### Nº021

# Cornelius Castoriadis

Introduction / Einführung: Nikos Papastergiadis



#### Introduction

# Nikos Papastergiadis

Notes without Notebooks: Freehand Cornelius Castoriadis

Cornelius Castoriadis never had a notebook. He wrote on the paper that was at hand. Whether it was the back of Red Cross ration tickets, the blank section of a conference schedule, or the reverse side of old documents from his workplaces such as the OECD and the Hôpital Henri-Rousselle, like a keen-eyed magpie he worked on the paper that was nearby. He sketched out his thoughts in a manner that combined an acerbic and polemical wit with an unflagging commitment to the ideals of freedom. It reveals a style that includes an alarming sense of political urgency, a fastidious care for semantic details, and an encyclopedic sweep in historical vision. These pages, collected from his archive, are now also like visual timepieces for a belated "notebook." They have been assembled as a montage of his engagement with philosophy, economics, politics, mathematics, and include a draft of a publication in which he outlines his seminal theory of the imagination.

Castoriadis was born in Constantinople in 1922. In 1941, he joined the Communist Party of Greece. Within a year, he decided to split, and for his trenchant criticisms of all authoritarian and bureaucratic ideologies he found himself on both fascist and Communist death lists. Throughout his life, he remained a critic of Soviet Communism and all forms of totalitarianism. With the aid of a scholarship offered by the French Institute of Athens, he fled to Paris in 1945. By 1948, along with Claude Lefort, he founded the left-wing radical group Socialisme ou Barbarie (Socialism or Barbarism). This group included, among others, Jean-François Lyotard. It developed strong links with postcolonial revolutionaries like C. L. R. James, took a principled stance in support of the Algerian struggles for liberation, and influenced many workers' movements throughout Europe. Daniel Cohn-Bendit was one of the many to cite the influence of Castoriadis' early revolutionary writings on the student uprisings of May '68. During this period, Castoriadis worked as an economist for the OECD, but given his status as an immigrant, he wrote under various pseudonyms. It was not until 1970 that he gained French citizenship and wrote under his own name. By 1973, he had commenced work as a psychoanalyst, and seven years later he joined the Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales. Throughout his life, Castoriadis was an admirer of aesthetic innovations and a lover of jazz. Octavio Paz and Milan Kundera were among the circle of his artistic friends. He died in 1997 in Paris.

At the core of Castoriadis' thinking were three main concepts: the imaginary, creation, and autonomy. These concepts are deeply interrelated and refer to the broad range of means by which a society develops symbolic forms and institutional structures to articulate its own identity. Castoriadis always stressed that social structures in general are not simply the product of prevailing economic forces or determined by fixed political frameworks, but rather that they are always conditional on the imaginary. The imaginary is neither a natural nor a rational configuration, but is the outcome of the people's identification with a specific social structure and their collective capacity to create their own institutions. Hence imagination, as Castoriadis reminds us in the above-mentioned draft reproduced in this notebook, is not simply a subjective state. It is also the collective capacity of the people to define their own rules and create their own social structures. Through these concepts of the imaginary and creation we also arrive at the crux of his term *autonomy*. It is through creation that being is given form, otherwise existence is an "abyss, chaos, groundless." For Castoriadis, creation is neither the reconfiguration of existing elements nor the assemblage that results from external pressures. Creativity is the process through which a paradigm of being is distinguished from the multitude of forces that exert influence on it. Castoriadis stressed that creation emerged in the world ex nihilo. Thus his theory of creation is different from other versions that put the emphasis either on mimesis (the expression of things in a given form) or discovery (the recognition of something that is already there but not quite noticed) or even synthesis (the novel reutilization of known entities). For Castoriadis, creation, whether it produces the Parthenon or Auschwitz, is always embedded in a specific historical context. However, the boldness of his theory also hinges on his examination of the radical and mysterious form by which creation produces newness. Creation is therefore not just the product of its time, for it also comes out of a void and asserts itself as the new and necessary form for living. His favorite example was the eruption of democracy in ancient Athens.

Returning from his archive in Paris, I found myself asking the question, is he a man or the emergency department of a revolutionary university? Castoriadis worked on so many fronts simultaneously, he was at home in five languages, he could switch between economic and mathematical models, and he didn't simply apply philosophical or psychoanalytic theories. He was a genuine free radical!

Nikos Papastergiadis (b. 1962) is Professor of Cultural Studies and Media & Communications at the University of Melbourne.

Without the support and permission of the Castoriadis estate, this publication would not have been possible. The author would like to express special thanks to Zoé Castoriadis and Myrto Gondicas for their transcription and translation of these texts.

#### Einführung

## Nikos Papastergiadis

Notizen ohne Notizbücher: Der freihändige Denker Cornelius Castoriadis

Cornelius Castoriadis besaß nie ein Notizbuch. Er schrieb auf dem Papier, das gerade zur Hand war. Mit dem scharfen Blick einer Elster nahm er alles, was sich anbot, seien es die Rückseiten von Lebensmittelkarten des Roten Kreuzes, die Leerzeilen in einem Tagungsprogramm oder die Rückseiten alter Dokumente von seinen Arbeitsplätzen, wie der OECD und dem Hôpital Henri-Rousselle. Castoriadis skizzierte seine Gedanken auf eine Weise, die einen präzisen und polemischen Verstand mit einem unermüdlichen Einsatz für die Ideale der Freiheit verband. Sein Stil zeichnet sich durch einen aufrüttelnden Sinn für politische Dringlichkeit, eine penible Sorgfalt in semantischen Details und den enzyklopädischen Horizont seines historischen Weitblicks aus. Die hier versammelten, seinem Archiv entnommenen Seiten erscheinen nun als visuelle Zeitdokumente in einem nachträglichen »Notizbuch«. Sie fügen sich zu einer Montage seiner Beschäftigung mit Philosophie, Wirtschaftswissenschaften, Politik, Mathematik und Psychoanalyse und beinhalten den Entwurf für eine Publikation, in der er seine einflussreiche Theorie der Imagination skizziert.

Castoriadis wurde 1922 in Konstantinopel geboren. 1941 wurde er Mitglied der Kommunistischen Partei Griechenlands. Innerhalb eines Jahres beschloss er auszutreten und fand sich wegen seiner harschen Kritik aller autoritären und bürokratischen Ideologien ebenso auf faschistischen wie auf kommunistischen Todeslisten wieder. Sein Leben lang blieb er ein Kritiker des sowjetischen Kommunismus und aller Formen von Totalitarismus. Mithilfe eines Stipendiums, das ihm vom Französischen Institut in Athen angeboten wurde, flüchtete er 1945 nach Paris. Zusammen mit Claude Lefort gründete er 1948 die linksradikale Gruppe Socialisme ou Barbarie (Sozialismus oder Barbarei), der neben anderen auch Jean-François Lyotard angehörte. Sie entwickelte enge Kontakte zu postkolonialen Revolutionären wie C. L. R. James, nahm eine konsequente Haltung zugunsten des Befreiungskampfs in Algerien ein und beeinflusste zahlreiche Arbeiterbewegungen in ganz Europa. Daniel Cohn-Bendit ist einer von vielen, die auf den Einfluss von Castoriadis' frühen revolutionären Schriften auf die Studentenunruhen des Mai '68 hingewiesen haben. Damals arbeitete Castoriadis als Wirtschaftswissenschaftler für die OECD, doch aufgrund seines Status als Immigrant schrieb er unter verschiedenen Pseudonymen. Erst 1970 erlangte er die französische Staatsbürgerschaft und

veröffentlichte von da an unter eigenem Namen. Er begann 1973 als Psychoanalytiker zu arbeiten und lehrte ab 1980 an der École des hautes études en sciences sociales. Castoriadis war sein Leben lang ein Bewunderer ästhetischer Neuerungen und Jazzliebhaber. Octavio Paz und Milan Kundera gehörten zum Kreis seiner Künstlerfreunde. Er starb 1997 in Paris.

Im Mittelpunkt von Castoriadis' Denken stehen drei wichtige Begriffe: das Imaginäre, Kreation und Autonomie. Diese Begriffe sind eng miteinander verknüpft und verweisen auf das breite Spektrum von Bedeutungen, durch die eine Gesellschaft symbolische Formen und institutionelle Strukturen entwickelt, um ihre Identität zum Ausdruck zu bringen. Castoriadis hat immer betont, dass gesellschaftliche Strukturen im Allgemeinen nicht einfach das Produkt der herrschenden ökonomischen Kräfte sind oder von festgelegten politischen Rahmenbedingungen determiniert werden, sondern stets vom Imaginären abhängen.

Das Imaginäre ist weder ein natürliches noch ein rationales Gebilde, sondern das Resultat der Identifikation von Menschen mit einer bestimmten Gesellschaftsstruktur und ihrer kollektiven Fähigkeit, eigene Institutionen zu schaffen. Daher ist die Imagination, wie Castoriadis uns im oben erwähnten Entwurf, der in diesem Notizbuch abgedruckt ist, in Erinnerung ruft, nicht einfach ein subjektiver Zustand. Sie ist zugleich die kollektive Fähigkeit von Menschen, sich selbst Regeln zu setzen und eigene soziale Strukturen hervorzubringen. Durch diese Konzepte des Imaginären und der Kreation kommen wir auch zur Kernfrage seines Begriffs »Autonomie«. Durch den Schaffensprozess erhält das Sein eine Form, andernfalls ist die Existenz ein »Abgrund, Chaos, bodenlos«. Für Castoriadis ist Kreation weder eine Umgestaltung bereits bestehender Elemente noch eine Montage, die durch äußeren Druck entsteht. Kreation ist der Prozess, durch den sich eine Seinsform von den unzähligen Kräften unterscheidet, die sie beeinflussen. Castoriadis hat betont, dass Kreation in der Welt ex nihilo erschien. Daher unterscheidet sich seine Theorie der Kreation von anderen Versionen, die die Mimesis (den Ausdruck von Dingen in einer gegebenen Form), die Entdeckung (das Erkennen von etwas, das schon vorhanden ist, aber nicht vollständig wahrgenommen wird) oder gar die Synthese (die neuartige Verwendung bereits bekannter Dinge) betonen. Für Castoriadis ist Kreation, ob diese nun den Parthenon oder Auschwitz hervorbringt, immer in einen spezifischen historischen Kontext eingebettet. Die Kühnheit dieser Theorie beruht auch auf seiner Untersuchung der radikalen und mysteriösen Form, durch die Kreation Neues schafft. Eine Kreation ist daher nicht schlichtweg ein Produkt ihrer Zeit, sondern kommt zugleich aus einer Leere und behauptet sich als neue und notwendige Lebensform. Sein bevorzugtes Beispiel hierfür war der Durchbruch der Demokratie im antiken Athen.

Als ich aus seinem Archiv in Paris zurückkehrte, stellte sich mir die Frage: Ist er ein Mensch oder die Notfallstation einer revolutionären Universität? Castoriadis arbeitete an zahlreichen Fronten gleichzeitig, sprach fünf Sprachen, konnte zwischen ökonomischen und mathematischen Modellen hin und her wechseln und wendete nicht einfach philosophische oder psychoanalytische Theorien an. Er war ein echter freier Radikaler!

Nikos Papastergiadis (geb. 1962) ist Professor für Kulturwissenschaften und Medien & Kommunikation an der Universität von Melbourne.

Diese Veröffentlichung wäre ohne die Unterstützung und Genehmigung des Castoriadis-Nachlasses nicht möglich gewesen. Der Verfasser möchte insbesondere Zoé Castoriadis und Myrto Gondicas für ihre Transkription und Übersetzung dieser Texte danken.

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ORGANISATION DE COOPERATION ET DE DEVELOPPEMENT ECONOMIQUES

Diffusion Restrainte

Faris, le 13 Décembre 1966

SGD(66)49

Barème 2

Direction Exécutive

#### NOTE DE SERVICE

#### Objet - Tickets de supercarburant exonéré

Il est rappelé que les bons de supercarburant exonéré délivrés au cours de l'année 1966 (couleur jaune-vert) cesseront d'être valables le 31 décembre 1966.

Les bons inutilisés à cette date ne pourront pas être échangés. La valeur des bons remis à la Division des Services Généraux (bureau 511, annexe Franqueville), avant le 31 décembre 1966, sera créditée aux intéressés. Au-delà de cette date, les bons ne pourront pas être repris et devront être considérés comme perdus.

ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT Restricted

Paris, 13th December, 1966

SGD(66)49

Executive Directorate

Scale 2

#### CIRCULAR

#### Subject - Petrol vouchers

The petrol vouchers (yellowish-green) issued during 1966 expire on 31st December, 1966.

Unused vouchers cannot be exchanged. Their cost will be refunded provided they are handed into the General Services Division (Room 511, Annex Franqueville) not later than 31st December, 1966. Vouchers cannot be accepted after that and must be regarded as lost.

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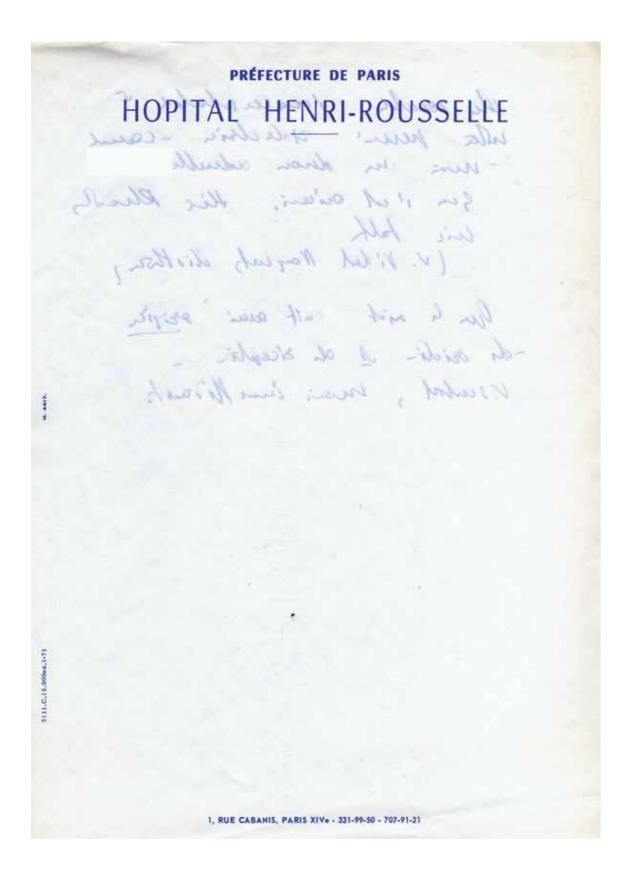
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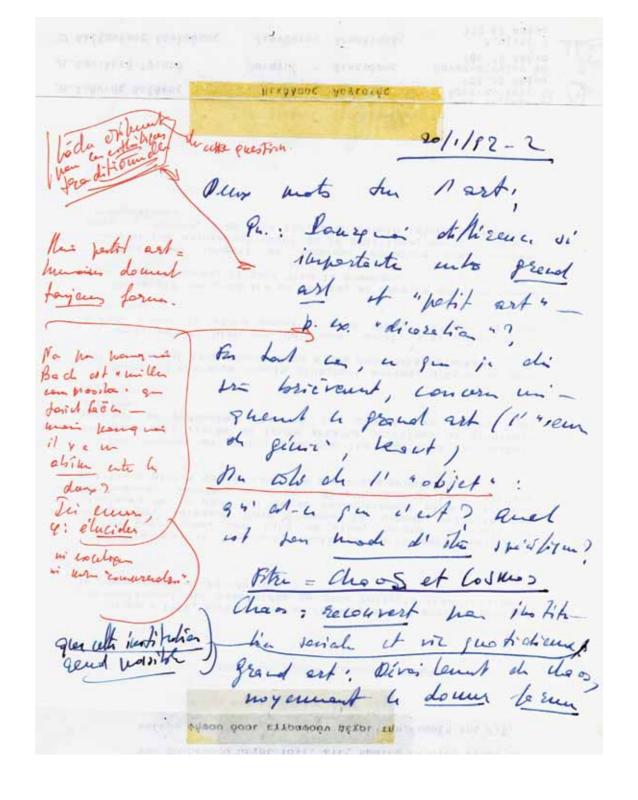
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# English Transcription / Englische Transkription

#### Page 6: Greek National Library Reader's Cards

[[At the age of eighteen, Castoriadis read Kant and commentaries on his writings]]

#### NATIONAL LIBRARY

Author's name	Kant, Im.	Cohen, Herm.	Vaihinger, H.
Book title	Kritik d reinen	Kants Theorie	Commentar zu
	Vernunft	der Erfahrung	Kants Kritik d.r.V
Reader's name	Κ. Καστοριάδης		
Date	18/7/1940		

#### Page 7: The Bureaucratic Barbarism

[[titles for a plan of publications dealing with this subject, circa 1948]]

The Bureaucratic Barbarism

Vol. I Socialism or Barbarism

Vol. II History of the USSR 1917-1947.

Vol. III The Bureaucratic Economy.

Vol. IV The Bureaucratic Society.

1. The Social Structure.

- 2. The State
- 2. The State.
- 3. The "Culture."

4. The Historical Signification.

Vol. V The Soviet Glacis.

Vol. VI Worldwide Stalinism

Vol. VII The Fight against Emerging Barbarism.

Vol. VIII The Revolutionary Program.

Vol. IX History of the Russian Question.

#### Page 8: Red-Cross Ration Tickets (recto)

Name of grocer Name of the indigent

#### Page 9: Phenomenology of the Proletarian Conscience (recto)

[[Plan for a publication developing this subject]]

Phenomenology of the Proletarian Conscience.

- What are the circumstances for the necessary return to the history of the workers movement. What are the possibilities for differentiating the proletarians from slaves, feudal peasants, or craftsmen.
- 2. What kind of workers' movement history is necessary. Critique:
  - a) Of external history
  - b) Of "exemplary" history. The search of signification
- Orientation of the problem, the question concerns the political capacities of the proletariat. Questions posed at first sight. Attitude toward those questions
- 4. General presupposition
- 5. "What is to be done?"
- 6. Treason and errors—Crisis of the revolutionary leadership
- 7. "Elemental drive"
- 8. The notion of experience
- 9. Signification of phases

Phenomenology of the Proletarian Conscience.

I. The per se of proletariat, or proletariat as an economic category.

The proletariat is first of all exploitation material.

Persistence of this determination.

Sense of economics as reduction to the per se.

Specification of the proletariat.

- II. The contradictions of the economic per se and the conscience of exploitation.
- Abstraction of this first determination.
- The internal contradiction of the proletarian exploitation.

Universal character of this contradiction.

Permanent historical signification of this contradiction.

#### Page 10: Phenomenology of the Proletarian Conscience (verso)

[[OECD document, 1947]]

#### Page 11: Math Applied to Economy

Value, interval, distance, semi-norm, norm, measure, capacity

Values K corps: if v:K  $\rightarrow$  /R+, with

. . .

K is a valuated corps, v is an absolute value

It follows immediately from the axioms that

[The definition seems to be also applied to a wide class of rings. The nonintegrated rings must be excluded because of V2. We can consider, anyway, an application. As to the question of commutativity, it is also present in the case of  $\underbrace{corps}_{,} e.g.$ ,  $\underbrace{if}_{,}\ldots$  and this poses a question since  $\underbrace{V(x)}_{,}$  has been defined in [R+, and must necessarily have  $\ldots$ ]

#### Page 12: Notes on Radio News Broadcasting, end of May 1968

[[Notes taken while listening to the news broadcasts on the radio.
Agreements that spelled the end of the mobilization]]

#### 25/5/68

ORTF, 22h00 [[French State radio station]]

Classification of the vind<ications> adopted by the prime minister—quite close to the one proposed by CGT [[main left-wing union]]

- 1. Smig (minimum salary)
- 2. Working hours
- 3. Employment guar.<antee>
- 4. Union rights
- Ordinances
- 6. Tax system)

The hurry to conclude the agreement shows the eagerness of all org.<anizations> and of the gov.<ernment> to plug, to fill in, the open gap.

Europe 22h30 [[private radio station]] (journalist: Philippe Bauchard) "Terrified by the speed with which they arrived in a few minutes to a decision that in the past would have taken days, weeks, or months" (one should say years!)

#### Page 13: Letter to Jacques Lacan in Ancient Greek

[[C. C. thanks J. L. for sending him his book *Ecrits* (1966). The dedication by Lacan in this book expresses the same kind of humor.]]

Cornelius Castoriadis, Athenian, to Jacques Lacan, Parisian and Trismegistus, Good day.

In your writing, you surpassed THE SAYING BY HERACLITUS: "YOUWOULD NOT FIND OUT THE BOUNDARIES OF SOUL, EVEN BY TRAVELING ALONG EVERY PATH: SO DEEP A MEASURE DOES IT HAVE," proving in fact an experience of boundaries, and equating the logos of profoundness with the profoundness of logos. Therefore I give thanks to you, also for sending your book, and above all for the sake of our common science; and this I rejoice in proclaiming.

Written in Paris, in the second year of the 685th Olympiad, at the beginning of winter.

#### Page 14: Letter to Jacques Lacan in Ancient Greek (verso, OECD)

[[OECD Circular, Subject: Petrol vouchers]]

#### Page 15: The Imaginary Element, p. 1

[[1974 notes for *The Imaginary Institution of Society*, 1975, which he was preparing during that period, written on headed writing paper of the Henri-Rousselle hospital, where he was volunteering as a psychotherapist/psychoanalyst]]

Ch. IV: Imagination in the philos.<ophical> tr<adition> One should say that:

Roughly speaking and in the best case, the inherited philosophy has sometimes dealt with imagination—considered as a "subjective faculty"—but in fact not at all with the imaginary as such and with its ontological status (see, nevertheless, Sartre, and perhaps Bachelard)—i.e., that this status is the status of a "subjective product." Now for us here what matters is

- to clarify the mode of being of the imaginary, as irreducible to anything
- to face without false pretenses the (enigmatic) question of a creation whose origin is not attributable to the "subject," not even to the "collectivity of subjects"

#### Page 16: The Imaginary Element, p. 2

understood as a collectio ex universitate

All "realistic/psychological" reduction of imaginary soc.<ial> hist.<orical> creation is hampered, at first and tritlely, by the fact that it presupposes what it claims to produce. Deduce from that = the collectivity as a collect.<ion> of social individuals within the institution and its content. But also—which is another way to say <the> same thing—as far as an "individual invention" of language, for instance, is a contradiction in terms. But in addition: The thesis here is that this creation is like a "field effect" (Example: invention of religion, see Part I: transf.<ormation> of the personal desire into a social-historical event means not only "condition" but active conjunction of <an> infinity of other factors.</a>

#### Page 17: The Imaginary Element, p. 3

This seems unacceptable to our—causal—reductionist way of thinking, but we have to admit that it is so. Hic Rhodus, hic salta (see Vidal-Naquet, Clisthenes)

The fact that the subject is <u>origin</u>—in creation—<u>and</u> in reception too—is essential, but not sufficient

### Page 18: The Imaginary Element, p. 4 (verso, Hôpital Henri-Rousselle-headed paper)

#### Page 19: The Imaginary Element

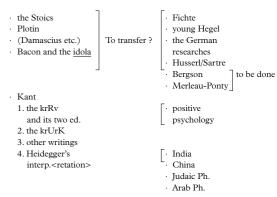
[[Publication plan, 1980, unfinished announced project]]

31/5/80-1

The imaginary element

The philosophical inherit<ance>

- It begins with Aristotle, because he is the first who thematized clearly:
   the general ontological frame
- →the difference of political thought (→Chios, VII–VIII 80)
- Φύσις of πόλις? φύσει δίκαιον?
- Φύσις of αρετή?
- (Cf. V. E. J. P. etc.)
- →∏εφί ψυχής, ΙΙΙ
- $\cdot$  pre-determination of sensoriality
- · the second imagination
- · the νούς
- · the first imagination



· Interpretation of the philosophical position

#### Page 20: On Psychoanalysis, p. 1

Psychoanalysis/Sociology

The etiology of neuroses (+ psychoses) established by Freud is valid, in a first approximation, for all patriarchical family societies. (One could say: for other type of families → another neurosis typology. [More precisely, we have to distinguish in Freud the type of etiology and processes such as traumas, repression etc., which are valid independently from any social or family structure, and the content of this etiology, obviously related to our society, + gene<rally> to the patriarchal type of family.—there we have to insert the discussion of whether the Oedipus complex has a universal content.]

But precisely, as we will see, the other types don't seem to produce mass neuroses/psychoses as witnessed in contemporary society. Problem: why does  $\psi$  <psychoanalysis> appear around 1900 (Traumdeutung)? Answer: two processes—"scientific" ideas having their own develop<ment> (Charcot, Bleuler, etc.)—social development

#### Page 21: On Psychoanalysis, p. 2

undoubtedly connected with puritanism/victorianism and neuroses proliferation.—(intimate, although "magic," connection of the two processes: only a society able to produce the scientific development of XIXth cent.-\(\cup \text{ury} > \cond \text{doubt} at the same time produce, to a growing degree, the neurotic wave. Still more true today—science at the same time symptom, effect and cause <of> \cdot \text{disadaptation} <of> \cdot \text{the individual} and collapse of valued behavior types). (Cf. "language" in L\(\cup \text{ui-Strauss.})\) If we think prophylaxy from neuroses, the main conclusion of Freudism is of a social kind: Reich. The social and family structures have to be modified as far as possible and become non-pathogenous. But which are those structures? Is it the patriarchal family? But it has been existing for 3 millennia—and even if documents are missing, it is probable that neur/psychosis were much rarer (and more violent: hysteria about witches, mere psychoses—geniuses etc.—crusades,

#### Page 22: On Psychoanalysis, p. 3

heresies etc.). So we must connect both the proliferation of neuroses and the appearance of  $\psi$ /analysis with recent phenomena (1 century) of social nature. The essential point here seems to be the main finding of American culturalists: every culture contains its dominant individual, which is a "neurotic" individual. But the structure of this neurosis "fits well" in structure of the society, it has a functional adequation to this society, whereas the contemporary neurosis has not.

#### Pages 23-39: On Art

#### Page 23

1. Question cowardly avoided by traditional aesthetics 2. But small art = humans always give form 3. Not why Bach is a "better composer" than Saint-Saëns—but why there is an abyss between those two? Here again \$\phi\$
 lucidate, neither explain nor "understand" Two words on art;

Qu.<estion>:Why is there such an important difference between high art and "minor art"—e.g., "decoration"? Anyway what I say very briefly exclusively concerns high art ("the work of genius," Kant).

From the "object's" side: what is it? Which is its specific mode of being? Being = Chaos and cosmos

Chaos: covered up by social institution and everyday life made possible by this institution. Great art: unveiling of chaos, by means of

#### Page 24

But evid.<ently> the origin is Plato, since the Demiurg of Timacus himself "imitates" the eternal Paradigm.

and creation of a cosmos via this form-giving (there is a partial and misunderstood echo of this in the Mimesis theory—Aristotle, and others. The only mimesis is this giving form to chaos. As being is vis formandi, so is art. But it is not a particular mimesis. Architecture does not imitate anything. Music creates a cosmos. "Imitative" music is the lowest form of music. Beethoven, Pastoral: Mehr Ausdruck der Empfindung als Malerei.

20/1/92-2a

#### Page 25

Does music "imitate" affects?

No—at the same time it gives them a form that does not exist elsewhere and it even makes them be. Who had ever "had" or "experienced" the affects aroused by hearing The Art of Fugue?

#### Page 26

20/1/92-2c

One is mistaken if one considers as "mimesis" the "use" of "matter," Literature: the difference between a "description" and great literature is that great literature (as great painting, etc.):

- a. enables us to see what "was there" without anybody seeing it, and b. makes what was not there be:
- The Castle (Kafka), The place where birds are born (Max Ernst); the Parthenon, Chartres or Reims or Cologne, Angkor Wat—or dance

End 22/1/92

#### Page 27

20/1/92-2

it is as if you said that having sex with someone you love is a "percept," 20/1/92–2c Saying that this form is necessarily "perceptible" (percept, says Deleuze) is a stupidity. The Castle, In Search of Lost Time are "percepts" only "in an instrumental way" or "accidentally": there are written signs,

#### Page 28

20/1/92-3

and there is reference to "perceived or experienced things" that are  $\underline{\omega}\sigma\pi\varrho$  " $\delta\lambda\eta$ —as a "material." Certainly this material cannot be "separated" from the form—but this is true for almost everything, (Aristotle, find quotation (Kantorowicz? . . . "it is absurd to wonder whether the knife is or is not iron"). But what makes of that—for literature, as for music or painting—a work of art is form (and the appropriation of the "material" to this form) As suitable incarnation of a specific signification. This signification is what the work of art "speaks" about.

#### Page 29

20/1/92-4

The <u>form</u> of the work of art is the only element that allows to present a <u>content of signification</u>—whose mode of being is <u>sui generis</u>, and for that reason it is <u>absolutely untranslatable</u> into another form, (Sometimes, extraordinary conjunctions <u>Gretchen am Spinnrade</u> etc.) Schubert, Schumann, H. Wolf or Wagner's text for <u>Tristan</u>.

#### Page 30

20/1/92-5

More generally: On mimesis:

We agree that: architecture, music, dance, poetry, the novel, and even tragedy, do not "imitate" anything.

Tragedy: certainly there is an "important and perfect act," as Aristotle said—"perfect" (τελεία—τέλος) περαίνουσα.

"Perfect"—τελεία—can evid.<ently> not signify here, perfect as to value because the object of tragedy is parricide, matricide, infanticide, fratricide, the massacre of innocent prisoners (Eur.<ip>eides>, Trojan Women).

Τελεία is: accomplished right to the end. And there is the correspondence:

#### Page 31

20/1/92-6

ήδυσμένω λόγω και οὺ δι᾽ ἀπαγγελίας χωρίς ἐκάστω τῶν εἰδῶν ἐν τοῖς μορίοις, μίμησις πράξεως σπουδαίας καὶ τελείας

δι' ἐλέου καί φόβου κάθαρσιν / τήν τῶν [τοιούτων] παθημάτων / περαίνουσα "achieving" leading to its end

## zάθαρσις τῶν παθημάτων = of passions, cf. de Interpr. realizes, completes accomplish/elaborate right to the end

Even in Aristotle, μίμησις appears as the means (or as the "material"?), the end being κάθαφοιν δι ἐλέου καί φόβου. The centuries have clung to this, forgetting the ambiguities of Arist's defin.<ition> of technè (see article on Technic)—and here in particular precisely technè completes what nature could not accomplish. Ἡ τήν φύσιν μιμεῖται, ἤ ἡ τέχνη ἐπιτελεῖ ἄ ἡ φύσις ἀδυνατεῖ

επιτελεί ἄ ή φύσις άδυνατεί άπεργάζεσθαι (Φ B 8, 199α 15–17) What is it that nature could not accomplish? Precisely the κάθαρσις των παθημάτων

#### Page 32

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not in the sense of "imitated acts" of tragedy—but of passions raised in the audience. If you see a son kill his mother, or two daughters hammer at their father, there is no  $\varkappa \acute{a}\theta \alpha \varrho \sigma \iota \varsigma$ , there is prob.<abby> ĕλεος  $\varkappa \alpha \acute{a}$   $\acute{b}\phi \delta \rho \varsigma$ , but not  $\varkappa \acute{a}\theta \alpha \varrho \sigma \iota \varsigma$ . But if you see the <code>Oresteia</code>, or <code>King Lear</code>, yes, there is  $\varkappa \acute{a}\theta \alpha \varrho \sigma \iota \varsigma$ .

Lastly, "representative arts": painting, sculpture. Small interval—from Ve B.C. to IIIe A.D., from Trecento to 1900—where "realism" appears as an imperative. But from Lascaux and Altamira, from the Cycle, disc, of the Maya and from the Africans to Kandinsky, Klee, Brancusi, and Giacometti,—where is the "imitation"?

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"Arist. Πολ, Θ, 6 1341 a 23 καιφοί èν οἶς ἡ θεωφία κάθαφοιν μᾶλλον δύναται ἥ μάθησιν"

#### Page 34

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#### Taminiaux pp. 194-195

Man with a Glove (1523/24), Louvre. Portraits of Tintoretto, Jan van Eyck's Arnolfini portrait, or Portrait of a Man in a Turban, or by Masaccio the face of Eve after the Fall (Brancacci Chapel), Florence Ex: portraits, quot.<ation> of Hegel:
"looking at a man's eyes, one sees
an abyss"; that is—not always—true
in reality. But it is always true for a
great portrait.
E.g., portrait of Titian (Vienne)
or self-portraits of Dürer, or
Rembrandt (the 2nd one) or Greco's
Lady in a Fur Wrap or Vermeer's
Girl with a Pearl Earring
Form is the only means that allows
to present a content of signification
whose mode of being is sui generis.

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Here again we can see why there is no "imitation" even in the portrait. Could a portrait be an "imitation"? Because human being is an abyss—containing infinite possibilities. It is this very abyss we are looking at through his glance—and who could pretend to "imitate the abyss"? It is not an imitation, it is a presentation of the Abyss, hiding nothing.

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#### Already said

That concerns the "object": it is the work that is "presentation etc . . ."

On the "subject's" side: Aristotle, tragedy: pity and terror ἔλεος και φόβος κάθαςσις, (argument about what κάθαςσις is) Kant, disinterested pleasure (Interesseloses Gefallen)
Coming from: presentation in the intuition of the Ideas of Reason. But we know what the Ideas of Reason are for Kant.
[[Kant's "sublime": discuss]
[Hezel, Aesthetics]

giving form

Page 37

Kafka

Ulysses

20/1/92-11

Iliad
Tragedy
Shakespeare
Spl<endeurs> et mis<eres>+ ill.
perdues
Educ. Sent.<imentale>
Tristan
In search <of lost time>

but does not answer the question. Why pleasure? Is there just pleasure? Pleasure, here, is the experience of sense-and, supreme moment, the sense of nosense, and the no-sense of sense. ← The form that art gives to chaos does not hide, does not mask chaos, but points it out. The Cosmos of art—of great art—is "transparent," it is not "phenomenal"—and it is "abolition of time" [Cf. CL <Crossroads in the Labyrinth>, p. 22-Abolition of difference by the means of difference. It is not a matter of "identification" or "distancing oneself."]

"disinterested pleasure" is exact,—

#### Page 38

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Meninas
The View of Delft
The Hospital Regents,
the Nightwatch (recently
inauthenticated—who cares!)

There is certainly the disinterested pleasure —but there is also the άνευ ορέξεως—there is the affect [mixture of joy and sadness, of pleasure and mourning, of astonishment and agreement ["the relevance of questions and the obviousness of answers, Proust]—there is the affect of the end of desire and this is what I propose as sense of the word χάθαρσις

There is Zauber—enchantment

Trauer—mourning

Thaumazein—astonished admiration

And at the end <u>Versöhnung</u> the conciliation with the end of desire (cf. CL, introd.<uction> p. 22)

On music

von Platen

Wer die Schönheit angeschaut mit Augen / ist schon dem Tode anheimgegeben

Rilke

Denn das Schöne ist nichts als des Schrecklichen Anfang

Page 39

Thinking means:

Take what is <u>given</u> ( $\phi$ .<ilosophy> is <u>linked</u> to what is given, even if it has to put it in question) and confer to it a n<ew> "significative" dimension = thinkable.

Circle. One cannot—and must not—break it.

What is given becomes  $\underline{\text{thinkable}}$  by  $\underline{\text{thought}}$  = by means of all the work that establishes noémata but that are as such

(There is a <u>question</u>. The law, there is after all an <u>intention</u> in the law.)

- ἄνευ ὀφέξεως (Aristotle)

(is it possible?)

– ἄνευ θυμοῦ.

The same for science. But science <is> either explan<atory> or comprehensive—though here we have to make everything noèton, κατά τό δυνατόν.

#### Page 40: Veritatis splendor = duplicitatis squalor, p. 1

[[Text written as a response to the encyclic by Jean Paul II, 1993, unpublished]]  $\,$ 

10/10/93

22/1/92-2

Veritatis splendor = duplicitatis squalor

1) one must not kill; why?

Is it because if everybody could kill mankind would disappear, or could become worse than any species of wild beasts?

Is it because hatred or an interest capable for murder are ugly? Is it because if we want to respect humanity inside us, we have to

Is it because if we want to respect humanity inside us, we have to respect <it> toward everybody?

Is it because, it . . . Nonsense, trifles, at best: secondary arguments all this. No: one must not kill mainly because God said: Thou shalt not kill. Why did God say this rather than the contrary? If it is for the already mentioned reasons or for another one of the same kind, why do we need God? If it is without reason, we must do what God said because God said it, that's all. This is exactly what we must call

#### Page 41: Veritatis splendor = duplicitatis squalor, p. 2

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heteronomy.

What if God had said the contrary? Well, it would still be God who said it, so we should obey him too.

But, a theologist might say,  $\underline{God\ could}$  not have said the contrary. Why? Because it would be against his nature, his essence, his being. God is the All-Good. God is the Good. How do you know that  $\underline{God\ \underline{i}}$  the All-Good? Because among other things, he said: Thou shalt not kill, and this is a good thing. And why is it good? Because God said it. And since God is the All-Good . . .

#### 100 Notes - 100 Thoughts / 100 Notizen - 100 Gedanken

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