

III

*Alterations in the distance between the self and objects as
the manifestation of varying styles of life*

We rarely realize to what extent our notions of spiritual processes possess a merely symbolic importance. The basic needs of life have forced us to consider the tangible external world as the first object of our attention. The concepts by which we conceive of an existence perceived outside the observer are therefore valid primarily for *its* contents and conditions; it is the class of objects in general, and every perception that is to become an object for us has to adjust to its forms. This demand refers to the mind itself which becomes the object of its own observation. First of all, however, the observation of the 'You' suggests itself as certainly being the most imperative prerequisite for communal life and individual self-assertion. But since we are never able to directly observe the other person's soul, and since all our perceptions are never anything more than our sense impressions, all psychological knowledge is nothing but an interpretation of the processes of consciousness that we perceive in our own mind. We transfer such an interpretation to the other person when confronted by physical impressions of them, even though this transference, focused as it is exclusively on its goal, is unaware of its point of origin. When the mind becomes an object of its own understanding, then this is possible only through images of spatial processes. When we speak of impressions and their relationships, of their elevation into consciousness and their sinking below the threshold of consciousness, of inner propensities and inhibitions, of mood with its elations and depressions, each of these expressions, and countless more, is clearly taken from observations of the external world. We may be quite sure that the laws that govern the life of our mind are of a totally different nature to those that govern an external mechanism, primarily because our mind lacks the clear circumscription and secure recognizability of its individual elements. Yet we unfailingly apprehend these 'conceptions' as a kind of essence that enters into the mechanical relationships of connecting and separating, or rising and falling. We are thus convinced, and experience confirms it, that this interpretation of the mind according to visible processes represents the inner reality of the mind, just as, for the astronomer, the movement of the stars is so successfully represented by his written computations that their outcome represents the picture that is verified by the outcome of the real forces.

This relationship is also valid in the opposite direction, namely in the interpretation of external events according to the contents of our inner life. I do not mean to say that the former is nothing but a world of notions, but that, once a relatively external phenomenon confronts a relatively internal one on some kind of epistemological basis, the specific internal phenomena

serve to form the external phenomena into a comprehensible image. Thus it is that the object as a whole is realized by the sum of its qualities that it presents to us only by our lending it the unified form of our ego. In so doing, we basically experience how a wealth of determinations and fates may be attached to a fixed entity. The same may be true, as has often been suggested, of energy and the causality of external objects: we project the feelings of physio-psychic tension, impulses, wilful action, on to the objects, and if we place these interpretative categories behind their immediate perceptibility, then we orientate ourselves towards them according to the emotional experiences of our inner nature. Perhaps this is how one comes across the opposite interrelationship as soon as one hits the substantiality of a deeper stratum below that primary symbolization of the inner life. If we characterize a mental experience as an association of conceptions, then this knowledge is achieved according to spatial categories. Yet perhaps this category of association itself gains its meaning and significance in a merely internal and in no way visible process. What we characterize as association in the external world, that is as entities somehow unified and existing in each other, actually always remain adjacent to each other, and in referring to this association we *mean* something that we can project only from within ourselves into the object, something that is incomparable to everything external, namely the symbol for what we are unable to state and what cannot immediately be expressed. Thus there exists a relativism, an unending process between internal and external life: the one as the symbol of the other, making it conceivable and representable, being neither the first nor the second, but realizing the unity of their—that is, our—being by their mutual dependency.

The mental and physical aspects of existence are all the more open to this mutual symbolizing interpretation the simpler they are. In the simple processes of association, fusion and reproduction of notions we can adhere to the idea of a general lawfulness of form that calls for an analogous response from both the inner and the outer world and thus makes the one the suitable representative of the other. Characterization in terms of analogies of spatial vividness becomes more difficult for more complicated and distinctive mental forms. It becomes more dependent upon its applicability to a large number of instances, in order not to appear arbitrary and playful and in order to possess a secure, though only symbolic, relationship to psychological reality. Starting out from itself, this psychological reality will find the comprehension of things, the interpretation of their own meaning and significance, all the more difficult and uncertain the more specialized or complex are the processes on both sides. For the mysterious identity of form in internal and external phenomena, which provides a bridge from the one to the other, becomes less probable and more difficult to conceive. This is intended as an

introduction to considerations that should encompass a series of various internal cultural phenomena and thereby make it clear that they all belong to one and the same style of life, because they all allow for an interpretation according to one and the same illustrative analogy.

One of the most frequent images that is used to illustrate the organization of life's elements is their arrangement in a circle with the individual at its centre. There is a type of relationship between this self and objects, people, ideas and interests that we can characterize only as *distance* between the two. Whatever our object may be, it can, with its content remaining unchanged, move closer to the centre or to the periphery of our sphere of interests and concerns. But this does not bring about a change in our inner relationship to this object; on the contrary, we can *characterize* certain relationships between the self and its contents only by the illustrative symbol of a definite or changing distance between the two. From the very outset, a symbolic expression for a verbally inexpressible state of affairs is created when we divide our inner existence into a central self and a surrounding array of contents. In view of the tremendous differences in sensory-external impressions of things according to their distance from our sensory organs—differences not only in distinctness, but also in the quality and whole character of the images received—an extension of this symbolization suggests itself whereby the diversity of the innermost relationship to objects is interpreted as a diversity in our distance from them.

From among the phenomena that, from this standpoint, form a unified series, I first wish to emphasize that of art. The inner significance of artistic styles can be interpreted as a result of the differences in distance that they produce between ourselves and objects. All art changes the field of vision in which we originally and naturally place ourselves in relation to reality. On the one hand, art brings us closer to reality; it places us in a more immediate relationship to its distinctive and innermost meaning; behind the cold strangeness of the external world it reveals to us the spirituality of existence through which it is related and made intelligible to us. In addition, however, all art brings about a distancing from the immediacy of things; it allows the concreteness of stimuli to recede and stretches a veil between us and them just like the fine bluish haze that envelops distant mountains. There are equally strong attractions on both sides of this duality of effects. The tension between them, their distribution over the wide variety of demands upon the work of art, gives a specific character to each artistic style. Indeed, the mere existence of style is in itself one of the most significant instances of distancing. Style, as the manifestation of our inner feelings, indicates that these feelings no longer immediately gush out but take on a disguise the moment they are revealed. Style, as the general form of the particular, is a veil that imposes a barrier and a distance in relation to the recipient of the expression of these feelings. Even naturalism

which specifically aims at overcoming the distance between us and reality, conforms to this basic principle of all art: to bring us closer to things by placing them at a distance from us. For only by self-deception do we fail to recognize that naturalism is also a style, that is, that it too organizes and remodels the immediacy of impressions on the basis of quite definite presuppositions and demands. This is irrefutably demonstrated by the course of art history in which everything that one era considers to be a faithful and true picture of reality is recognized by a later period to be highly prejudiced and falsified, whereas this later period now claims to present things as they *really* are. Artistic realism makes the same mistake as scientific realism by assuming that it can dispense with an *a priori*, with a form that—springing from the inclinations and needs of our nature—provides a robe or a metamorphosis for the world of our senses. This transformation that reality suffers on its way to our consciousness is certainly a barrier between us and its immediate existence, but is at the same time the precondition for our perception and representation of it. Indeed, in a certain sense naturalism may bring about a quite distinctive distancing from things if we observe its preference for the objects of everyday life, for the trite and the banal. For since naturalism is undoubtedly a stylization too, this style is more appreciated by a refined artistic sense—which sees art as lying in the work of art and not, by whatever method it may be represented, in its object—if it is executed on some immediate, raw, earthly material.

*Modern tendencies towards the increase and diminution
of this distance*

On the whole, the aesthetic interest of recent times has tended towards an increase in the distance produced by transposing objects into art. I have in mind the tremendous attraction that artistic styles far removed both in time and space have for the artistic sense of our time. Many lively, stimulating notions are aroused by what is far away and this satisfies our many-sided need for stimulation, although, because of the absence of any relationship to our most personal and direct interests, all these strange and distant notions have a faint ring about them and are therefore more than a comforting stimulation for weakened nerves. What we today call the 'historical spirit' perhaps not only is a favourable condition for this phenomenon, but also has the same origin. Through the wealth of inner relationships to spatially and temporally far removed interests, the historical spirit makes us more sensitive towards shocks and confusions that come to us from direct proximity and contact with people and things. The flight from the present is made easier, is less of a loss and is to some extent justified if it leads to the recognition and enjoyment of concrete realities, even though they are far away and can be experienced only very

indirectly. Out of this process there springs the present vividly felt charm of the fragment, the mere allusion, the aphorism, the symbol, the undeveloped artistic style. All these forms, familiar to all the arts, place us at a distance from the substance of things; they speak to us 'as from afar'; reality is touched not with direct confidence but with fingertips that are immediately withdrawn. The most extreme refinement of our literary style avoids the direct characterization of objects; it only touches a remote corner of them with the word, and grasps not the things but only the veil that envelops them. This is most clearly demonstrated by the symbolistic tendencies in the fine arts and in literature. Here, the distance that art already places between ourselves and the objects is extended yet a stage further, in that the notions that form the content of the ultimately stimulating psychic experience no longer have a visible counterpart in the work of art itself, but are only provoked by perceptions of quite a different kind. In all this we discover an emotional trait whose pathological deformation is the so-called 'agoraphobia': the fear of coming into too close a contact with objects, a consequence of hyperaesthesia, for which every direct and energetic disturbance causes pain. The delicacy, spirituality and differentiated sensitivity of so many modern people therefore finds expression in a negative taste; that is, they are easily offended by the unacceptable, they determinedly reject what they find unsympathetic, they often abhor much if not most of what is offered to them as attractions; whereas the positive taste, the energetic affirmation, the cheerful and unreserved acceptance of what they like—in short, the actively appropriating energies—are decidedly lacking.

Yet this inner tendency that the symbol of distance represents extends far beyond the aesthetic realm. Philosophical materialism, for instance, which believed that it could apprehend reality directly, today again gives way to subjectivist or neo-Kantian theories which allow objects to be reflected or distilled by the medium of the mind before they may become cognitions. The subjectivism of modern times has the same basic motive as art: to gain a more intimate and truer relationship to objects by dissociating ourselves from them and retreating into ourselves, or by consciously acknowledging the inevitable distance between ourselves and objects. When confronted with a stronger self-awareness, this subjectivism inevitably leads to an emphasis upon our inner nature, while on the other hand it is associated with a new, deeper and more conscious modesty, a delicate reticence towards expressing the ultimate, or towards giving a naturalistic form to a situation that would constantly reveal its innermost foundation. In other scientific areas, for instance, and with regard to ethical considerations, the trite utility as the evaluative standard of volition recedes still further. Here we can see that this characterization of action only refers to those relationships that are nearest at hand, and that therefore, in order to raise it beyond its mere technique as a means, it has to obtain its specific general

instructions from higher and often religious principles that are unrelated to sensual immediacy. Finally, in the case of specialized detailed work, the call for integration and generalization arises from all sides; that is, a call for that distance which commands an overview of all concrete details, for a bird's-eye view in which all the restlessness of the present is transcended and where what was previously only tangible now also becomes intelligible.

Perhaps this tendency would not be so effective and noticeable were it not for the fact that it is accompanied by the opposite trend. One can interpret the intellectual relationship of modern science to the world in two different ways. It is true that the infinite distances between ourselves and objects have been overcome by the microscope and the telescope; but we were first conscious of these distances only at the very same moment in which they were overcome. If one adds to this the fact that every problem solved throws up more than one new one, and that coming closer to things often only shows us how far away they still are from us, then one has to admit that the period in which mythology predominated, in which there was a very general and superficial knowledge of an anthropomorphism of nature, made possible, from a *subjective* standpoint and with reference to sensations and beliefs (however mistaken), a shorter distance between men and objects than exists at present. All those ingenious methods by which we penetrate the internal aspects of nature can only very slowly and in a piecemeal manner replace that intimate familiar closeness that was secured for the mind by the Greek gods, by the interpretation of the world according to human impulses and emotions, by their being linked to a personally efficacious god with a teleological concern for the welfare of man. We could first of all characterize this difference by saying that, the more the distance in the external world is conquered, the more it increases the distance in the spiritual world. The justification for this symbolic expression can again be shown by applying it to a completely different sphere. Modern man's relationship to his environment usually develops in such a way that he becomes more removed from the groups closest to him in order to come closer to those more remote from him. The growing dissolution of family ties; the feeling of unbearable closeness when confined to the most intimate group, in which loyalty is often just as tragic as liberation; the increasing emphasis upon individuality which cuts itself off most sharply from the immediate environment—this whole process of distancing goes hand in hand with the formation of relationships with what is most remote, with being interested in what lies far away, with intellectual affinity with groups whose relationships replace all spatial proximity. The overall picture that this presents surely signifies a growing distance in genuine inner relationships and a declining distance in more external ones. Cultural development brings about the fact that previously unconscious and instinctive accomplishments later occur with clear

accountability and fragmented consciousness. On the other hand, what originally required careful attention and conscious effort becomes mechanical routine and instinctive matter-of-factness. Thus, correspondingly, the most remote comes closer at the price of increasing the distance to what was originally nearer.

The part played by money in this dual process

The extent and intensity of the role that money plays in this dual process is first manifested as the *conquest* of distance. It is not necessary to elaborate upon the fact that only the translation of values into the money form makes possible those associations of interests in which the spatial distance of the interested parties is absolutely negligible. To give but one of hundreds of possible examples: only by means of money is it possible for a German capitalist and also a German worker to be actually involved in a ministerial change in Spain, in the profits of African gold mines, and in the outcome of a South American revolution. However, money as the agent of the opposite tendency seems to me to be of greater significance. The loosening of family ties has its origin in the special economic interests of its individual members, which is possible only in a money economy. Above all, it brings about a situation in which the means of livelihood can be based on completely individual talents. For only their equivalent money form makes possible the evaluation of very specialized tasks, and without their conversion into a general value they could hardly arrive at mutual exchange. The money form of equivalents makes individual relations with the outside world and entrance into unfamiliar groups that are interested only in the money value of tasks or the money contributions of their members more easy. The family, whose structure is based on collective ownership, particularly upon land ownership, is the exact opposite. Collective ownership resulted in a solidarity of interests which sociologically represented a continuity in the connections between family members; whereas the money economy makes possible, indeed even enforces, a mutual distancing. Certain other forms of modern existence, aside from those of family life, rest upon the distancing brought about by money transactions. Money transactions erect a barrier between persons, in that only one of the two parties to the transaction receives what he *actually* wants, what corresponds to his specific needs, whereas the other party to the transaction, who only receives money, has to search for a third party to satisfy his needs. The fact that both enter the transaction with a completely different *kind* of interest adds a new element of estrangement to the antagonism that is already brought about by opposing interests. In the same manner, it has already been suggested that money results in a universal objectification of transactions, in an elimination of all personal nuances and tendencies, and, further, that the number of relationships

based on money is constantly increasing, that the significance of one person for another can increasingly be traced back, even though often in a concealed form, to monetary interests. In this way, an inner barrier develops between people, a barrier, however, that is indispensable for the modern form of life. For the jostling crowdedness and the motley disorder of metropolitan communication would simply be unbearable without such psychological distance. Since contemporary urban culture, with its commercial, professional and social intercourse, forces us to be physically close to an enormous number of people, sensitive and nervous modern people would sink completely into despair if the objectification of social relationships did not bring with it an inner boundary and reserve. The pecuniary character of relationships, either openly or concealed in a thousand forms, places an invisible functional distance between people that is an inner protection and neutralization against the overcrowded proximity and friction of our cultural life.

The same function that money has for the style of life also penetrates even more deeply into the individual human subject, not as the distancing from other persons but from the material objects of life. The mere fact that wealth today arises out of the means of production instead of out of the means of consumption as in primitive epochs indicates an enormous degree of distancing. Just as an increasing number of stages are introduced into the production of cultural objects themselves—in that the finished product becomes more and more removed from the raw material—so property ownership places the owner technically, and therefore also personally, at a much greater distance from the ultimate goal of all wealth than during the period when wealth merely meant an abundance of immediate possibilities for consumption. The division of labour, conditioned by its interaction with the monetary system, supports similar internal consequences in the sphere of production. The less each individual produces a complete final product, the more his activity appears to be merely a preliminary stage, and the more the source of his activity seems to be removed from the ultimate meaning and purpose of his work. Stated directly: just as money intervenes between person and person, so it intervenes between person and commodity. Since the emergence of a money economy we are no longer directly confronted with the objects of economic transactions. Our interest in them is disrupted through the medium of money, their own objective significance becomes dissociated from our consciousness because it is more or less excluded from its proper position in our constellation of interests by their money value. If we recall how often awareness of purpose is arrested at the level of money, then it becomes clear that money and the enlargement of its role places us at an increasingly greater mental distance from objects. This often occurs in such a way that we lose sight of their qualitative nature so that the inner contact with their whole distinctive existence is disrupted. This is true not only of cultural objects; our whole life also

becomes affected by its remoteness from nature, a situation that is reinforced by the money economy and the urban life that is dependent upon it. To be sure, the distinctive aesthetic and romantic experience of nature is perhaps possible only through this process. Whoever lives in direct contact with nature and knows no other form of life may enjoy its charm subjectively, but he lacks that distance from nature that is the basis for aesthetic contemplation and the root of that quiet sorrow, that feeling of yearning estrangement and of a lost paradise that characterizes the romantic response to nature. If modern man finds his highest enjoyment of nature in the snowbound regions of the Alps or on the shores of the North Sea, then this can hardly be explained solely in terms of the heightened need for excitement. It is also to be explained by the fact that this inaccessible world, which actually rejects us, represents the extreme enhancement and stylization of what nature as a whole still means to us: a spiritual distant image that confronts us even in moments of physical proximity as something internally unattainable, a promise that is never fully kept and an entity that responds to our most passionate devotion with a faint resistance and strangeness. Landscape painting, which as an art depends upon distance from the object and upon a break in our natural unity with it, has only developed in modern times as has the romantic sense of nature. They are the result of that increasing distancing from nature and that particularly abstract existence that urban life, based on the money economy, has forced upon us. This in no way contradicts the fact that it is precisely the possession of money that has allowed us to take flight into nature. For the very fact that nature can only be enjoyed by urban people under these conditions thrusts an entity between them and nature—no matter in how many transformations and mere after-effects—which forms a link between the two at the very same time that it separates them.

Credit

This significance of money is much more evident in its extended form as credit. Credit extends the series of conceptions still further and with a greater awareness of their unrestricted breadth than does the intermediate instance of cash. The pivot of the relationship between creditor and debtor lies, at it were, outside the straight line of contact between them and is set at a farther distance from them: the individual's activity and transactions thereby gain the qualities of far-sightedness and enhanced symbolism. In that the bill of exchange or the concept of money debt in general represents the values of distant objects, they are condensed, as it were, in the bill just as the view over a spatial distance condenses the contents of the view by a perspectival shortening. And just as money places a distance between ourselves and objects, and also brings them closer to us—thereby displaying its specific indifference in these contrasting effects—so too the

instrument of credit has a dual relationship to our total assets. On the one hand, it has been pointed out that cheque transactions are a palliative against extravagance; some people are more easily inclined towards unnecessary spending when they have cash in hand than if the money is deposited with a third party and can be used only by drawing a cheque. On the other hand, it seems to me that the temptation to imprudence is particularly strong if one does not have all the disposable money before one's eyes but can dispose of it merely by the stroke of a pen. On the one hand, the form of cheque transactions, through the multiple mechanism that we have set in motion, dissociates us from money, while on the other it makes the transaction easier, not only because of the technical convenience but also psychologically, because money as cash gives us a visual impression of its value and makes it harder for us to part with it.

I wish to cite but one instance of the relevant features of credit transactions which, although not common, is none the less very apposite. A traveller relates that an English businessman once gave this definition: 'The common man is one who buys goods by cash payment; a gentleman is one to whom I give credit and who pays me every six months with a cheque.' It is primarily the basic attitude that is worthy of note here: namely that it is not necessary to be a gentleman in order to obtain credit, but rather that whoever demands credit is a gentleman. That credit transactions seem to reflect *greater distinction* may be traced back to two different sentiments. First, they demand trust. It is the essence of distinction not to demonstrate its views and their value but simply to presuppose adherence to them. Similarly, this is also the reason why the ostentatious display of wealth is a sign of lack of distinction. Certainly, any trust always implies a risk; persons of distinction demand that one takes this risk in doing business with them, the implication being that they do not recognize a risk and are unwilling to pay a premium for it because they consider themselves to be absolutely reliable. This attitude is reflected in Schiller's epigram, that noble characters pay only with what they are and not with what they do. It is understandable that mere payment in ready cash suggests something petty bourgeois to this businessman, since in this instance the stages of the economic series are anxiously compressed, whereas credit creates a distance between them that he controls on the basis of trust. It is a feature of higher stages of development everywhere that the original closeness and immediate unity of the elements is dissolved in order to unite them, as independent and distinct entities, in a new, more abstract and comprehensive synthesis. In credit transactions the immediacy of value exchange is replaced by a distance whose poles are held together by trust in the same way as religiosity is more intense the greater is the distance—in contrast to anthropomorphism and all sensual conceptions—between God and the individual soul in order to call forth the most considerable degree of *belief* so as to bridge the distance between them. The reason why the

element of distinction in credit is no longer felt in larger transactions in the business community is because credit has become an impersonal organization and trust has lost its specific personal character—without which the category of distinction cannot be applied. First, credit has become a technical form of transaction either with or without very much reduced psychological overtones. Second, the accumulation of small debts up to the final payment by cheque brings about a certain reserve on the part of the buyer in relation to the trader. The continuous and direct interaction that is common to cash payments is eliminated. Viewed from the outside and, as it were, aesthetically, delivery by the businessman has acquired the form of a tribute, of an offering to the powerful that is accepted, at least in individual cases, without a corresponding return. Since payment at the end of the credit period is made not from person to person but by a cheque, by an order, as it were, to the objective account at the bank, this reserved behaviour persists on the part of the individual. Thus, from all sides the distance that is the basis of the concept of the ‘gentleman’ and the appropriate expression for this kind of transaction is accentuated between the ‘gentleman’ and the tradesman.

I will content myself with this singular example of credit’s distancing effect on the style of life and only add one of its very general traits that refers back to the significance of money. Modern times, particularly the most recent, are permeated by a feeling of tension, expectation and unreleased intense desires—as if in anticipation of what is essential, of the definitive of the specific meaning and central point of life and things. This is obviously connected with the overemphasis that the means often gain over the ends of life in mature cultures. Aside from money, militarism is perhaps the most striking example in this respect. The regular army is a mere preparation, a latent energy, a contingency, whose ultimate goal and purpose not only very rarely materializes but is also avoided at all costs. Indeed, the enormous buildup of military forces is praised as the only means of preventing their explosion. With this teleological web we have reached the very pinnacle of the contradiction that lies in the drowning out of the end by the means: the growing significance of the means goes hand in hand with a *corresponding* increase in the rejection and negation of the end. And this factor increasingly permeates the social life of the people; it directly interferes with personal, political and economic relationships on a large scale and indirectly gives certain age groups and social circles their distinctive character.

The pre-eminence of technology

The tendency towards making final ends illusory appears less crass, but more dangerous and insidious, in the advances and evaluation of technology. If the relationship of technological achievements to the meaning of life is, at

best, that of a means or an instrument or very often no relationship at all, then, from among the many causes of the failure to recognize technology's role here, I only wish to mention the splendour that it has autonomously developed. It is one of the most common and almost unavoidable human traits to confuse the height, magnitude and perfection that has been achieved within the boundaries and internal presuppositions of a particular sphere with the significance of the sphere as a whole. The wealth and perfection of individual parts, the degree to which the sphere approximates to its own immanent ideals, is all too easily interpreted as a value and dignity in itself, and in its relationship to other elements of life. The realization that something might be outstanding within its genre and in relation to the demands of its type, while this genre and type is itself evaluated as something minimal and low—this realization presupposes, in each individual case, a very astute mode of thought and a differentiated sense of values. How often do we submit to the temptation to exaggerate the importance of our own achievements by ascribing an extravagant significance to the whole sphere to which they belong, by elevating their relative superiority to that of an absolute! How often does the possession of an exquisite detail of any kind of value—from the objects of the collector's mania to the specialized knowledge of a specific scientific discipline—deceive us into thinking that this particular kind of value is as valuable within the context of all values as the individual piece is in relation to its particular sphere! Basically, this derives from the same old metaphysical mistake: to transfer the attributes that the elements of a whole possess in relation to each other to the whole. It is this mistake through which, for example, the demand for a causal foundation valid for all *parts* of the world and their relationship to one another is also raised with reference to the whole world. It will probably appear most strange to the enthusiasts of modern technology that their attitude is based on the same formal mistake as that of the speculative metaphysician. And yet such is the case: the *relative* height that the technical progress of our time has attained in comparison with earlier circumstances and on the basis of the recognition of certain goals is extended by them to an *absolute* significance of these goals and this progress. It is true that we now have acetylene and electrical light instead of oil lamps; but the enthusiasm for the progress achieved in lighting makes us sometimes forget that the essential thing is not the lighting itself but what becomes more fully visible. People's ecstasy concerning the triumphs of the telegraph and telephone often makes them overlook the fact that what really matters is the value of what one has to say, and that, compared with this, the speed or slowness of the means of communication is often a concern that could attain its present status only by usurpation. The same is true in numerous other areas.

This preponderance of means over ends finds its apotheosis in the fact that the peripheral in life, the things that lie outside its basic essence, have

become masters of its centre and even of ourselves. Although it is true to say that we control nature to the extent that we serve it, this is correct in the traditional sense only for the outer forms of life. If we consider the totality of life, then the control of nature by technology is possible only at the price of being enslaved in it and by dispensing with spirituality as the central point of life. The illusions in this sphere are reflected quite clearly in the terminology that is used in it and in which a mode of thinking, proud of its objectivity and freedom from myth, discloses the direct opposite of these features. To state that we conquer or control nature is a very childish formulation since it presupposes some kind of resistance, a teleological element in nature itself, an animosity towards us. Yet nature is merely indifferent and its subjugation does not affect its own regularities. In contrast, all notions of domination and obedience, conquest and subjugation have a proper meaning only if an opposing will has been broken. This is merely the counterpart to the expression that the effectiveness of natural laws exerts an inescapable coercion upon things. In the first place, however, natural laws do not *act* at all since they are only formulae for the activity of specific materials and energies. The naivety of this misunderstanding of natural scientific methods—the assumption that natural laws direct reality as real forces just as a sovereign controls his empire—is on the same level as believing in God’s direct control over our earthly life. The alleged *coercion*, the necessity to which natural events are supposed to be subject, is no less misleading. But the human mind feels chained to laws under these categories only because stirrings that seek to lead us in another direction exist. Natural events as such are not subject to the alternatives of freedom and coercion, and the ‘must’ injects a dualism into the simple existence of things that only makes sense to the conscious mind. Although all this seems to be just a matter of terminology, it does lead astray those who think superficially in the direction of anthropomorphic misinterpretations and it does show that the mythological mode of thought is also at home within the natural scientific world view. This concept of human control over nature supports the self-flattering delusion of our relationship to nature which could be avoided, even on the basis of this comparison. Indeed, the objective picture certainly suggests a growing domination of nature by man; but this does not yet determine whether the subjective reflex, the psychic significance of this historical fact, cannot run in the opposite direction. One should not be misled by the tremendous amount of intelligence that created the theoretical foundations of modern technology and which, indeed, seems to put Plato’s dream of making science reign supreme over life into practice. Yet the thread by which technology weaves the energies and materials of nature into our life are just as easily to be seen as fetters that tie us down and make many things indispensable which could and even ought to be dispensed with as far as the essence of life is concerned. It has been asserted with reference to

the sphere of production that the machine, which was supposed to relieve man from his slave labour in relation to nature, has itself forced him to become a slave to it. This is even more true of the more sophisticated and comprehensive internal relationships: the statement that we control nature by serving it implies the shocking obverse meaning that we serve it in so far as we dominate it. It is quite erroneous to believe that the significance and intellectual potential of modern life has been transferred from the form of the individual to that of the masses. Rather, it has been transferred to the form of the objects: it lives in the immense abundance, the marvellous expediency and the complicated precision of machines, products and the supra-individual organizations of contemporary culture. Correspondingly, the 'revolt of the slaves' that threatens to dethrone the autocracy and the normative independence of strong individuals is not the revolt of the masses, but the revolt of objects. Just as, on the one hand, we have become slaves of the production process, so, on the other, we have become the slaves of the products. That is, what nature offers us by means of technology is now a mastery over the self-reliance and the spiritual centre of life through endless habits, endless distractions and endless superficial needs. Thus, the domination of the means has taken possession not only of specific ends but of the very centre of ends, of the point at which all purposes converge and from which they originate as final purposes. Man has thereby become estranged from himself; an insuperable barrier of media, technical inventions, abilities and enjoyments has been erected between him and his most distinctive and essential being.

There has never been an age in which such an emphasis on the intermediate aspects of life in contrast to its central and definite purposes was totally alien to that age. Rather, since man's mind is completely focused upon the categories of ends and means, it is his lasting fate to oscillate between the contradictory demands of means and ends. The means always implies the internal difficulty of using a force and awareness that are not really meant for it but for something else. However, the meaning of life does not really lie in realizing the permanent reconciliation of conditions for which it strives. In fact, the vitality of our inner life may indeed depend upon the continuation of that contradiction, and the styles of life probably differ fundamentally in terms of the intensity of this contradiction, the preponderance of the one or the other side and the psychological form of either one. In the case of the present age, in which the preponderance of technology obviously signifies a predominance of clear intelligent consciousness, as a cause as well as an effect, I have emphasized that spirituality and contemplation, stunned by the clamorous splendour of the scientificotechnological age, have to suffer for it by a faint sense of tension and vague longing. They feel as if the whole meaning of our existence were so remote that we are unable to locate it and are constantly in danger of moving away from rather than closer to it.

Furthermore, it is as if the meaning of life clearly confronted us, as if we would be able to grasp it were it not for the fact that we lack some modest amount of courage, strength and inner security. I believe that this secret restlessness, this helpless urgency that lies below the threshold of consciousness, that drives modern man from socialism to Nietzsche, from Böcklin to impressionism, from Hegel to Schopenhauer and back again, not only originates in the bustle and excitement of modern life, but that, conversely, this phenomenon is frequently the expression, symptom and eruption of this innermost condition. The lack of something definite at the centre of the soul impels us to search for momentary satisfaction in ever-new stimulations, sensations and external activities. Thus it is that we become entangled in the instability and helplessness that manifests itself as the tumult of the metropolis, as the mania for travelling, as the wild pursuit of competition and as the typically modern disloyalty with regard to taste, style, opinions and personal relationships. The significance of money for this kind of life follows quite logically from the premises that all the discussions in this book have identified. It is only necessary to mention here the dual role of money. Money stands in a series with all the means and tools of culture, which slide in front of the inner and final ends and ultimately cover them up and displace them. Money is most important in illustrating the senselessness and the consequences of the teleological dislocation, partly because of the passion with which it is craved for, and partly because of its own emptiness and merely transitional character. However, in this sense, money is only the highest point on the scale of all these phenomena. It carries out the function of imposing a distance between ourselves and our purposes in the same manner as other technical mediating elements, but does it more purely and completely. Here, too, money shows itself to be not an isolated instance but rather the most perfect expression of tendencies that are also discernible in a series of lower phenomena. Yet in another respect, money stands outside this whole series by frequently being the agent that brings about the transformations in the sequence of purposes. Money interweaves this sequence as the means of means, as the most general technique of practical life without which the specific techniques of our culture could not have developed. Indeed, even in this respect, money exhibits the duality of its functions through whose unification it repeats the form of the greatest and the deepest potentialities of life: on the one hand, it is an equal member or even a first among equals *in* the series of human existence, and, on the other, it stands *above* them as an integrating force that supports and permeates every single element. In the same way, religion is a force in life, one interest among others and often opposed to them. It is one of those factors that are the constituents of life and yet, on the other hand, it expresses the unity and the basis of our whole existence—on the one hand it is a link in life's organism, and on the

other it stands opposed to that organism by expressing life through the self-sufficiency of *its* summit and inwardness.

The rhythm or symmetry of the contents of life

I now move on to a second determinant of the style of life that is characterized, as is distancing, not by a spatial analogy but by a temporal one. Since time encompasses internal just as much as external events, so reality is characterized more directly and with less recourse to symbolism than in the former case. We are concerned here with the *rhythm*, in which life's contents advance and recede, with the question as to what extent different cultural epochs themselves favour or destroy the rhythm of their course, and whether money takes part in this process not only through its own movements but also through its influence on the strengthening or weakening of the periodicity of life. All the sequences of our life are regulated by upward and downward rhythm; the undulation that we immediately recognize in nature and as the basic form of so many phenomena also holds sway over the soul. The alternation of day and night which determines our whole form of life indicates rhythm as a general scheme. We are unable to pronounce two meaningfully co-ordinated terms without giving a greater emphasis to the one than to the other: thus, for example, 'truth and poetry' is something totally different from 'poetry and truth'. And if, out of three elements, the third is co-ordinated to the second, it cannot be completely realized psychologically; but rather the modulating form of the psychic tends to give an accent to the third that is similar to the first. Thus, the metre $\sim\infty$ cannot be expressed absolutely correctly, but rather the third syllable is inevitably somewhat more accentuated than is the second. The proportioning of sequences of activity, both large and small, into rhythmically repeated periods serves to conserve energy. By means of the change within each period, the physically or psychologically active organs are alternately spared, while at the same time the regularity of the rotation favours an adjustment to the whole complex of movements, whose regularity makes each repetition easier. Rhythm satisfies the basic needs for both diversity and regularity, for change and stability. In that each period is composed of different elements, of elevation and decline, of a quantitative or qualitative variety, the regular repetition produces a reassurance, uniformity and unity in the character of the series. Simplicity or complication of rhythm, the length or brevity of its individual periods, its regularity and its interruptions provide, as it were, the abstract scheme for individual and social, objective and historical life-sequences. Within the cultural development under discussion here we first encounter a series of phenomena that takes a rhythmical course in its earlier stages but a continuous or irregular course in its later stages. Perhaps the most striking of these phenomena is that man, unlike most other animals, for

whom periods of sexual excitement and indifference are distinctly separated, no longer has a definite mating period, though primitive peoples still exhibit aspects of this periodicity in their behaviour. The difference in the mating period of animals is basically determined by the fact that birth has to take place during seasons that are the most favourable with regard to feeding and climatic conditions for the raising of the young; indeed, some very primitive Australian aborigines, who possess no domestic animals and are therefore regularly faced with famines, have children only at a definite time of the year. Through his control over food and protection against the weather civilized man has become more independent, so that, with regard to mating, he can follow his individual rather than his general, necessarily rhythmically determined impulses. Hence the above-mentioned variations in sexuality have been transformed into a more or less fluctuating continuum. In any case, it has been established that the still observable periodicity in the maximal and minimal number of births is more marked in agricultural than in industrial areas, in the country than in cities. Furthermore, the child lives in an insurmountable rhythm of sleeping and waking, of activity and relaxation, and something similar may be observed in rural areas. Conversely, the regularity of these needs (and not only their satisfaction!) has long been disrupted for city-dwellers. And if it is true that women represent a less highly differentiated stage of human development and one that is still closer to nature, then the periodicity of their physiological life would serve to confirm this. As long as man is directly dependent upon the harvest or the fruits of hunting and also upon the arrival of the pedlars or periodic fairs, life in many respects has to move in a rhythm of expansion and contraction. For some nomadic tribes who are already more developed than the Australian aborigines—for instance some African peoples—the seasons in which no pasture land is available mean to them an annually recurring period of semi-famine. And even where no specific periodicity exists, the primitive subsistence economy exhibits its essential characteristic with regard to consumption as the direct change from one contrast to another, from want to surplus and from surplus to want. The levelling effect of culture is quite obvious here. It not only ensures that the necessities of life are available throughout the whole year in roughly equal quantity, but also reduces wasteful consumption by means of money. For now a temporary surplus can be transferred into money and its enjoyment can be evenly and continuously distributed over the whole year.

Finally, I wish to mention here—though only as a characteristic symbol of this development and quite independent of the economy—that in music too the rhythmic element is the first distinct and most accentuated element in its primitive stages. A missionary in Ashanti is impressed by the marvellous way in which the musicians keep time despite the chaotic disharmony of the music; Chinese theatre music in California—although an

unmelodious noise that grates upon one's ears—is supposed to possess rigid rhythmic measures; a traveller says of the festivals of the Wintun Indians: 'Then come songs in which each Indian expresses his own emotions, and in which, strangely enough, they keep time perfectly.' If we move further down the scale of development we find that certain insects produce a sound that consists of one and the same sharp, rhythmically repeated note in order to enchant the female; in contrast, the more highly developed birds produce love songs whose rhythm is quite subservient to the melody. And at the highest levels of music one notices that the recent trend seems to be to move away completely from the rhythmical, not only in Wagner's music but also in that of certain of his opponents who choose texts that do not lend themselves to rhythm and put the Letter to the Corinthians and Solomon's sermons to music; the acute change from raising to lowering the tone gives way to more balanced or more irregular forms. If we apply this analogy to economic and general cultural life, then it becomes more easily comparable, since it is possible to buy anything at any time for money and so the emotions and stimulations of the individual need no longer to cling to a rhythm that would enforce a periodicity in order to satisfy them. When critics reproach the present economic order for its regular change between overproduction and crises, what they wish to indicate by this is that it is still imperfect and that a continuity of production and consumption ought to be established. At this point I would point to the extension of means of transport which have progressed from the infrequency of the mailcoach to the almost uninterrupted connections between the most important places and to the telegraph and telephone which makes communication possible at any time; the improvement of artificial lighting which increasingly eliminates the difference between day and night and, as a result, the natural rhythm of life; printed literature, which provides us, at any suitable moment and independent of the natural alternation in thought processes between exertion and rest, with thought and stimuli. In short, if culture, as one is accustomed to saying, overcomes not only space but also time, then this means that definite periods of time no longer determine the compelling framework for our activities and enjoyments, but rather they now depend only upon the relationship between the will and our ability and upon the purely objective conditions for carrying them out. Thus, the general conditions of life are freed from rhythm; they are more even and provide individual freedom and possible irregularity. The elements of regularity and diversity that are *united* in rhythm are now separated by means of this differentiation.

It would, however, be quite wrong to reduce the development of the style of life to the temptingly simple formula that it proceeds independently of any framework from the rhythm of its contents to a realization of its content. This is valid only for certain periods of development which require more profound and complex interpretations. Therefore, I first wish to

investigate the psychological and historical significance of rhythmic while omitting its purely physiological conditioning which only repeats the fluctuations of external nature.

The sequence and simultaneity of rhythm and symmetry

Rhythm may be defined as symmetry in time, just as symmetry is rhythm in space. If one draws lines to represent rhythmical movement then they become symmetrical; conversely, the study of symmetry implies a rhythmic conception. Both are different forms of the same basic motif. Rhythm is for the ear what symmetry is for the eye at the start of all formations of raw material. In order to imbue things with an idea, a meaning and harmony, one has to form them symmetrically, organize the parts within the whole and order them evenly around a central point. Thus, the creative power of man when confronted with the arbitrariness and chaos of merely natural formations is illustrated in the quickest, most visible and direct manner. Symmetry is the first indication of the power of rationalism to relieve us of the meaninglessness of things and to accept them as they are. Therefore, the languages of primitive people are also often much more symmetrical than those of civilized people, and even the social structure exhibits—for instance, in the ‘hundreds’, which form the organizational principle of the most diverse primitive peoples—the symmetrical arrangement as a first attempt by the intellect to place the masses in a readily visible and controllable form. The symmetrical structure is completely rational in origin; it facilitates the control of the multitude from one vantage point. Impulses are transmitted further with less resistance, and are more readily calculable through a symmetrically structured medium than where the inner structure and the boundary of the parts is irregular and fluctuating. If objects and men are brought under the yoke of the system—that is, if they are arranged symmetrically—then they can best be dealt with rationally. For this reason, both despotism and socialism possess particularly strong inclinations towards symmetrical constructions of society. This is true of both of them because they imply a strong centralization of society that requires the reduction of the individuality of its elements and of the irregularity of its forms and relationships to a symmetrical form. To give a practical manifestation of this: Louis XIV is supposed to have endangered his health by having doors and windows arranged symmetrically. Similarly, socialist utopias always construct the local units of their ideal cities or states according to the principle of symmetry: localities and buildings are arranged in the form of either circles or squares. In Campanella’s Sun-state, the design of the capital is mathematically measured with compasses, as are the daily arrangements for the citizens and the gradation of their rights and obligations. Rabelais’s order of Thelemites, in contrast with More’s utopia, displays an absolute

individualism—no clocks are allowed in this utopia but rather everything is supposed to happen according to need and occasion. Yet the style of unrestricted calculability and rationalization of life nevertheless tempts him to arrange the buildings of his ideal state in a distinctly symmetrical manner: a gigantic building in the shape of a sextangle, a tower at each corner, sixty steps in diameter. The stonemasons' lodge of the medieval association of builders with its strictly regulated, standardized mode of life and constitution was built in the form of a square. This general trait of socialist projects indicates in a crude form the deep attraction of a notion of the harmonic, stabilized organization of human activity that has overcome the resistance of irrational individuality. The symmetrical-rhythmic formation emerges as the first and simplest structure, through which, as it were, reason stylizes the material of life, and makes it controllable and assimilable. It is the first framework by means of which reason is able to penetrate things. But this also indicates the limits to the meaning and justification of this style of life. It is oppressive in two respects: first, in relation to the human subject whose impulses and needs always arise only in a happy, fortuitous harmony with a fixed scheme rather than in a preestablished harmony; and second, and no less significantly, in relation to external reality whose powers and relationships to us can only be forcibly integrated into such a simple framework. With due regard to the different areas of validity, one might formulate this in terms of an apparent paradox: nature is not as symmetric as the mind would like it to be and the mind is not as symmetric as nature would like it to be. All the acts of violence and inadequacies that a systematic method imposes upon reality are also due to the rhythm and symmetry in the formation of the contents of life. Just as the individual person's assimilation of people and objects by imposing upon them the form and law of his own being testifies to a considerable strength, and just as the more superior person, too, does justice to the uniqueness of objects and shows regard for them in the process of making them subservient to his ends and his power, so it is an eminently human quality to force the theoretical and practical world into a framework that is provided by us. But it is more noble to recognize the specific laws and requirements of things and to integrate them into our existence and activities by following them. For this not only demonstrates the much greater capacity for expansion and malleability of the latter, but it also can make much more creative use of the wealth and possibilities of objects. Thus it is that we observe in some spheres of life that rhythm as the rationalistic-systematic principle appears as the later stage of development, whereas in other spheres this stage is resolved according to circumstances, and the rigidity of the framework is adjusted to the changing requirements of the conditions themselves. For instance, we observe that only at a higher cultural level does the institution of regular meals divide the day rhythmically, whereas a number of regular daily meals

is unknown among primitive peoples. On the contrary, we have already mentioned that they often have a regular cycle of periods of privation and times of frivolous jubilation that has been completely abolished by more advanced economic technology. However, this regularity of daily meals achieves its stability at very high levels of development but perhaps not at the highest levels of the social and intellectual scale. It is discontinued by the highest strata of society on account of their professional and social obligations, and complicated considerations of all kinds. The changing requirements of objective circumstances and the mood of the day may also cause the artist and the scholar to do the same. This already indicates how much the rhythm of meal times, and its opposite, corresponds to the rhythm of work. Here too different sequences exhibit quite different relationships. Primitive man works just as irregularly as he eats. Tremendous exertions of energy, brought about by need or whim, are followed by periods of complete laziness which alternate with the former quite fortuitously. It is probably correct to assume that, at least in northern countries, a fixed order of activities, a meaningful rhythm of exertion and relaxation of strength, first commences with ploughing in agriculture. This rhythm reaches its highest degree in more complex factory work and in office work of all kinds. At the peak of cultural activity—in scientific, political, artistic and commercial work—it tends to decrease considerably. For instance, if we learn that a certain writer picks up his pen and puts it down again at the very same minute every day, then we suspect that this stationary rhythm of production lacks inspiration and inner significance. But among wage-earners too this development leads at a later stage to irregularities and unpredictability even though for completely different reasons. With the advent of large-scale industry in Britain, the workers suffered greatly from the fact that any slump in sales disturbed a large enterprise to a far greater extent than it had disturbed the many smaller enterprises previously, because previously the guild would have distributed the losses. Formerly, the craftsman continued to work in bad times in order to accumulate a reserve, but now workers were simply discharged; formerly, the wages were fixed by the authorities, but now every decline in prices led to a reduction in wages. Under these circumstances it is reported that many workers preferred to continue to work under the old system, rather than to work for higher wages at the cost of the greater irregularity of work. Capitalism and the economic individualization that corresponds to it have, at least in part, made work as a whole—and therefore its content too!—much more insecure and have subordinated it to many more fortuitous constellations than existed at the time of the guilds when the greater stability of working conditions imparted a much stricter rhythm to other aspects of life during the day and the year. Recent investigations have shown that, whereas the arrangement of the content of work formerly had a predominantly rhythmic character, particularly in the case of primitive

cooperative work, and was accompanied by songs, with the perfection of tools and the individualization of work this rhythmic character was subsequently lost. The modern factory, it is true, still possesses strong rhythmic elements, but, to the extent that they require regularly repeated motions, they possess an altogether different subjective significance than do the earlier work rhythms. Whereas this earlier rhythm corresponded to the inner demands of physiological-psychological energies, the present rhythm is related either directly to the indifferent objective movements of the machine or to the necessity for the individual worker who performs only a small part of the process to keep pace with the other members of the work-group. Perhaps this brings about a deadening of the sense of rhythm as such. The old guild associations struggled, just like modern trade unions, for a reduction in hours of work. But whereas the journeymen's associations accepted a working day from 5 or 6 am to 7 pm, that is for the whole day until bedtime, and as compensation pushed strenuously for one whole day off, trade unions today demand a shorter working day. The period of regular change between work and rest has become shorter for the modern worker. For the earlier workers, the sense of rhythm was enduring enough for them to be satisfied with a weekly period. Today, however, more frequent stimulation is needed—perhaps as a consequence or expression of declining nervous energy—and the alternation between work and rest has to become speeded up in order to produce the subjectively desired effect.

Analogous developments in money

The development of money as an institution follows the same pattern. It exhibits certain rhythmic phenomena as a kind of intermediate stage. From the chaotic fortuitousness that must have characterized its first appearance, money passed through a stage that at least reflects a principle and a meaningful form, until, at a still further stage, money gains a continuity in availability through which it is able to adjust itself to all objective and personal needs, free from the constraint of a rhythmic and, in a deeper sense, still fortuitous framework. For our purposes it is necessary here only to illustrate the transition from the second to the third stage with some examples. Even in the sixteenth century, in a city like Antwerp, in which a tremendous number of money transactions took place, it was almost impossible to get hold of a considerable amount of money outside the regular fairs where bills of exchange were bought and sold. The extension of this availability to any time when a person requires money indicates the transition to the establishment of a fully developed money economy. Yet it is typical of the fluctuation between rhythmical and non-rhythmical forms of money transactions and of people's awareness of them that the transactions at Antwerp were called 'the permanent fair' by those who

were used to the difficulties and irrationality of money transactions in a medieval economy. Furthermore, as long as the businessman makes and receives all payments in cash, he must secure a considerable amount of cash whenever larger sums are due, and on the other hand he has to know how to invest such sums efficiently at times when his receipts arrive. The concentration of money transactions in large banks relieves him of the periodic necessity of accumulating and disposing of money. For since he and his business colleagues use the same clearing bank, assets and liabilities are now simply balanced by transferring the necessary amount from one account to another, so that the individual businessman needs only a relatively limited and stable amount of cash for daily expenses while the banks too need relatively less cash than the individual businessman did formerly because the credits and debits of different customers offset one another. Finally, I wish to give one more example. The more or less periodic fluctuations between scarcity and abundance in a period in which a money economy is not yet fully developed produces a corresponding periodic fluctuation in the interest rate from extreme cheapness to exorbitant expensiveness. The perfection of the money economy tends to eliminate these fluctuations, so that the rate of interest, in comparison with earlier periods, remains stable. Hence a change of 1 per cent in English discount rates becomes an event of major significance. In this way, the arrangements of the individual businessman become more easily adjustable and independent both of fluctuations that are beyond his control and of those fluctuations that often reluctantly forced him into bad forms of business practice.

The forms that rhythm or lack of rhythm bestow upon the contents of existence finally lost their form as alternating stages of development and present themselves simultaneously. The two principles of life that one can characterize with the symbols rhythmic-symmetrical and individualistic-spontaneous are two profoundly different trends whose opposition is not, as in previous examples, always reconcilable through integration in the course of development, but rather ultimately characterizes the permanent character of individuals and groups. Not only is the systematic form of life—as I emphasized above—the *technique* of centralizing tendencies, whether of a despotic or a socialistic kind, but also it gains an independent charm. The inner harmony and external conciseness, the harmony of the parts and the calculability of their fate, confer an attraction upon all symmetrical-systematic organizations, the effects of which exert a formative power that extends far beyond politics to countless public and private interests. Such organizations are supposed to give the individual contingencies of existence a unity and transparency that transposes them into a work of art. It is the same aesthetic attraction that is aroused by the machine. The absolute regularity and reliability of the movements, the complete removal of oppositions and frictions, the harmonious dovetailing

of the smallest and largest parts, imparts to the machine, even at superficial glance, a distinctive beauty. It is this beauty that is repeated, to a greater extent, in the organization of the factory and which the socialist state is supposed to give the widest possible application. But this attraction, like all aesthetics, is based upon an ultimate direction and significance of life, upon an elemental quality of the soul. This aesthetic attraction or verification is manifested only in tangible material. We do not *possess* that elemental quality as we do its aesthetic, moral, social, intellectual, eudaemonistic manifestations in practical life, but rather we *are* that quality. These ultimate decisions of human nature cannot be put into words, but can only be sensed in those individual representations as their ultimate and guiding force. Therefore, it is impossible to argue about the relative attractions of opposing forms of life in the experience of which the aristocratic and individualistic tendencies—no matter which area of our interests is affected—confront one another. Historically, aristocracies prefer to steer clear of systematics, of the general form that places the individual in a structure that is external to him. Genuine aristocratic sentiment demands that every form of a political, social, objective or personal nature develops independently and thus proves its own value. The aristocratic liberalism of English life therefore finds the typical and, as it were, organic expression of its innermost motives in asymmetry, in freeing each individual case from the prejudices formed by similar cases. Macaulay, the enthusiastic liberal, specifically emphasizes this as the genuine strength of English constitutional life when he says: ‘We do not think of symmetry, but rather of expediency; we never remove an anomaly merely because it is an anomaly; we do not set up other norms than those which are required by the specific case under consideration. These are the rules which have guided the considerations of our 250 Parliaments from King John to Queen Victoria.’ The ideal of symmetry and logical roundness, which relates the meaning of every single event to a central point, is here rejected in favour of the ideal that permits every element to develop independently according to its own circumstances and allows the whole to appear as an irregular and unbalanced phenomenon. It is obvious that this contrast profoundly affects personal styles of life. On the one hand, there is the systematization of life, with its different provinces organized harmoniously around a central point, with all interests carefully graded and each content of these interests permitted only to the extent that the system makes allowance for. These comprise specific regularly alternating activities, a fixed alternation between activity and rest—in short, a rhythm in both co-ordination and sequence—that makes no allowance either for fluctuations in needs, energies and moods or for the chance of extraneous stimulations, situations and incidents. Instead, the form of existence that is established is completely secure because it excludes everything that does not accord with it or could not be successfully adjusted to its system. On the other hand,

there is the formation of life from case to case, establishing the most favourable relationships between the inner demands of every moment and the corresponding exigencies of the external world, a continuous readiness for experiencing and acting combined with a constant respect for the autonomous life of things in order to do justice to their representations and requests as they arise. In this way, the calculability and secure equilibrium of life is indeed sacrificed and so is the style of life in the narrower sense. Life is not controlled by ideas whose application always leads to systematization and strict rhythms; rather, it is formed out of individual elements regardless of the symmetry of the whole, which is experienced only as a constraint rather than as an attraction. The essence of symmetry lies in the fact that every element of a whole derives its position, its justification and its significance only in relation to other elements and to a common centre. Conversely, if every element follows its own impulse and evolves autonomously and only for its own sake, the whole becomes necessarily asymmetrical and fortuitous. This conflict, in view of its aesthetic reflex, is the basic motif of all processes that are played out between a social whole—of a political, religious, familial, economic, social or any other kind—and its individual members. The individual strives to be an organic totality, a unity with its own centre from whence all the elements of his being and his action derive a coherent and consistent meaning. But if the supra-individual whole is supposed to be independently coherent and to realize its own objective notion of itself with self-sufficient significance, then it cannot possibly tolerate any independence on the part of its members. Hence it is impossible to expect a tree growing out of different trees, but only out of cells, or a painting out of other paintings, but only out of strokes of the brush not one of which on its own possesses any completeness, independent life or aesthetic significance. The totality of the whole—although it gains practical reality only in certain actions of the individual and perhaps even only within the individual—stands in eternal conflict with the totality of the individual. The aesthetic expression of this struggle is particularly impressive because the charm of beauty is always embedded in a whole, no matter whether it has immediate distinctiveness or a distinctiveness that is supplemented by fantasy as in the case of a fragment. The essential meaning of art lies in its being able to form an autonomous totality, a self-sufficient microcosm out of a fortuitous fragment of reality that is tied with a thousand threads to this reality. The typical conflict between the individual and supra-individual existence can be interpreted as the irreconcilable striving of both elements to attain an aesthetically satisfying expression.

Money, however, seems to serve the expression of only *one* of these two contrasting forms. For money itself is completely formless: it does not contain within itself the slightest suggestion of a regular rising and falling of the contents of life; it offers itself at every moment with the same freshness

and efficiency; by its far-reaching effects and by reducing things to one and the same standard value, that is by levelling out countless fluctuations, mutual alternations of distance and proximity, of oscillation and equilibrium, it levels out what would otherwise impose far-reaching changes upon the possibilities for the individual's activities and experiences. It is significant that we term money in circulation 'liquid' money: like a liquid it lacks internal limits and accepts without resistance external limits that are offered by any solid surroundings. Thus, money is the most decisive and completely indifferent means for transposing the supra-individual rhythm in the conditions of life into the harmony and stability that allow a freer, more individual and more objective confirmation of our personal energies and interests. Yet it is precisely this insubstantial nature of money that enables it to support the systematization and tempo of life wherever the level of development or personal trends press for it. While we have observed that there is a close correlation between liberal constitutions and the money economy, it is just as worthy of note that money provides an extremely efficient technique for despotism, as a means for incorporating the most remote places into its rule which, in a barter economy, always tend to separate and become autonomous. And whereas the individualistic society of England has developed and become a major power through the growth of its financial system, money is also the precursor of socialistic forms of society not only through the dialectical process of turning liberalism into its negation, but also quite directly because, as we have seen, specific monetary conditions present the blueprint or type of social form that socialism strives to establish.

Money here becomes a category among the forces of life whose distinctive characteristic is that their essence and meaning is to rise above the antagonisms that exist within their respective sphere of interests and to be quite indifferent towards them while at the same time participating in these antagonisms by taking sides where once they had been unconcerned or judges. First, this is true of religion which man needs in order to reconcile the dichotomy between his wants and their satisfaction, between his moral demands and his practice, between his ideal notion of the world and reality. If such conciliation is accomplished, however, religion no longer remains upon the heights that its highest moments have achieved but steps down to the battle arena and identifies with one side of the dualism of existence which it had previously unified. On the one hand, religion confronts what we experience as our whole life as an equivalent power; it is a totality that exists above all the relativity of human nature. On the other hand, religion is part of life as one of its elements, and the whole of life depends on its interplay with all other elements. Thus, religion is both a whole organism and at the same time a single organ; it is a part of existence and at the same time existence itself on a higher internalized

level. The same form is disclosed by the behaviour of the State. It is certainly in the nature of the State to stand above parties and their conflicting interests; the power of the State owes its unimpeachability and its position as the highest authority in society to this abstract level. Though the State is imbued with all these qualities, it none the less participates in the struggle of specific social forces, supports the party of one group against that of the other, which, in a narrower sense, confronts the State as another force, although in a wider sense it is a part of it. It is this dual position of the highest authorities that repeats itself in metaphysics wherever, for instance, the totality of existence is interpreted as a spiritual essence and the absolute—which creates and manifests itself in all phenomena—as a spiritual substance. Yet this absolute must, at the same time, be recognized as something relative. For in reality the spirit is confronted not only with a corporality, such that in this opposition it first realizes its own essence, but also with spiritual phenomena of an inferior kind such as wickedness, indolence and hostility. Such a metaphysics will not consider these qualities to be part of *the* spirit which is the absolute substance of being. Instead, the spirit is juxtaposed to all worldly and imperfect existence as a party, a balancing factor, a specific value, even though spirit as an absolute incorporates everything. This dual existence is most radically effective in the concept of the self. The self who conceives the world confronts all the specific contents of the world on an equally high level, independent of all qualities, differences and conflicts that exist *within* the individual, as it were, as his own private affair. But our actual sense of life does not permit the individual to remain at this high level, but identifies with certain contents more than with others—just as religion has God interfere at some points, whereas He should be equally effective at all other points. The self becomes identical with a particular content of itself, it differentiates itself, positively or negatively, aligns itself at a high or low level against the rest of the world and its distinctive features, whereas the meaning of the self had placed it above all these.

This then is the kind of form that money, in relation to its sphere of domination, shares with these other forces that are so different in terms of their content. The essence of money also lies in the abstract height to which it raises itself above all individual interests and styles of life; it gains its significance in and through the movements, conflicts and the balancing of all these, as an impartial entity which does not reveal the slightest clue for or against serving a particular interest. And then, supplied with all the unique qualities of being able to transcend distances, of concentrating power and of penetrating everywhere—qualities that are the result of its *distance* from all that is specific and one-sided—money enters the service of specific wants or forms of life. And here, despite all the general similarities that money as a form shares with religion, the State and metaphysical thought, a remarkable difference emerges. All these forces, where they

identify themselves with particular interest and standpoints, become distinctly partisan with regard to one side of the conflict and opposed to the adversary; they align or identify themselves with *one* of the specific differences to which they were previously indifferent, and in so doing exclude the other differences. Money, however, offers its services equally to almost every purpose within its sphere of influence. It does not exist in an antagonistic relationship to other things as do the other forces as soon as they transform their general meaning into a particular one. Money actually preserves the comprehensive quality of its general meaning by the uniformity with which it serves protagonists when they use their general relation to money in order to work out their differences and to fight out their conflicts. In practice, the objectivity of money is not something that lies above oppositions so as to be subsequently used illegitimately by one side against the other, but is rather, from the very outset, of service to both sides of the conflict.

In so doing, however, money does not belong to the broad category that includes air, which is breathed equally by the most diverse living organism, or weapons, which are used equally by all parties to a conflict. Yet money is the most all-embracing instance of the fact that even the most radical differences and antagonisms in the human world always leave room for similarities and community of interests. But money is more than this. The other types of nonpartisan entities simply remain aloof from the inner purposes that they serve. Money, however, no matter how alien it is as an abstract entity to all subjectivity and qualities, and as the economic abstract of the full extent of the universe of values, frequently displays the mysterious capacity for serving the *distinctive* essence and orientation of two antagonistic parties. The one extracts from the general reservoir of values that money represents those forces, means of expression, possibilities of communication or independence that are appropriate for its specific nature, while the opposite party receives monetary support that is no less flexible and pliable and no less helpful to *its* inner nature. The importance of money for the style of life lies in the fact that, precisely because of its complete detachment from all one-sided entities, it may be used by any one of them as its own instrument. Money is the symbol in the empirical world of the inconceivable unity of being, out of which the world, in all its breadth, diversity, energy and reality, flows. The indiscernible structure of things has to be subjectively interpreted by metaphysics in such a manner that the contents of the world form a merely spiritual context, that they exist in a mere ideality and that only then—of course not in a temporal process—does existence emerge above them. It has been expressed in this manner: that the ‘what’ gains its ‘thatness’. No one is able to say what this being actually is, which qualitatively determines the difference between the real object and the merely logically valid objective content. And this being, however empty and abstract its pure notion may

be, appears as the warm stream of life, flowing into the schemata of concepts of things, allowing them to blossom and unfold their very essence, no matter how diverse or antagonistic their content and attitude may be. And yet this is nothing extraneous or strange to them, but rather it is their own essence which accepts being and develops it into an effective reality. Of all external practical things—for which any analogy to the absolute is only partially valid—money comes closest to this power of being. In its very essence it too is quite external to things and completely indifferent to their differences, so that each entity can fully absorb it and develop *its* specific nature to its fullest extent. I have particularly emphasized the significance of money for the development of the rhythmical and the specific-objective styles of life, because the incomparable depth of their opposition illustrates very clearly this kind of activity on the part of money.

*The pace of life, its alterations and those of the money
supply*

Finally, there is a third influence by which money contributes to determining the form and order of the contents of life. It deals with the *pace* of their development, which is different for various historical epochs, for different areas of the world at any one time and for individuals of the same group. Our inner world extends, as it were, over two dimensions, the size of which determines the pace of life. The greater the differences between the contents of our imagination at any one time—even with an equal number of conceptions—the more intensive are the experiences of life, and the greater is the span of life through which we have passed. What we experience as the pace of life is the product of the sum total and the depth of its changes. The significance of money in determining the pace of life in a given period is first of all illustrated by the fact that a *change* in monetary circumstances brings about a *change* in the pace of life.

It has been asserted that an increase in the quantity of money—whether through the import of metals or the debasement of currency, through a positive balance of trade or through the issue of paper money—would leave the internal situation of a country completely unchanged. For aside from the few people whose income is fixed and not multipliable, every commodity or piece of work would increase in money value if the supply of money increased; but since everyone is a producer as well as a consumer, then the individual would earn only that much more as he had to spend, and the situation would remain unchanged. Even if such a proportionate increase in prices were the objective effect of an increase in money supply, quite basic psychological changes would occur. No one readily decides to pay a higher price for a commodity than he did hitherto even if his income has increased in the meantime; on the other hand,

everyone is easily tempted by an increased income to spend more, without considering that the increased income is balanced by price increases in daily needs. The mere increase in the supply of money that one has in one's hand intensifies—quite regardless of any awareness of its mere relativity—the temptation to spend money, and in so doing promotes a greater turnover in commodities, an increase, acceleration and multiplication in economic conceptions. The basic human trait of interpreting what is relative as an absolute conceals the transitory character of the relationship between an object and a specific amount of money and makes it appear as an objective and permanent relationship. This brings about disturbance and disorientation as soon as one link of the relationship changes. The alteration in what is active and passive is in no way immediately balanced by its psychological effects. When such changes occur the awareness of the economic processes in their previous stability is interrupted from every side and the difference between present and previous circumstances makes itself felt on every side. As long as the new adjustment does not occur, the increase in the quantity of money will cause a constant sense of disorder and psychic shocks, and will thus deepen the differences and the comparative disparity between current conceptions and thereby accelerate the pace of life. It would therefore be to invite misinterpretation were one to infer a 'consolidation of society' from the continuous increase in income. It is precisely because of the increase in money income that the lower strata become agitated, a condition that—depending upon one's political viewpoint—is interpreted either as rapacity and mania for innovation, or as healthy development and energy, but which in any case is avoided where a greater stability of income and prices exists. The latter implies at the same time the stability of social distances.

The accelerating effects of an increase in the supply of money on the development of the economic-psychic process are most conspicuously displayed by the after-effects of debased paper money, in the same way as some aspects of normal physiology are most clearly illustrated by pathological and abnormal cases. The unnatural and unfounded influx of money brings about, first of all, a shaky and illogical increase in all prices. The first plethora of money only suffices to satisfy the demand for certain categories of goods. Therefore one issue of unreliable paper money is followed by another, and the second issue by yet another. 'Any pretext'—it was stated of Rhode Island at the beginning of the eighteenth century—'served for the additional multiplication of notes. And if paper money had driven all coins out of the country, *the scarcity of silver* would have been an additional reason for further paper money issues.' The tragic consequence of such operations is that a second paper money issue is unavoidable in order to satisfy the demands that are the result of the first issue. This will make itself felt all the more where money itself is the immediate centre of the movements: price revolutions that are the result of

the inundation of paper money lead to speculation, which in turn requires constantly growing supplies of money. One might say that the acceleration in the pace of social life that is brought about through an increase in the supply of money is most clearly discernible when the purely functional importance of money, without reference to its substantial value, is in question. The acceleration in the whole economic tempo is here raised to a still higher pitch, because, as it were, its origin is purely immanent; that is, it first manifests itself in the acceleration in the printing of money. This interrelationship is demonstrated by the fact that, in countries with a rapid pace of economic development, paper money is particularly apt to increase in quantity. A monetary expert states with reference to North America: 'One cannot expect people who are so impatient with small gains, so convinced that wealth can be produced out of nothing or at least out of very little, to be willing to impose upon themselves the self-restrictions which in England or Germany reduce the dangers of paper money issues to a minimum.' In particular, however, the acceleration in the pace of life that is brought about through an increase in the supply of paper money results from the upheaval in ownership. This is clearly discernible in the North American paper money economy prior to the War of Independence. The abundantly printed money which had originally circulated at a high value suffered tremendous losses in value. Whoever was wealthy yesterday could be poor today; and conversely, whoever had secured fixed values for borrowed money paid his debts back in devalued money and thus became rich. Not only did it become everyone's urgent interest to transact his economic operations as quickly as possible, to avoid long-term transactions and to learn to take up opportunities immediately; but also, these fluctuations in ownership brought about a sense of continuous change, sudden rifts and convulsions within the economic scene that spread to many other areas of life and were thus experienced as the growing intensity in the trend of economic life or as a quickening of its pace. Compared with stable money, debased money has even been considered to be of specific utility: it has been claimed that it is desirable to have debts repaid in debased money, because debtors are generally active economic producers, whereas creditors are mostly passive consumers who contribute much less positively to economic transactions. The fiduciary note-issue was not yet legal currency at the beginning of the eighteenth century in Connecticut and at the beginning of the nineteenth century in England, yet every creditor was obliged to accept it in payment of debts. The specific significance of money for the pace of economic life is further substantiated by the fact that the crisis that occurs after the excessive issue of paper money retards and paralyses economic life to a corresponding degree. Here too the role of money in the objective development of the economy corresponds to its functions as a mediator in the subjective aspect of that development: for it has been rightly pointed out that exchange is slowed

down by the multiplication of the means of exchange beyond what is actually required, just as the increase in the number of brokers eases transactions up to a certain point beyond which, however, it operates as a barrier to transactions. Generally speaking, the more mobile money is, the less secure is its value because everyone tries to get rid of it as quickly as possible. The obvious objection, that trade requires two people and that the ease with which base money is given away is paralysed by the hesitancy to accept it, is not quite valid, because base money is still better than no money at all (and the same cannot always be claimed for poor merchandise). The interest in money as such has to be discounted against the distaste for base money on the part of the seller of merchandise. Hence the interest of the buyer and the reluctance of the seller to exchange commodities for base money do not exactly balance since the latter is weaker and cannot adequately limit the acceleration of circulation through the former. On the other hand, the owner of base money, or money that is valuable only under specific circumstances, has a lively interest in the preservation of the circumstances that give value to his possessions. When in the middle of the sixteenth century the princes' debts had grown to such an extent that there were widespread national bankruptcies, and when in France the sale of annuities was practised to an excessive extent, then it was stated in their defence—since they were very insecure—that in so doing the loyalty of the citizen as an owner of annuities to the king and his interest in saving him would thereby be greatly strengthened. It is significant that the term 'partisan' originally referred to a money-lender who was party to a loan to the Crown, while later, owing to the solidarity of interests between such bankers and the minister of finance under Mazarin and Fouquet, the term acquired the meaning of an 'unconditional supporter' and it has preserved this meaning ever since. This occurred during the period of greatest unreliability in the French finances, whereas during their improvement under Sully the partisans (moneylenders) moved into the background. And later Mirabeau, when introducing the *assignat* (paper currency), emphasized that wherever the currency existed the desire for its reliability ought to exist: 'You consider a defender necessary for the measures taken and a creditor interested in your success.' Thus, such money creates a specific grouping of interests and, on the basis of a new tendency towards inertia, a new animation of contrasts.

However, this assumption that these consequences of an increasing amount of money in circulation make themselves felt to a greater extent in so far as cheaper money affects producers and consumers to the same extent is far too simple. In reality such phenomena are much more complicated and volatile. This may be seen, first of all, in objective terms. The increase in the supply of money at first brings about an increase in the prices of only some commodities and leaves others as they were. It has been assumed that because of the influence of American precious metals the

prices of European goods since the sixteenth century have risen in a definite and slow order of succession. The increase in the supply of money within a country always at first affects only a specific group that takes care of the flood of money. First and foremost, a rise in the prices of those goods will occur for which members of this group compete, whereas other commodities, the price of which is determined by mass consumption, will remain cheap. The gradual influx of larger supplies of money leads to attempts to balance them out, the previous price relationship of commodities is disrupted, and the budget of each household becomes accustomed to disturbances and shifts. In short, the fact that any increase in the supply of money affects the prices of goods *unevenly* necessarily has a disturbing effect upon the process of interpretation of the situation on the part of economically active persons. It leads to widespread experiences of differentiation, to the breakdown of existing parities and to demands for attempts to balance them out. It is certainly true that this influence—partly accelerating, partly retarding—is a result not only of the unevenness of prices but also of the unevenness within money values themselves. That is, it is the result not only of the devaluation of money but, perhaps even more so, of the continuous fluctuation in the value of money. It has been said of the period prior to the great English coinage reform of 1570 that ‘if all shillings had been reduced to the value of groats, transactions would have adjusted themselves relatively easily. But the fact that one shilling equalled 6 pence, another 10, and a third one 8, 6 or even 4 pence made every exchange a controversy!’

The unevenness in the prices of commodities results in a situation in which certain persons and occupations profit by a change in money values in a quite specific manner while certain others suffer considerably. In former times this was especially true of the peasantry. Towards the end of the seventeenth century, the English peasant, ignorant and helpless as he was, actually became squeezed between those people who owed him money and paid him its face value, and those to whom he owed money and insisted on payment by weight. Later the same was true in India at every new devaluation of money: if the farmer sold his harvest, he never knew whether the money received would suffice to pay the rent for his mortgage. It has long been known that wages are the last to be adjusted to a general increase in prices. The weaker a social group is, the slower and more sparingly does the increase in the amount of money trickle through to it. Frequently, an increase in income is attained only after an increase in the prices of that strata’s consumer goods has long been in force. Out of this process, shocks and agitations of all kinds emerge. The growing differences between the strata require constant alertness because, in view of the new circumstances, conservative and defensive attitudes are no longer sufficient. Instead, positive struggle and conquest are required in order to preserve the *status quo ante* with regard to the relationship between the strata as well as

the standard of living of individual strata. This is one of the basic reasons why every increase in the quantity of money has such a disturbing effect upon the pace of social life, since it produces new differences on top of the existing ones and divisions, even in the budget of the individual family, that must constantly accelerate and deepen the level of awareness. It is quite obvious that a considerable decline in the amount of money will bring about similar effects except that they will be in reverse. The close relationship between money and the pace of life is illustrated by the fact that an increase as well as a decrease in the amount of money, as a consequence of its uneven diffusion, brings about those manifestations of differentiation that are mirrored psychologically in break-downs, irritations and the compression of mental processes. This implication of *changes* in the quantity of money is only a phenomenon or an accumulation of the significance of money for the relationship of objects, that is for their psychic equivalents. Money has brought about new equations between objects. We compare them, one with another, according to their utility value, their aesthetic, ethical, eudaemonistic and labour value, with reference to hundreds of relationships of quantity and quality, so that their identity in one of these relationships may coincide with total lack of identity in another. Thus, their money value creates an equation and comparison between them that is in no way a constant function of other values, yet is always the expression of some notions of value that are the origin and combination of others. Every value standpoint that orders and ranks things differently and cuts across the usual mode of ordering things provides, at the same time, a new vitality for their relationship, a suggestion of as-yet unknown combinations and syntheses, of the discovery of their affinities and differences. This is because our minds are constantly endeavouring to counterbalance what is irregular and to force differentiation upon the uniform. In so far as money confers upon things within a given sphere a sameness and differentiation to a greater extent than any other value standpoint, it thereby stimulates innumerable endeavours to combine these with the ranking derived from the other values in the sense of these two tendencies.

The concentration of monetary activity

In addition to the results of changes in the supply of money, which suggest that the pace of life is, as it were, a function of those changes, the compression of the contents of life is evident in another consequence of monetary transactions. It is a peculiar feature of monetary transactions that they tend to concentrate in a relatively few places. As far as local diffusion is concerned, it is possible to establish a scale of economic objects. Here I shall indicate only some of the characteristic levels. The scale commences with agriculture, which by its very nature resists every

attempt to concentrate its different areas; agriculture is inevitably bound up with the original dispersal of space. Industrial production can be compressed to some extent: the factory is a spatial condensation compared with artisan production and domestic industry while the modern industrial centre is a manufacturing microcosm, in which every kind of raw material in the world is transformed into objective forms, whose origins are dispersed throughout the world. The most remote link in this scale is money transactions. Owing to the abstractness of its form, money has no definite relationship to space: it can exercise its effects upon the most remote areas. It is even, as it were, at any moment the central point of a circle of potential effects. On the other hand, it also enables the largest amounts of value to be condensed into the most minute form—such as the \$10 million cheque that was once signed by Jay Gould. To the possibility of condensing values by means of money and of condensing money by means of its increasingly abstract forms, there corresponds the possibility of condensing monetary transactions. In so far as the economy of a country is increasingly based upon money, financial activities become concentrated in large centres of money transactions. In contrast to the country, the city has always been the seat of money transactions and this relationship also holds for comparisons between small towns and cities. An English historian has stated that in its whole history London, though it never functioned as the heart of England but sometimes as its brain, always operated as its purse. Similarly, it was said that already at the end of the Roman Republic every penny that was spent in Gaul entered the books of financiers in Rome. This centrifugal force that finance possesses supports the interest of both parties: that of the borrowers because they can obtain cheaper money because of the competition of inflowing capital (the interest rate in Rome was 50 per cent lower than the average in ancient times), and that of the creditors because, although money does not have such a high value as in outlying areas, they are sure of chances for investment at any time, which is more important than lending the money at a higher rate in isolated areas. As a result, it has also been pointed out that contractions in the central money market can be more easily overcome than at the various outlying points on the periphery. Through the process of centralization that is inherent in money, the preliminary stage of accumulation in the hands of scattered individuals has been surmounted. The centralization of monetary transactions on the stock exchanges counteracted the superior power that individuals could wield by monetary means. For instance, even though the stock exchanges of Lyons and Antwerp brought enormous gains to individual money magnates during the fifteenth century, they objectified the power of money in a central institution that was superior to the power and rules of even the most powerful individuals, and they prevented the situation from arising in which a single financial house could

determine the trend of world history to the extent that the Fuggers had once done.

The more basic reason for the evolution of financial centres is obviously to be found in the relativity of money. This is because, on the one hand, money expresses only value relationships between commodities, while on the other the value of every definite quantity of money cannot be as directly ascertained as can that of any other commodity; it has significance only in comparison with the total amount that is offered. Therefore, the maximum concentration of money at one point, the continuous competition of huge amounts, the balancing of a major part of supply and demand as such, will lead to the more accurate determination of its value and to its greater utilization. A bushel of grain has a particular importance at any one place, no matter how isolated and regardless of its money value. A certain quantity of money, however, is important only in relation to other values. Hence, in order to attain a stable and just valuation, money has to be confronted with as many other values as possible. This is the reason why not only 'everything presses for gold'—men as well as things—but also why money itself presses for 'everything'. It seeks to come together with other money, with all possible kinds of values and their owners. The same interrelationship operates in the opposite direction: the convergence of large numbers of people brings about a particularly strong need for money. In Germany, one of the main demands for money arose out of annual fairs organized by local lords in order to profit from the exchange of currency and the tax on goods. Through this enforced concentration of commercial transactions at a single point in a larger territory, the inclination to buy and sell was greatly increased and the need for money thereby first became a general necessity. Wherever increasingly large numbers of people come together, money becomes relatively that much more in demand. Because of its indifferent nature, money is the most suitable bridge and means of communication between many and diverse people. The more people there are, the fewer are the spheres within which they can base their transactions except through monetary interests.

The mobilization of values

All this illustrates to what great extent money symbolizes acceleration in the pace of life and how it measures itself against the number and diversity of inflowing and alternating impressions and stimuli. The tendency of money to converge and to accumulate, if not in the hands of individuals then in fixed local centres; to bring together the interests of and thereby individuals themselves; to establish contact between them on a common ground and thus, as determined by the form of value that money represents, to concentrate the most diverse elements in the smallest possible space—in short, this tendency and capacity of money has the psychological

effect of enhancing the variety and richness of life, that is of increasing the pace of life. It has already been emphasized elsewhere that the modern concept of time—as a value determined by its usefulness and scarcity—first became accepted with the growth of capitalism in Germany when, during the fifteenth century, world trade and financial centres developed together with the quick turnover of cheap money. It was in this period that the church clocks began to strike at every quarter of an hour; and Sebastian Franck, who was the first to recognize the revolutionary significance of money even though in a most pessimistic manner, first called time an expensive commodity. The most characteristic symbol of all these correlations is the stock exchange. Economic values and interests are here completely reduced to their monetary expression. The stock exchange and its representatives have achieved the closest possible local assembly in order to carry out the clearance, distribution and balancing of money in the quickest manner possible. This twofold condensation of values into the money form and of monetary transactions into the form of the stock exchange makes it possible for values to be rushed through the greatest number of hands in the shortest possible time. The New York Stock Exchange, for instance, has a turnover every year that is five times the amount of the cotton harvest through speculation in cotton, and even in 1887 fifty times the total yearly production of oil was sold there. The frequency of the turnover increases with fluctuations in the quoted price of a particular value. Indeed, the fluctuations in the rate of exchange was the reason why regular stock exchange dealings in royal promissory notes [*Königsbriefen*] developed at all in the sixteenth century. For these notes, which reflected the changing credit status of, for instance, the French Crown, provided a completely different inducement to buying and selling than had previously existed with stable values. Changes in valuation are greatly increased and even often brought about by the flexible quality of money to express them directly. And this is the cause as well as the effect of the fact that the stock exchange is the centre of monetary transactions. It is, as it were, the geometrical focal point of all these changes in valuation, and at the same time the place of greatest excitement in economic life. Its sanguine-choleric oscillations between optimism and pessimism, its nervous reaction to ponderable and imponderable matters, the swiftness with which every factor affecting the situation is grasped and forgotten again—all this represents an extreme acceleration in the pace of life, a feverish commotion and compression of its fluctuations, in which the specific influence of money upon the course of psychological life becomes most clearly discernible.

Finally, the relative speed of circulation of money in relation to all other objects must immediately increase the general pace of life wherever money becomes the general centre of interest. The roundness of coins which makes them 'roll' symbolizes the rhythm of the movement that money

imparts to transactions. Even where coins originally possessed corners, their constant use must have smoothed the corners and rounded them off; physical necessity has thus provided the most useful form of instrument for the intensity of transactions. For centuries in the countries bordering on the Nile there even existed globular money composed of glass, wood or agate—the differences in the material used suggests that its form was the reason for its popularity. It is no coincidence that the principle of ‘rounding off’ is applied with reference to large sums of money, since this principle corresponds to the expanding money economy. ‘Rounding off’ is a relatively modern term. The most primitive form of cheques payable to the English Treasury were tallies for any irregular amount and they frequently circulated as money. Only in the eighteenth century were they replaced by endorsable paper bills which represented rounded-off amounts from £5 upwards. It is surprising how little attention was formerly paid to rounding off, even for large amounts of money. That the Fuggers in 1530 agreed to pay 275,333 florins and 20 crowns to the Emperor Ferdinand, and that Emperor Maximilian II in 1577 owed them 220,674 florins, are not isolated cases. The development of the institution of shares followed a similar course. The joint stock of the East India Company in the Netherlands in the seventeenth century could be split up into any proportions that might be desired. Only the acceleration of transactions finally brought about the situation in which a fixed unit of 500 Flemish pounds became the only possible unit of ownership or ‘share’ in its trade. Even today in the retail trade, monetary transactions are calculated in rounded off amounts in places with a considerable volume of money transactions, whereas prices in more remote regions would appear to be rarely rounded off.

The above-mentioned development from inconveniently large to smaller coins and money orders clearly has the same significance for the acceleration of the speed of transactions as the rounding off process, which itself suggests a physical analogy. The need to have money in small amounts increases with the speed of transactions. In this context, it is significant that in 1844 an English bank note circulated on average for fifty-seven days before being redeemed, whereas in 1871 it circulated for only thirty-seven days! If one compares the velocity of circulation of landed property with that of money, then this immediately illustrates the difference in the pace of life between periods when the one or the other was the focal point of economic activity. One thinks, for example, of the character of tax payments with reference to external and internal fluctuations depending on the object on which they were levied. In Anglo-Saxon and Norman England taxes were imposed exclusively upon land ownership: during the twelfth century levies were imposed on the possession of cattle; shortly afterwards, certain portions of mobile property (the fourth, seventh and thirteenth parts) became taxable. The objects of

taxation became more and more diverse until finally money income was made the proper basis of taxation. In so doing, taxation attains a hitherto-unknown degree of flexibility and adjustability, and the result is a much greater variability and yearly fluctuation in the contribution of individuals, combined with a greater stability of the total revenue produced. The direct significance of and emphasis upon landed property or money for the pace of life may explain the great value that very conservative peoples place upon agriculture. The Chinese are convinced that only agriculture secures the peace and perpetuation of states, and perhaps for this reason they have imposed a huge tax upon the sale of land, so that most sales of land are carried out privately and without official registration. But where the acceleration of economic life that is instigated by money has asserted itself, it seeks to impose its rhythm upon the resistant form of landed property. During the eighteenth century the state of Pennsylvania provided mortgages for private land purchase and permitted the bills to be circulated as paper money. Benjamin Franklin stated that these bills were, in reality, *coined land*. Similarly, in Germany it has been asserted by conservatives that the legislation of recent decades concerning mortgages will bring about a liquidation of landed property and will transform it into some kind of paper money that could be given away in bills of any desired amount so that, as Waldeck also puts it, landed property would seem to exist only in order to be sold by auction. Not surprisingly, modern life too mobilizes its contents in the most superficial sense and in several less well known respects. In medieval times and also during the Renaissance, what we today term 'movables' or furnishings in the strict sense were little in demand. Wardrobes, sideboards and benches were built into the panelling; tables and chairs were so heavy that they were often immovable, and small movable fixtures were almost non-existent. Subsequently, furniture, like capital, has become mobile.

Finally, I wish to illustrate by means of a legal regulation the power of the trend in the money economy to subject other contents of life to its own pace. It is an old legal precept that an object that has been taken away from its legal owner has to be returned to him in all circumstances, even if the present owner has acquired it legitimately. Only with reference to money is this precept invalid: according to Roman as well as modern law, money that has been stolen cannot be taken away from a third person who has acquired it in good faith and returned to the original owner. This exception is obviously necessitated by the practice of business transactions which would otherwise be considerably handicapped, disturbed and disrupted. But recently, however, this restitutory dispensation has been extended to cover all other objects that come under rule of the commercial code. This implies that the acceleration in commercial transactions makes every commodity similar to money. It allows them to function only as money

value and subjects them to the same regulations that money itself requires for the purpose of facilitating its transactions!

Constancy and flux as categories for comprehending the world

The following consideration may serve to characterize the contribution that money makes to the determination of the pace of life by its specific nature and in addition to its technical consequences that have already been mentioned above. The more precise analysis of the concepts of constancy and change reveals a dual opposition in the form in which they are realized. If we consider the substance of the world, then we easily end up in the idea of an ἐὶ καὶ πᾶν, of an unchangeable being, that suggests, through the exclusion of any increase or decrease in things, the character of absolute constancy. If, on the other hand, we concentrate upon the formation of this substance, then constancy is completely transcended; one form is incessantly transformed into another and the world takes on the aspect of a *perpetuum mobile*. This is the cosmologically, and often metaphysically interpreted, dual aspect of being. However, if a thoroughgoing empirical method is applied, this contrast between constancy and flux takes on a different aspect. If we observe the image of the world as it immediately presents itself to us, then there are certain forms that do persist through time, whereas the real elements of which they are composed are in continuous motion. Thus, for example, the rainbow persists despite the constantly changing position of the water particles; the organic form persists despite the constant exchange of material of which it is composed. Indeed, in every inorganic object only the relationship and the interaction of the smallest parts persist, whereas the parts themselves, hidden to our eyes, are in constant molecular flux. Thus, reality itself is in a restless flux, and though we are unable to observe this because, as it were, we lack the sharpness of sight, the forms and constellations of movements solidify in the appearance of the enduring object.

As well as these two contrasts in the application of the concepts of constancy and flux to the world as it is perceived, there exists a third. Constancy may have a meaning that goes beyond any extended period of time. The simplest, but in this context a sufficient, instance of this is the law of nature. The validity of the law of nature rests on the fact that a certain constellation of elements necessarily results in a definite effect. This necessity is totally independent of *when* the preconditions present themselves in reality. Whether it be once or a million times, at this moment or in a hundred thousand years hence, the validity of the law is eternal in the sense of timelessness. Its essence and very notion exclude any change or motion. It does not matter, at this point, that we cannot ascribe unconditional validity with unconditional certainty to any single law of

nature. This is not only because our comprehension, which cannot distinguish between the recurrent but fortuitous combination of phenomena and actual causal relationships, is necessarily subject to correctibility, but rather, and above all, because each law of nature is valid only for a definite state of mind, whereas for another one the truth would lie in a different formulation of the same factual state of affairs. However, since the human mind is liable to develop no matter how slowly and indiscernibly, there can be no law that is valid at a given moment that is not subject to change in the course of time. Yet this change refers only to the perceptible content of the law of nature and to its meaning and concept. The notion of a law—which exists regardless of any instance of its imperfect realization but which none the less justifies the idea and gives it meaning—rests upon that absence of all motion, upon that validity that is independent of all given conditions because they are changeable. There must be a corresponding phenomenon in the form of motion to this distinctive absolute form of persistence. Just as constancy may extend over any extent of time, no matter how long, until any relationship to a specific moment of time is simply dissolved by the eternal validity of the law of nature or the mathematical formula, so too change and motion may be conceived of as absolutes, as if a specific measurement of time for them did not exist. If all motion proceeds between a ‘here’ and a ‘there’, then through this absolute motion—the *species aeternitatis* in reverse—the ‘here’ completely disappears. Whereas timeless objects are valid in the form of permanency, their opposites are valid in the form of transition, of non-permanency. I am in no doubt that this pair of opposites is comprehensive enough to develop a view of the world out of them. If, on the one hand, one knew all the laws that control reality, then reality would actually be reduced to its absolute contents, to its eternal timeless significance. This would be true even though reality could not yet be constructed on this basis since the law as such, according to its ideal content, is completely indifferent towards any individual instance of its realization. But it is precisely because the content of reality is completely absorbed in these laws, which constantly produce effects out of causes and simultaneously allow these effects to operate as causes, that it is possible, on the other hand, to perceive reality, the concrete, historical, experiential appearance of the world in that absolute flux that is indicated by Heraclitus’ symbolic formulation. If one reduces the view of the world to this opposition, then everything of duration, everything that points beyond the immediate moment, is extracted from reality and assembled in the ideal realm of mere laws. In reality itself things do not last for any length of time; through the restlessness with which they offer themselves at any moment to the application of a law, every form becomes immediately dissolved in the very moment when it emerges; it lives, as it were, only by being destroyed; every consolidation of form to lasting objects—no matter how short they last—is

an incomplete interpretation that is unable to follow the motion of reality at its own pace. The unity of the whole of being is completely comprehended in the unity of what simply persists and what simply does not persist.

*Money as the historical symbol of the relative character of
existence*

There is no more striking symbol of the completely dynamic character of the world than that of money. The meaning of money lies in the fact that it will be given away. When money stands still, it is no longer money according to its specific value and significance. The effect that it occasionally exerts in a state of repose arises out of an anticipation of its further motion. Money is nothing but the vehicle for a movement in which everything else that is not in motion is completely extinguished. It is, as it were, an *actus purus*; it lives in continuous self-alienation from any given point and thus forms the counterpart and direct negation of all being in itself.

But perhaps it represents, no less as a symbol, the opposite form, that of defining reality. The individual amount of money is, in fact, by its very nature in constant motion. But this is only because its value relates to the individual objects of value, just as the general law relates to the concrete conditions in which it realizes itself. If the law, which itself stands above all motions, none the less represents the form and basis of all motions, then the abstract value of wealth that is not subdivided into individual values and that is represented by money is, as it were, the soul and purpose of economic activities. As a tangible item money is the most ephemeral thing in the external-practical world; yet in its content it is the most stable, since it stands as the point of indifference and balance between all other phenomena in the world. The ideal purpose of money, as well as of the law, is to be a measure of things without being measured itself, a purpose that can be realized fully only by an endless development. Money expresses the relationship that exists between economic goods. Money itself remains stable with reference to the changes in relationships, as does a numerical proportion which reflects the relationship between many and changing objects, and as does the formula of the law of gravity with reference to material masses and their infinitely varying motion. Just as the general concept in its logical validity is independent of the number and modification of its realizations, indicating, as it were, their lawfulness, so too money—that is, the inner rationale by which the single piece of metal or paper becomes money—is the general concept of objects in so far as they are economic. They do not need to be economic; but if they wish to be, they can do so only by adjusting to the law of valuation that is embodied in money.

The observation that this one institution participates equally in the two basic forms of reality may explain the relationship of these two forms. Their significance is actually a relative one; that is, each finds its logical and psychological possibility for interpreting the world in the other. Only because reality is in constant motion is there any sense in asserting its opposite: the ideal system of eternally valid lawfulness. Conversely, it is only because such lawfulness exists that we are able to comprehend and grasp that stream of existence that would otherwise disintegrate into total chaos. The general relativity of the world, at first glance familiar to only one side of this opposition, in reality also engulfs the other side and proves to be its mistress where it only appeared to be a party. In the same way, money transcends its significance as a single economic value in order to represent abstract economic value in general and to entwine both functions in an indissoluble correlation in which neither is the first.

Money, as an institution of the historical world, symbolizes the behaviour of objects and establishes a special relationship between itself and them. The more the life of society becomes dominated by monetary relationships, the more the relativistic character of existence finds its expression in conscious life, since money is nothing other than a special form of the embodied relativity of economic goods that signifies their value. Just as the absolutist view of the world represents a definite stage of intellectual development in correlation with the corresponding practical, economic and emotional conditions of human affairs, so the relativistic view of the world seems to express the momentary relationship of adjustment on the part of our intellect. More accurate, it is confirmed by the opposing images of social and subjective life, in which money has found its real effective embodiment and the reflected symbol of its forms and movements.