictory readiness for insight in relation to this assumption that the problem of meaning and values stands at the centre of all questions of power and power claims, that is, of all life, since life's biopsychic factors were translated inside of culture into⁸⁰ ideational magnitudes, is also required. The question of values is the question of life par excellence, even though values do not have objective existence: therein lies the insurmountable and rich in consequences paradox of human, socially organised life. While the consistent value-free way of looking at things comprehends this paradox and thereby (theoretically) overcomes this paradox, this consistent value-free consideration renounces, as long as it wants to remain true to itself, active participation in social life, which is based exactly on this paradox. The question of values only then becomes indeed a question of life, when good and evil, truth and falsehood are sharply distinguished from one another and are perceived as real, tangible magnitudes, which provide a conceptual basis for the overall assessment of human affairs. In contrast to that, consistent value-free consideration cannot accept the concepts of

⁷⁹ The Greek translation states (p. 210): "methodically proceed with his thought".

⁸⁰ Kondylis adds to the Greek version (p. 211): "the language of".

good and evil, true and false in the sense of how they are used in moralistic-normativistic language. Because these concepts appear only **INSIDE** of human life in its existential concreteness, and that is why they cannot constitute benchmarks for judgement of this life in its totality, that is, **FROM THE OUTSIDE**. The value-free way of looking at things must therefore be interrelated with an analysis of human life, which could show how such concepts are formed and how they function concretely. The perception that value concepts are weapons in the service of humans, whose endeavour at self-preservation must automatically flow into the struggle for the extension of power, could play into the hands of the objection of normativists that here after all value judgements are uttered, since man is declared to be evil, aggressive etc.. However, such descriptions can be regarded as pejorative judgements or even as insults in respect of man only from a normativistic point of view; in the framework of a value-free way of looking at things these notions of evil, being aggressive etc. are merely terms, which are used conventionally, if at all, and do not have the familiar normativistic connotations. Incidentally, such descriptions amount to pejorative value judgements only if one mentions "malice", "aggressivity" etc. with the express or implicit intention to contrast them with "goodness", "peaceableness" etc.. A consistent value-free consideration, however, must keep far away from such contradistinctions, since for it the supposedly opposing situations (or facts of the case), which are connoted by the for example aforementioned terms⁸¹, are merely different expressions and outcomes, complementary aspects and sides of the same life functions.

With these latter observations we have already touched upon the central question: on what perception of human affairs is value-free consideration

⁸¹ Rather than "the for example aforementioned terms", the Greek version (p. 212) provides: "the aforementioned and interrelated terms".

based? Which human reality does value-free consideration think about when it asserts the transience and relativity of all values (and anti-values), and from that draws the conclusion of the valuelessness and meaninglessness of world and man, while at the same time ascertains that values must be fought over as if these values were objectively given magnitudes? The answer to that was given in the previous chapters of this book partly explicitly and partly allusively. It can be summarised as follows: ultimate, not further reducible, reality consists of existences, individuals or groups, which struggle for their self-preservation and, together with that of necessity also for the extension of their power, that is why they meet as friends or foes and change friends or foes according to the needs of the striving after self-preservation and striving after power⁸². This sounds and is banal, if however, it is thought through without the smuggling in of heterogeneous thoughts to its ultimate conclusion, then it means the - of course only logical - elimination of all normativism. But first of all, this fundamental ontological proposition should not be understood somehow or other biologically or in the sense of a contradistinction between "intellect(-spirit)" and life or existence. Human existence, as we know it, cannot be separated through abstraction from the "intellect(-spirit)" in all its ("intuitive" as well as "logical") forms without ceasing to be human (pp. 101-102). The expression "ultimate reality", which we just used in reference to fighting existences, is not, therefore, to be understood in the sense of traditional substance metaphysics. We only mean that all other perceptions and concepts of reality are the work of that ultimate reality, that is, that ideas and values are functions, in fact the ways of functioning of the social existence fighting for self-preservation and the extension of power, and that this

⁸² Kondylis includes "[striving after] the extension of their power" rather than just "striving after power" in the Greek text (p. 213).

origin of ideas and values shapes their character; on the other hand however, ideas and values do not constitute mere accidental occurrences of social human existence or substance, which could also be absent from social human existence or substance. Consequently, the value-free way of looking at things does not at all misjudge the existence and effect of ideas and values in the sense of specific, existential functions, but it cannot at the same time take the content of the same ideas and values at face value and by simply believing everything they supposedly represent. If for the idealistic stance in respect of the intellect(-spirit), an essential feature is to take ideas at face value, then value-free consideration is definitely inclined in an anti-idealistic manner. In accordance with the aforementioned fundamental ontological proposition, value-free consideration understands ideas and values first and foremost as symbols and weapons, and hence does away with every idealism. Values as functions, and values as contents, are two different things, and the fact that the "intellect(-spirit)" produces values is just as little proof of the correspondence of the texture of the "intellect(-spirit)" with the texture of values of its character as the fact of the production of ideas by man proves his pure spirituality⁸³. Fighting existences, which have "intellect(-spirit)" at their disposal, that is, they live socially and produce values, must now secure with their struggle their self-preservation not merely physically, but also "intellectually(-spiritually)". That is why in foro externo⁸⁴ the "intellect(-spirit)" propagates generally valid values, which are deployed as weapons, whereas in foro interno⁸⁵ the "intellect(-spirit)" takes care of the creation of rationalisations (as explanations) and moral justifications, which increase the fighting power of the existence; even

⁸³ Instead of "pure spirituality", Kondylis opts for "purely intellectual(-spiritual) existence as being" in the Greek text (p. 215).

⁸⁴ In the external court; in public, public(al)ly; outwardly.

⁸⁵ In the internal court; in private, privately; inwardly.

"pure" theory, as sovereign conceptual processing and ideational subjugation of each and every respective relevant part of what objectively exists, aims at heightening the sense of power of the existence identifying itself with theoretical activity.

Consistent value-free consideration stands or falls by this perception of the "ultimate reality" of existences fighting for self-preservation, and in the course of this struggle these existences group themselves in accordance with the friend-foe-relation, and they also stand or fall by the perception of the function of the "intellect(-spirit)" and of values.

Because consistent value-free consideration can only be value-free if it does not believe in the objectivity of values, if it, that is, comprehends these same values as concomitants and instruments of the struggle for self-preservation, which concern only him who struggles just for his own, most often merely ideational⁸⁶, self-preservation. Consistent value-free consideration cannot then be restricted to abstention from⁸⁷ value judgements, even though this constitutes one of its essential features. On the other hand however, no-one is entitled to (and is also capable of) such an abstention from value judgements, if he believes there is really something to defend, something interrelated with the (at least in actual fact accepted) meaning of life. To accept the existence of objective values and to still want to disregard these objective values in scientific analyses, would actually be in violation of objectivity itself. If objective values were accepted, then objectivity can only consist in the consideration of human affairs in accordance with those values' practical postulates. In that respect, (the consistent) moralists and normativists are right, and they are also right when they have recourse to content-related arguments

⁸⁶ Rather than "most often merely ideational self-preservation", Kondylis's Greek text (p. 216) reads: "self-preservation, most times simply and only at the level of ideas".

⁸⁷ Kondylis adds "the formulation of" to the Greek text (p. 216).

against every consistent value-free consideration; namely, they understand in their own way that value freedom as scientific procedure is directly or indirectly asserted in relation to a certain perception of human affairs. What the moralists and normativists, in the process, call into question above all is the reduction of the real (i.e. reality) to existences, which fight for self-preservation and the extension of their power. Since for moralists existences fighting for self-preservation and the extension of power is not merely a fact, but "evil", they contrast "good" to it and they refer to phenomena like peace, morals (i.e. ethics) and love, which are supposed to suggest another picture of human reality. Now interpretation stands against interpretation, and the question is which of the two can more likely take into account (and explain) the entirety of known phenomena. However, no normativism can satisfactorily explain the existence and current power in the world of that which it calls "evil", without it canceling itself. Because if "evil" is firmly rooted inside the human element (i.e. man), so that its power is rendered understandable in the simplest way possible, then normativism's promises, if taken at face value, have no prospect of realisation; if again "evil" does not belong by definition and from the outset to the human element (i.e. man), then it must be explained from where "evil" comes and how such a strange element could and can gain so much influence over this same human element; if this is put down to coincidence or to the evil intent of a minority, yet again things are not less bad for normativism, since coincidences or exceptional malice can neither be foreseen nor can they be prevented with certainty - quite apart from the fact that the very own (self-existent and self-activating) strength of the normative element must really be slight if even accidental factors have been able to foil the normative element's realisation on a broad basis throughout the whole of history until now. Because normativism indeed combats "evil" nominally,

it does not, however, actually explain "evil", but it can interpret it only in a roundabout way⁸⁸, that is why normativism resorts to the distinction between "Being (or Is or To Be)" and "Appearance" (pp. 78-79), and normativism therefore remains of necessity basically dualistic - exactly because of its inability to derive "evil" from "good" without logical, historical or psychological leaps. For the value-free way of looking at things there are no such problems and difficulties at all. A "Being (or Is or To Be)" in contrast to an "Appearance" does not therefore need to be postulated here because the concept of "good" - which, in accordance with normativism, is made noticeable *hic et nunc* only partly or in reflections, but whose final victory in contrast to the temporary, that is surface predominance of "evil", is expected or at least desired and striven for - is simply missing. If, on the other hand, "good" and "evil" as concept and counter concept are put aside and are absorbed in the broad spectrum of the various ways of functioning of existence, then it is no longer a necessity to explain the existence of one with regard to the presence of the other. Nevertheless, if we want to linger just for a moment at the familiar dualistic terminology of normativism, we can notice that it is theoretically simpler and easier to descriptively follow the genesis of "good" and of morals (i.e. ethics) by means of the internalisation of the commands of social self-preservation, and indeed of the (fundamental) principle of social disciplining (p. 67), than to do the opposite, i.e. to genetically get "evil" or in any event "non-evil" out of "good". It must be emphasised that normativism, even if for tactical reasons does not want to be tied to the anthropological question, nonetheless is obliged at least implicitly to presuppose that man is in a position, if not actively, at any rate, potentially, to act "well" and "rationally", that is, he is not by nature

⁸⁸ Kondylis's Greek version (p. 218) includes the phrase: "so that it [normativism] essentially cancels [deletes, strikes out] its ["evil's"] presence".

"evil" or at least can bring and keep under control the "evil" aspect of his nature. Exactly because normativism is logically forced into making this anthropological assumption, it confronts the aforementioned theoretical task, to satisfactorily derive "evil" from "good" or in any event from "non-evil", in which⁸⁹ the essence or at least the potentially stronger part of man must consist.

The theoretical superiority of value-free consideration and of descriptive decisionism in general vis-à-vis all the variants (kinds of games) of normativism is also revealed in a second, no less important point. Against the value freedom and the perception of reality⁹⁰ of descriptive decisionism, the normativists can, namely, summon all sorts of arguments, in relation to which a contrasting referring to the content of thought is articulated, that is, it is asserted that value freedom and descriptive decisionism are false as to their content or their explicit assertions. Now however, the normativists are hardly in a position to think up against the value-free decisionistic position, arguments, which, if they are looked at exclusively as form-related (i.e. formal) structures, would not constitute a vivid example of exactly that thought style which, in accordance with the ascertainments of descriptive decisionism, must underlie every normativistic theoretical approach. Since value-free descriptive decisionism does not concern itself with thought content, but principally with thought structures, that is, value-free descriptive decisionism is a morphology of thought in its interweaving with the endeavour at self-preservation and with polemics, hence it cannot be refuted through content-related counterarguments, but only through the indication of the actually existing thought structures, which do not show those features which descriptive decisionism regards as constitutive for

⁸⁹ Kondylis adds ", as it [normativism] believes," to the Greek text (pp. 219-220).

⁹⁰ Instead of "reality" Kondylis opts for "'ultimate reality'" in the Greek version (p. 220).

every normativistic thought. Arguments, which as regards content indeed turn against descriptive decisionism, at the same time however show the aforementioned by this descriptive decisionism, structural features (i.e. they came out of an act or process of the decision or they presuppose an act or process of the decision, they claim the monopoly of interpretation for themselves, they aggressively handle values etc.), they indeed constitute subjective refutations of descriptive decisionism, but at the same time unintentional objective confirmations of descriptive decisionism's theses. In accordance with the regular discrepancy between the objective function and the self-understanding of normativistic thought (p. 117), the validity, therefore, of descriptive decisionism is proved precisely by the objections of its foes, if only these objections are considered as thought structures and not as thought content. Descriptive decisionism obtains this theoretically advantageous position since it itself persists in the investigation of thought structures, it does not look at thought content as a foe, that is, it also does not itself offer any content (except for the description of thought structures in their anthropological rootedness) for acceptance on the part of others: yet precisely the difference in thought content brings enmity into consciousness and intensifies enmity, while this difference in thought content also gives enmity its arguments as weapons (pp. 84-85). That is why value-free consideration can claim for itself a theoretical status of exception (i.e. privileged position), because it (at least for its part) does not have foes - because value-free consideration, in other words, renounces active participation in life. Value-free consideration is, of course, argumentatively nourished by the contrasting with normativism and in this respect it comes into being, like every other position too, as a counterposition; however value-free consideration wants to only describe normativism, it does not strive for normativism's annihilation, but on the

contrary, stresses that only by means of normativistic positionings can socially organised life take itself seriously and preserve itself. One cannot reasonably ask for more from a way of looking at things in order to call a position impartial and above every enmity.

Insofar as value-free descriptive decisionism differentiates itself from militant decisionism through the complete eradication of all normative components, it must expect still more intense enmity and still sharper polemics than militant decisionism. If already the rejection of militant decisionism is due to angst (or fear) in the face of scepticism and relativism, which seem to leave all socially indispensable values in the hands of the arbitrariness of subjective decisions (p. 66), then descriptive decisionism must be classified as downright nihilism. This description corresponds to the actual situation of things, if by nihilism, the thesis of the objective valuelessness and meaninglessness of world and man is exclusively understood. However, normativists are not interested in sober descriptions, but rather in polemics, and because of that they portray the aforementioned thesis thus, as if it implies the command to destroy world and man. Because, that is, the normativists themselves on account of their existential stance are not in a position to think of something that would have no normative implications or presuppositions, that is why they must believe that the thesis of the objective valuelessness and meaninglessness of world and man contains the command for their destruction; the mixing of Is (i.e. Being or To Be) and Ought, which, for the normativistic thought style in the most different dosages and combinations, is decisive, is therefore transferred to value-free descriptive decisionism with inverted signs (i.e. symbolism) and with polemical intent, so that value-free descriptive decisionism is made out to be the irrational monstrous invention of blind instincts, and the forever vigilant drive of self-

preservation of man, especially of the "educated", is mobilised against value-free descriptive decisionism's positions. In reality, however, value-free descriptive decisionism cannot plead for the destruction of world and man, without it violating its own theoretical principles, i.e. without it itself turning into (negative) normativism. Because the Ought of destruction remains an Ought like any other Ought, and whoever stands up for the Ought of destruction must presume the anti-value of what is to be destroyed, that is, he must make value judgements. From the normativists' convenient point of view, it of course seems as though the thesis of the value-lessness of man and world is tantamount to man and world's consideration as anti-values - and this again because the normativists themselves connect something positive with the value concept, so that the value concept's putting aside must entail an active negation. However, from the value-free point of view "valueless" is not the counter concept of "value" (this counter concept of value is called "anti-value"), but something that has neither value or anti-value, and behaves neutrally towards every value thought and value judgement. If, therefore, world and man in accordance with value-free consideration cannot be looked at either as anti-values or as values, then also in reference to world and man, an Ought of destruction applies just as little as a command of preservation or high praise. Normativists could of course object that whoever denies value in respect of world and man, smoothes the way theoretically for their destruction, even if he does not preach the same destruction openly. However, apart from that, destruction is not theoretically covered by the denying of value, but only the attributing of anti-value, and moreover, a historical answer to the aforementioned objection is obvious: because the greatest destructions and sufferings were not caused in history until now by relativists, scepticists or nihilists, but by moralists and normativists - and indeed in

the name of the "only" true religion, the "only" correct politics or the "only" race suitable for rule (i.e. domination). Each and every other respective normativistic party of course disputes that these are the "true" values, and also does not shy away from stamping the foe - erroneously, but polemically effectively - as nihilist, which however does not change the aforementioned historical facts in the slightest.

Most and the most influential arguments, which are presented against consistent value-free consideration are of the type: if such a theory held water, then there would not be any truth and any morals (i.e. ethics). Here it once more becomes obvious that and how the foes of consistent value freedom confirm consistent value freedom while they want to refute it. In such arguments are most distinctly seen, namely, the dependence of "philosophical" statements on ratings (i.e. evaluations), which are connected with decisions bringing about identity⁹¹. Put another way, arguments of such a type mean: since there ought to be truth and morals (i.e. ethics), that is why value-free descriptive decisionism must be false or it is not permitted to be right. Because very many normativists in their endeavour to present their own wishes and ought-ideas (i.e. deontologies) in the most highly objective form, shy away from such a formulation of their argument, thus they make their argument simpler, i.e. they reverse the above sequence of propositions and say: since truth and morals (i.e. ethics) actually exist, that is why value-free descriptive decisionism is false. All these statements or arguments certainly are tangible tautologies, but what matters here is not their logical analysis. Rather, it interests us to underline in such statements the implicit mixing of Is (i.e. Being or To Be) and Ought. In itself this mixing constitutes a secularised disguising of the age-old animistic and religious belief that whatever happens in the

⁹¹ The Greek translation (pp. 225-226) reads: "which provide to each and every respective subject its identity".

world is somehow or other connected with hopes of deliverance or at any rate with the destinies of man. Since normativists would like to objectify their Ought, in which their power claims in the form of generally binding commands are hiding, they combat, as a rule, the fundamental separation of Is (i.e. Being or To Be) and Ought, which gives the (plausible) impression that the Ought has nothing to do with objective given facts, but only with subjective stances. For the normativists' automatic mechanism of thought it is admittedly the case that the express and consistent separation of Is (i.e. Being or To Be) and Ought (Should) more or less expresses the wish to put obstacles in the way of the realisation of the Ought. The animistic prehistory of the mixing of Is (i.e. Being or To Be) and Ought is discernible here in the angst (or fear) in the face of the magical power of the word and of the curse: whoever expresses something ominous, wishes it as well, and contributes eo ipso to its carrying out. The defence of the close relation between Is (i.e. Being or To Be) and Ought, as sober and epistemologically well-founded as it may sometimes sound, has always stood under the aegis of this primitive thought style. This ascertainment is not here meant disparagingly; rather, one should conclude from it that exactly in this ascertainment the vitality of that defence, namely its perpetual reference to the constants of the human drive of self-preservation, which inside of⁹² culture strive for an objective, that is, taking root in life itself, meaning of life, is seen.

While value-free consideration is restricted to the description of Is (i.e. Being or To Be) and radically breaks away from the Ought and, above all, normative statements, it loses every chance of gaining for itself adherents to a socially significant extent. It does not have any kind of advice to give and it cannot help any subject with regard to the vitally

⁹² Kondylis adds: "the conditions [circumstances] of" to the Greek translation (p. 227).

necessary rationalisation (i.e. as explanation or justification) of its own power claims. But above all, this needs to be done. One can go without everything - and not least of all the scientific knowledge of Is (i.e. Being or To Be) -, if one only knows with certainty about how one should behave and orientate oneself in life, if one, that is, believes one is in possession of a recipe for coping with the difficulties of the struggle for existence. Ought-ideas (i.e. deontologies) constitute exactly such a recipe and that is why they are most of all sought in theories. Most people behave naturally and sensibly when the first question they pose in relation to a theory is what does it have to offer them that is concrete and useful in practice; and when the theoreticians themselves do not fully accept the criterion of "vulgar practiciness", then they merely defend their consciousness of identity and of status (i.e. exalted position), which is connected with complicated logical constructions, although on the other hand, out of consideration for their social power claims, they must extol the beneficial practical consequences of their theories. Only he who makes power claims hastens to recommend the obeying of an Ought. Every such recommendation implies that the person recommending offers his services simultaneously as knower of good and evil and hence as worthy leader of people. Since value-free descriptive decisionism does not make power claims, it does not have anything to suggest to people in respect of the shaping of their life. Where power claims are lacking, not merely abstaining from practical recommendations must follow, but also total silence; even the public announcement of value-free decisionistic theory constitutes an inconsistency, which is due to literary vanity or to the pleasure one tastes in provoking others. The only possible value-free, namely, piece of advice not comprising a power claim on the part of the adviser - i.e. "do what you want, there are, anyway, no objective yardsticks, which can bindingly forbid or command some act" - would be

both empty in terms of content and consequently useless, as well as unenforceable in practice at the social level. If everyone namely acted in accordance with his desire and as a result social cohesion and self-preservation were in danger, then those social defence mechanisms would automatically have to be set in motion, which exactly keep action in accordance with one's desire within noticeable limits. Every collective attempt at complying with the aforementioned piece of advice, would therefore lead to the confirmation of those social institutions which stand in the way of compliance with this piece of advice. The piece of advice again: "do, what you want, but only within what is socially permitted or even, at any rate, on pain of what is possible", is simply meaningless because people do precisely this anyway. The social defence mechanisms guarantee of course more or less successfully THAT the (fundamental) principle of social disciplining is (nominally) respected, but they cannot determine in terms of content and in advance WHAT is regarded as such respect on each and every different occasion. The content of the decision, which defines the Ought in greater detail and prescribes for the subject its behaviour, is therefore left to, despite all the effect of society's defence mechanisms, the taste of this same subject - in relation to which here "taste" does not mean imponderable notions (and likings), but the deeper inclinations and expectations of an existence and, thus understood, a very serious matter contrary to common language (speech or linguistic) usage. Even the decision to not follow (directly pressing towards something) taste⁹³, is a question of ("higher (or finer)") taste. The difference lies only in whether someone is willing to make out of one's own taste a more or less comprehensive theory of world and man, or not. It is highly advisable to do this, if one wants to participate in the game of the social power struggle. Without the addition of high-flown words - only someone who

⁹³ Kondylis's Greek translation reads: "to not succumb to the immediate [direct] temptation of taste".

stands observing on the fringes of society can come to terms with the fact that the evaluations and giving of meanings, the moral ought-ideas (i.e. deontologies) and must-ideas (i.e. teachings or study of duty) ultimately constitute a question of taste. Those, however, who are interested, with whatever (as a rule, moral) signs (i.e. symbolism), in objectifying their own decision and in passing their own decision off as socially binding, cannot and are not allowed to recognise this same fact. Whether because of that they become happier than others, is also a question of taste, which may here remain an open question. At any rate, this claim, of those objectifying their own decision and passing it off as socially binding, causes, sooner or later, competition and therefore its own formulation or even satisfaction only contributes to perpetuate the state of affairs (i.e. situation) which, exactly through that objectification and passing off as socially binding of the decision, the said claim was supposed to have abolished in the long term. There is, therefore, no final solution and no happiness not in danger. Whoever believes in the existence of final solutions, has angst (or fear) with regard to (losing) the certainty of happiness not in danger.

That is the "ultimate reality", as value-free descriptive decisionism apprehends it. Almost all people would without doubt not like to live in "such a world" - although they in fact do live in "such a world". The aversion to such a world must indeed be very lively and sincere, otherwise humans would not have made up any ethics and any metaphysics in order to embellish their world and to make it habitable - and over and above that, in order to reconcile themselves to some extent with death, which is not actually a future occurrence, but a part of everyday life and does not merely consist in biological demise, but also in the pitiless finiteness and relativity of all human undertakings. However,

the repugnance, as well, for a meaningless and valueless world remains a question of taste. In my theoretically curious eyes, this world, precisely in its present state, is highly interesting. I find it exciting and thrilling that on this planet, matter or energy, however one wants to put it, itself came by consciousness of itself, that there are beings which in their striving for the extension of power, produce the "intellect(-spirit)" in the whole variety of its forms and its astonishing games, and mutually exterminate one another, according to preference, with the help of articles of faith and theories. Yet, such observations and thoughts can give cause for speculative pleasures only to parasitical connoisseurs⁹⁴. All the same, they do not constitute, in any case, compelling arguments against suicide out of boredom.

⁹⁴ The Greek version (p. 232) contains the phrase "to connoisseurs and those who know [knowers] on the fringes [of society]" rather than "to parasitical connoisseurs").

Texts used for this translation:

Kondylis, P. *Macht und Entscheidung. Die Herausbildung der Weltbilder und die Wertfrage*, Klett-Cotta, Stuttgart, 1984.

Kondylis, P. "Macht und Entscheidung. Die Herausbildung der Weltbilder und die Wertfrage", pp. 21-128 in P. Kondylis, *Machtfragen. Ausgewählte Beiträge zu Politik und Gesellschaft*, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt, 2006.

Κονδύλης, Π. *Ισχύς και Απόφαση. Η διαμόρφωση των κοσμοεικόνων και το πρόβλημα των αξιών*, Στιγμή, Αθήνα, 1991.

Where there was a discrepancy (no matter how small) between the German texts, the 1984 text was preferred. Notwithstanding that the English translation is from the German text, Kondylis's own Greek version proved very useful in producing the English translation since the author's own preferences in translating German terms guided much of the approach to translating from German into English, whilst of course always keeping in mind the differences between, and respective textures of, the three languages, and the history of conveying German sociological and philosophical terms in English.

All the footnotes are the translator's and as footnotes have nothing to do with Kondylis himself.