

On The Biocentric Metaphysics of Ludwig Klages

by Joe Pryce

Prelude: The Intellectual Environment

DURING THE CLOSING YEARS of the 19th century, the limitations and inadequacies of the superficial positivism that had dominated European thought for so many decades were becoming increasingly apparent to critical observers. The wholesale repudiation of metaphysics that Tyndall, Haeckel and Büchner had proclaimed as a liberation from the superstitions and false doctrines that had misled benighted investigators of earlier times, was now seen as having contributed significantly to the bankruptcy of positivism itself. Ironically, a critical examination of the unacknowledged epistemological assumptions of the positivists clearly revealed that not only had Haeckel and his ilk been unsuccessful in their attempt to free themselves from metaphysical presuppositions, but they had, in effect, merely switched their allegiance from the grand systems of speculative metaphysics that had been constructed in previous eras by the Platonists, medieval scholastics, and post-Kantian idealists whom they abominated, in order to adhere to a ludicrous, ersatz metaphysics of whose existence they were completely unaware.

The alienation of younger thinkers from what they saw as the discredited dogmas of positivism and materialism found expression in the proliferation of a wide range of philosophical schools, whose adherents had little in common other than the will to revolt against outmoded dogma. "Back to Kant!" became the battle-cry of the neo-Kantians at Marburg. "Back to the things themselves!" proclaimed the "phenomenologist" Edmund Husserl; there were "neo-positivists," "empirio-critical" thinkers, and even the invertebrate American ochlocracy lent its cacophonous warblings to the philosophical choir when William James proclaimed his soothing doctrine of "Pragmatism," with which salesmen, journalists, and other uncritical blockheads have stupefied themselves ever since.

A more substantial and significant revolt, however, emerged from another quarter altogether when several independent scholars began to re-examine the speculative metaphysical systems of the "philosophers of nature" who had flourished during the Romantic Period. Although the astonishing creativity of these men of genius had been forgotten whilst positivism and materialism ruled the roost, of course, men like Nietzsche, Burckhardt, and Bachofen had preserved elements of the Romantic heritage and had thereby, as it were, already prepared the soil in which younger men would sow the precious seed of a Romantic Revival. By the turn of the 20th century the blossoms had emerged in the form of the philosophers of the "vitalist" school. In France, Henri Bergson became the leading proponent of philosophical vitalism, and his slogan of *élan vital* as well as his doctrine of *évolution créatrice* thrilled audiences in the salons as well as in the university lecture halls. In Hungary, the astonishingly gifted philosopher and physicist, Melchior Palágyi—a thinker of an altogether higher order than the superficial Bergson—conducted profound research into celestial mechanics, which clearly anticipated the theory of relativity; he developed the theory of "virtual" movement; and his critical powers enabled him to craft a definitive and withering refutation of Husserl's pseudo-phenomenology, and his insights retain their validity even now in spite of the oblivion to which the disciples of

Husserl have consigned them.

In the German-speaking world the doctrines of *Lebensphilosophie*, or "philosophy of life," achieved academic respectability when Wilhelm Dilthey became their spokesman. Sadly, candor demands that we draw the reader's attention to the troubling fact that it was Dilthey who inaugurated a disastrous trend that was to be maintained at German universities for the next hundred years by such able obfuscators and logomachs as Heidegger and his spawn, for, to put it as charitably as possible, Dilthey was the first significant German philosopher to achieve wide renown in spite of having nothing significant to say (that is why, perhaps, Dilthey and Heidegger furnish such mountains of grist for the philosophical proles who edit and annotate and comment and publish and—*prosper*).

Among these "philosophers of life," there were "amalgamists," among whom we find Hans Driesch, who sabotaged his own project by indulging in futile attempts to combine the irreconcilable doctrines of Kantian idealism and vitalism in his theory of the "entelechy," which, although he proclaimed it to be a uniquely vitalistic notion, is always analyzed mechanistically and atomistically in his expositions. The profound speculative metaphysics of Houston Stewart Chamberlain also succumbed to the Kantian infection, for even Chamberlain seems to have been blind to the ineluctable abyss that divides vitalism and Kantianism.

Finally, and most significantly, we encounter the undisputed master-spirit of the "vitalist" school in the German world, the philosopher and polymath Ludwig Klages, whose system of "biocentric" metaphysics displays a speculative profundity and a logical rigor that no other vitalist on the planet could hope to equal.

The Early Years

Ludwig Klages was born on December 10, 1872, in the northern German city of Hannover. He seems to have been a solitary child, but he developed one intense friendship with a class-mate named Theodor Lessing, who would himself go on to achieve fame as the theorist of "Jewish Self-Hatred," a concept whose origins Lessing would later trace back to passionate discussions that he had had with Klages during their boyhood rambles on the windswept moors and beaches of their Lower Saxon home.

In 1891 he received his "Abitur," and immediately journeyed to Leipzig to begin his university studies in Chemistry and Physics. In 1893, he moved to Munich, where he would live and work until the Great War forced him into Swiss exile in 1915.

Klages continued his undergraduate studies in Chemistry and Physics during the day, but at night he could usually be found in the cafés of Schwabing, then as now the Bohemian district of Munich. It was in Schwabing that he encountered the poet Stefan George and his "circle." George immediately recognized the young man's brilliance, and the poet eagerly solicited contributions from Klages, both in prose and in verse, to his journal, the *Blätter für die Kunst*.

Klages also encountered Alfred Schuler (1865-1923), the profoundly learned Classicist and authority on ancient Roman history, at this time. Schuler was also loosely associated with the George-circle, although he was already becoming impatient with the rigidly masculine, "patriarchalist" spirit that seemed to rule the poet and his minions. Klages eventually joined

forces with Schuler and Karl Wolfskehl, an authority on Germanistics who taught at the University of Munich, to form the Kosmische Runde, or "Cosmic Circle," and the three young men, who had already come under the influence of the "matriarchalist" anthropology of the late Johann Jakob Bachofen, soon expressed their mounting discontent with George and his "patriarchal" spirit. Finally, in 1904, Klages and Schuler broke with the poet, and the aftermath was of bitterness and recrimination "all compact." Klages would in later years repudiate his association with George, but he would revere Schuler, both as a man and as a scholar, to the end of his life.

The other crucial experience that Klages had during this last decade of the old century was his overwhelming love affair with Countess Franziska zu Reventlow, the novelist and Bohemian, whose "Notebooks of Mr. Lady" provides what is, perhaps, the most revealing—and comical—rendition of the turbulent events that culminated in the break between the "Cosmic Circle" and the George-Kreis; Wolfskehl, who was himself an eyewitness to the fracas, held that, although Franziska had called the book a novel, it was, in fact, a work of historical fact. Likewise, the diaries of the Countess preserve records of her conversations with Klages (who is referred to as "Hallwig," the name of the Klages-surrogate in her "Mr. Lady": she records Klages telling her that "There is no 'God'; *there are many gods!*" At times "Hallwig" even frightens her with oracular allusions to "my mystical side, the rotating Swastika" and with his prophecies of inevitable doom). When the Countess terminated the liaison, Klages, who suffered from serious bouts with major depression throughout his long life, experienced such distress that he briefly contemplated suicide. Fate, of course, would hardly have countenanced such a quietus, for, as Spengler said, there are certain destinies that are utterly inconceivable—Nietzsche won't make a fortune at the gambling tables of Monte Carlo, and Goethe won't break his back falling out of his coach, he remarks drily.

And, we need hardly add, Klages will not die for love...

On the contrary: he will live for Eros.

Works of Maturity

After the epoch-making experiences of the Schwabing years, the philosopher's life seems almost to assume a prosaic, even an anticlimactic, quality. The significant events would henceforth occur primarily in the thinker's inner world and in the publications that communicated the discoveries that he had made therein. There were also continuing commitments on his part to particular institutions and learned societies. In 1903 Klages founded his "Psychodiagnostic Seminars" at the University of Munich, which swiftly became Europe's main center for biocentric psychology. In 1908, he delivered a series of addresses on the application of "Expression Theory" (*Ausdruckskunde*) to graphological analysis at one such seminar.

In 1910, in addition to the book on expression-theory, Klages published the first version of his treatise on psychology, entitled *Prinzipien der Charakterologie*. This treatise was based upon lectures that Klages had delivered during the previous decade, and in its pages he announced his discovery of the "Id," which has popularly, and hence erroneously, for so long been attributed to Freud. He came in personal contact with several members of rival psychological schools during this period, and he was even invited—in his capacity as Europe's leading exponent of graphology—to deliver a lecture on the "Psychology of Handwriting" to the Wednesday Night

Meeting of the Freudian "Vienna Society" on the 25th of October in 1911.

The philosopher also encountered the novelist Robert Musil, in whose masterpiece, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, Klages appears—in caricatured form, of course—as the eerie and portentous prophet Meingast, that "messenger from Zarathustra's mountain." The novelist seems to have been most impressed by the philosopher's speculations in *Vom kosmogonischen Eros* concerning the ecstatic nature of the "erotic rapture" and the Klagesian "other condition" (*andere Zustand*). Paradoxically, however, Musil's novel presents Meingast [Klages] as a manic and domineering worshiper of power, which is quite strange when one considers that Klages consistently portrays the Nietzschean "Will to Power" as nothing but a modality of hysteria perfectly appropriate to our murderous age of militarism and capitalism. Anyone familiar with the withering onslaught against the will and its works which constitutes the section entitled *Die Lehre der Wille* in Klages's *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele* must, in addition, feel a certain amazement at Meingast's ravings concerning the necessity for a "determined will"! Another familiar (and depressing) insight into the resistance mounted by even sympathetic writers to the biocentric philosophy can be derived from a perusal of Musil's *Tagebücher*, with its dreary and philistine insistence that the Klagesian rapture must at all costs be constrained by *Geist*, by its pallid praise for a "daylight mysticism," and so on. Admittedly, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* will remain an astonishing and beautifully-crafted masterpiece of 20th Century belles lettres, in spite of its author's jejune "philosophical" preachments.

During this same period, Klages rediscovered the late-Romantic philosopher Carl Gustav Carus, author of the pioneering *Psyche: Zur Entwicklungsgeschichte der Seele* ("Psyche: Towards a Developmental History of the Soul") in which the unconscious is moved to center-stage (sadly, the Jung-racket falsely credits their master with this discovery). The very first sentence of this work indicates the primacy attributed by Carus to the unconscious: "The key to the understanding of the conscious life of the soul lies in the realm of the unconscious." During the Romantic Revival that took place in the Germany of the 1920s, Klages would edit a new, abridged version of *Psyche*, in which Carus is purged of his logocentric and Christian errors. Klages, however, fully accepts Carus's definition of the soul as synonymous with life, a formulation that he rates as epochally significant. He finds Carus's statement to be as profound as the aphorism of Novalis in which he locates the soul at the point of contact between the inner and outer worlds.

In 1913, Klages presented his *Zur Theorie und Symptomatologie des Willens* to the Vienna Congress of International Societies for Medical Psychology and Psychotherapy. In that same year, Klages delivered an address entitled *Mensch und Erde* to a gathering of members of the German Youth Movement. This seminal work has recently received its due as the "foundational" document of the "deep ecology" movement when a new edition was published in 1980 in coordination with the establishment of the German "Green" political party.

In his *Heidnische Feuerzeichen*, which was completed in 1913, although it would not be published in book form until 1944, Klages has some very perceptive remarks on consciousness, which he regards as always effect and never cause. He cautions us to realize that, because our feelings are almost always conscious, we tend to attribute far too much importance to them. Reality is composed of images [*Bilder*] and not feelings, and the most important idea that Klages ever developed is his conception of the "actuality of the images" [*Wirklichkeit der Bilder*]. He also savages the insane asceticism of Christianity, arguing that a satisfied sexuality is essential for all genuine cosmic radiance. Christ is to be detested as the herald of the annihilation of earth

and the mechanization of man.

The pioneering treatise on "expression theory," the *Ausdruckskunde und Gestaltungskraft*, also appeared in 1913. The first part of his treatise on the interpretation of dreams (*Vom Traumbewusstsein*) appeared in 1914, but war soon erupted in Europe, swiftly interrupting all talk of dreams. Sickened by the militaristic insanity of the "Great War," Klages moved to neutral Switzerland. In 1920 he made his last move to Kilchberg, near Zurich, Switzerland, where he would spend the rest of his life.

The first substantial excerpt from the treatise that would eventually become his *Hauptwerk* (*Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele*) was published as *Geist und Seele* in a 1916 number of the journal *Deutsche Psychologie*. He soon turned his attention to the more mundane matter of the contemporary world situation, and in 1918, concerned by the spread of "One World"-humanitarianism and other pernicious forms of "humanism," Klages published the classic *Brief über Ethik*, in which he re-emphasized his opposition to all ethical and individualistic attempts to improve the world. The modern world's increasing miscegenation has hatched out a horde of mongrels, slaves, and criminals. The world is falling under the dominion of the enemies of life, and it matters not a bit whether the ethical fanatic dubs his hobbyhorse *Wille, Tat, Logos, Nous, Idee, Gott*, the "Supreme Being," *reines Subjekt*, or *absolutes Ich*: these phrases are merely fronts behind which spirit, the eternal adversary of life, conducts her nefarious operations. Only infra-human nature, wherein dwells a principle of hierarchical order in true accord with the laws of life, is able to furnish man with genuine values. The preachers of morality can only murder life with their prohibitive commands so stifling to the soul's vitality. As Klages's disciple Hans Prinzhorn cautions us, the vital order "must not be falsified, according to the Judæo-Christian outlook, into a principle of purposefulness, morality, or sentimentality." The "Letter on Ethics" urges us to avoid all such life-hostile values, and to prize instead those moments when we allow our souls to find warmth in the love which manifests itself as adoration, reverence, and admiration. The soul's true symbol is the mother with her beloved child, and the soul's true examples are the lives of poets, heroes, and gods. Klages concludes his sardonic "Letter" by informing the reader, in contemptuous and ironical tones, that if he refuses to respond to these exemplary heroes, he may then find it more congenial to sit himself down and listen, unharmed, to a lecture on ethics!

In 1921, Klages published his *Vom Wesen des Bewusstseins*, an investigation into the nature of consciousness, in which the ego-concept is shown to be neither a phenomenon of pure spirit nor of pure life, but rather a mere epiphenomenal precipitate of the warfare between life and spirit. In this area, Klages's presentation invites comparison with the Kantian exposition of "pure subjectivity," although, as one might expect, Klages assails the subjectivity of the ego as a hollow sham. The drive to maximize the realm of ego, regardless of whether this impulse clothes itself in such august titles as "The Will to Power" (Nietzsche), the "Will to Live" (Schopenhauer), or the naked obsession with the "Ego and its Own" (Stirner), is merely a manifestation of malevolent *Geist*. Klages also ridicules the superficiality of William James's famous theory of "stream of consciousness," which is subjected to a withering critical onslaught. After James's "stream" is conclusively demolished, Klages demonstrates that Melchior Palágyi's theory more profoundly analyzes the processes whereby we receive the data of consciousness. Klages endorses Palágyi's account of consciousness in order to establish the purely illusory status of the "stream" by proving conclusively that man receives the "images" as discrete,

rhythmically pulsating "intermittencies."

We should say a few words about the philosopher whose exposition of the doctrine of consciousness so impressed Klages. Melchior Palágyi [1859-1924] was the Hungarian-Jewish *Naturphilosoph* who was regarded as something of a mentor by the younger man, ever since 1908, when they first met at a learned conference. Like Klages, Palágyi was completely devoted to the thought-world of German Romantic *Naturphilosophie*. Klages relied heavily on this thinker's expert advice, especially with regard to questions involving mechanics and physics, upon which the older man had published outstanding technical treatises. The two men had spent many blissful days together in endless metaphysical dialogue when Palágyi visited Klages at his Swiss home shortly before Palágyi's death. They were delighted with each other's company, and reveled even in the cut and thrust of intense exchanges upon matters about which they were in sharp disagreement. Although this great thinker is hardly recalled today even by compilers of "comprehensive" encyclopedias, Palágyi's definitive and irrefutable demolition of Edmund Husserl's spurious system of "phenomenology" remains one of the most lethal examples of philosophical *adversaria* to be found in the literature. Palágyi, who was a Jew, had such a high opinion of his anti-semitic colleague, that when Palágyi died in 1925, one of the provisions of his will stipulated that Ludwig Klages was to be appointed as executor and editor of Palágyi's posthumous works, a task that Klages undertook scrupulously and reverently, in spite of the fact that the amount of labor that would be required of him before the manuscripts of his deceased colleague could be readied for publication would severely disrupt his own work upon several texts, most especially the final push to complete the three-volume *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele*. One gets the impression that Klages felt the task that had been imposed upon him was also one of the highest honors, and Klages's high regard for Palágyi's thought can best be appreciated when we realize that among the numerous thinkers and scholars whose works are cited in his collected works, the contemporary philosopher who is cited most frequently, and at the greatest length, is none other than Melchior Palágyi.

Klages published his influential anthropological-historical study, *Vom kosmogonischen Eros*, in 1922, and in the *Selbstbericht* which serves as an introduction to this work he details the points of agreement and the points of disagreement between his views and those of Friedrich Nietzsche.

In 1923 Klages published his *Vom Wesen des Rhythmus* (a revised edition of which would be issued in 1934). Then in 1925, two fervent admirers of Klagesian biocentrism—one was Niels Kampmann who would go on to publish some of Klages's works in book form—brought out the first issue of a scholarly journal, the brilliant *Zeitschrift für Menschenkunde*, which would continue to publish regularly until the rigors of war eventually forced the editors to suspend publication in 1943 (eight years after the end of the war, the journal began a new career in 1953.)

A revised and enlarged edition of the treatise on characterology appeared in 1926 with the new title *Die Grundlagen der Charakterkunde*. Klages also published *Die psychologischen Errungenschaften Nietzsches* in this same year, a work which, more than a quarter of a century after its initial appearance, the Princeton-based Nietzsche-scholar Walter Kaufmann—surely no friend to Klages!—would nevertheless admire greatly, even feeling compelled to describe Klages's exegesis of Nietzsche's psychology as "the best monograph" ever written on its subject.

A collection of brief essays entitled *Zur Ausdruckslehre und Charakterkunde*, was brought out by Kampmann in 1927; many of them date from the early days of the century and their sheer

profundity and variety reinforce our conviction that Klages was a mature thinker even in his twenties.

The first two volumes of his magnum opus, the long-awaited and even-longer pondered, *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele*, finally appeared in 1929. One year later the *Graphologisches Lesebuch* appeared, and the third and final volume of *Der Geist* hit the book-shops in 1932, a year that seems to have been a very busy one indeed for our polymathic philosopher, since he also found time to revamp his slender monograph entitled *Goethe als Naturforscher*, a short work that can only be compared to the Goethe-books of H. S. Chamberlain and Friedrich Gundolf for breadth of scholarship and insight into the creativity of a great seer and scientist (this study was a revised edition of a lecture that had originally been published in the *Jahrbuch des Freien Deutschen Hochstifts* in 1928).

Hans Prinzhorn, the psychologist, translator of D. H. Lawrence and compiler of the landmark treatise on the artistry of the mentally-disturbed, had long been a friend and admirer of Klages, and in 1932 he organized the celebration for the sixtieth birthday of the philosopher. The tributes composed by the various scholars who participated in this event were collected and edited by Prinzhorn for publication in book-form, with the title *Festschrift zum 60. Geburtstag*.

National Socialist Germany, World War II, and their Aftermath

Shortly after the NSDAP seized power at the beginning of 1933, one of Klages's disciples established the *Arbeitskreises für biozentrisches Forschung*. At first the German disciples of Klages were tolerated as harmless philosophical eccentrics, but soon the Gestapo began keeping a close eye on members and contributors to the biocentric circle's house organ *Janus*. By 1936 the authorities forcibly shut down the journal and from that time until the fall of the regime, the Gestapo would periodically arrest and question those who had been prominent members of the now-defunct "circle." From 1938 onwards, when Reichsleiter Dr. Alfred Rosenberg delivered a bitter attack on Klages and his school in his inaugural address to the summer semester at the University of Halle, the official party spokesmen explicitly and repeatedly condemned Klages and his friends as enemies of the National Socialist *Weltanschauung*.

Klages traveled widely during the 1930s, and he especially enjoyed his journeys to Greece and Scandinavia. In 1940 he published *Alfred Schuler: Fragmente und Vorträge. Aus dem Nachlass*, his edition of Alfred Schuler's literary remains. The "Introduction" to the anthology is a voluminous critical memoir in which Klages rendered profound tribute to his late mentor. However, in the pages of that introduction, Klages introduced several statements critical of World-Jewry that were to dog his steps for the rest of his life, just as they have compromised his reputation after his death. Unlike so many *ci-devant* "anti-semites" who prudently saw the philo-semitic light in the aftermath of the war, however, Klages scorned to repudiate anything that he had said on this or any other topic. He even poured petrol on the fires by voicing his conviction that the only significant difference between the species of master-race nonsense that was espoused by the National Socialists and the variety adopted by their Jewish enemies was in the matter of results: Klages blandly proclaims that the Jews, after a two-thousand year long assault on the world for which they felt nothing but hatred, had actually won the definitive victory. There would be no re-match. He sneered at all the kow-towing to Jewry that had already become part of the game in the immediate post-war era, because, he reasoned, even as a tactical ploy such sycophantic behavior has always doomed itself to complete and abject failure.

In December of 1942, the official daily newspaper of the NSDAP, the *Völkischer Beobachter*, published a vicious and ungracious attack on Klages in the edition that appeared on the philosopher's 70th birthday. During the war years, Klages began compiling notes for a projected full-dress autobiography that was, sadly, never completed. Still, the notes are fascinating in their own right, and are well worth consulting by the student of his life and thought.

In 1944, Barth of Leipzig published the *Rhythmen und Runen*, a self-edited anthology of Klages's prose and verse writings stemming from the turn of the century (unfortunately, however, when Bouvier finally brought out their edition of his "Collected Works," which began to appear in the mid-1960s, *Rhythmen und Runen*, along with the Stefan George-monograph and such provocative pieces as the "Introduction" to Schuler's writings, were omitted from the set, in spite of the fact that the original prospectus issued to subscribers announced that these works would, in fact, be included. The reasons for this behavior are—need we say?—quite obvious).

When the war ended, Klages began to face true financial hardship, for his market, as well as his publishers, had been devastated by the horrific saturation bombing campaign with which the democratic allies had turned Germany into a shattered and burnt-out wasteland. Klages also suffered dreadfully when he learned that his beloved sister, Helene, as well as her daughter Heidi, the philosopher's niece, had perished in the agony of post-war Germany, that nightmare world wherein genocidal bestiality and sadistic cruelty were dealt out by occupying forces with a liberal hand in order most expeditiously to "re-educate" the survivors of the vanquished Reich. Although Klages had sought permission from the occupying authorities to visit his sister as she lay dying, his request was ignored (in fact, he was told that the only civilians who would be permitted to travel to Germany were the professional looters who were officially authorized to rob Germany of industrial patents and those valiant exiles who had spent the war years as literary traitors, who made a living writing scurrilous and mendacious anti-German pamphlets). This refusal, followed shortly by his receipt of the news of her miserable death, aroused an almost unendurable grief in his soul.

His spirits were raised somewhat by the *Festschrift* that was organized for his 75th birthday, and his creative drive certainly seemed to have remained undiminished by the ravages of advancing years. He was deeply immersed in the philological studies that prepared him to undertake his last great literary work, the *Die Sprache als Quell der Seelenkunde*, which was published in 1948. In this dazzling monument of 20th century scholarship, Klages conducted a comprehensive investigation of the relationship between psychology and linguistics. During that same year he also directed a devastating broadside in which he refuted the fallacious doctrines of Jamesian "pragmatism" as well as the infantile sophistries of Watson's "behaviorism." This brief but pregnant essay was entitled *Wie Finden Wir die Seele des Nebenmenschen?*

During the early 1950s, Klages's health finally began to deteriorate, but he was at least heartened by the news that there were serious plans afoot among his admirers and disciples to get his classic treatises back into print as soon as possible. Death came at last to Ludwig Klages on July 29, 1956. The cause of death was determined to have been a heart attack. He is buried in the Kilchberg cemetery, which overlooks Lake Zurich.

Understanding Klagesian Terms

A brief discussion of the philosopher's technical terminology may provide the best preparation

for an examination of his metaphysics. Strangely enough, the relationship between two familiar substantives, "spirit" [*Geist*] and "soul" [*Seele*], constitutes the main source of our terminological difficulties. Confusion regarding the meaning and function of these words, especially when they are employed as technical terms in philosophical discourse, is perhaps unavoidable at the outset. We must first recognize the major problems involved before we can hope to achieve the necessary measure of clarity. Now Klages regards the study of semantics, especially in its historical dimension, as our richest source of knowledge regarding the nature of the world (metaphysics, or philosophy) and an unrivalled tool with which to probe the mysteries of the human soul (psychology, or characterology [*Charakterkunde*]). We would be well advised, therefore, to adopt an extraordinary stringency in lexical affairs. We have seen that the first, and in many ways the greatest, difficulty that can impede our understanding of biocentric thought confronts us in our dealings with the German word *Geist*. *Geist* has often been translated as "spirit" or "mind," and, less often, as "intellect." As it happens, the translation of Hegel's *Phänomenologie des Geistes* that most American students utilized in their course-work during the 1960s and 1970s was entitled "The Phenomenology of Mind" (which edition was translated with an Introduction and Notes by J. B. Bailey, and published by Harper Torchbooks, New York, 1967).

Lest it be thought that we are perversely attributing to the word *Geist* an exaggeratedly polysemic status, we would draw the reader's attention to the startling fact that Rudolf Hildebrandt's entry on this word in the Grimm *Wörterbuch* comprises more than one hundred closely printed columns. Hildebrandt's article has even been published separately as a book. Now in everyday English usage, spirit (along with its cognates) and soul (along with its cognates) are employed as synonyms. As a result of the lexical habits to which we have grown accustomed, our initial exposure to a philosopher who employs soul and spirit as *antonyms* can be a somewhat perplexing experience. It is important for us to realize that we are not entering any quixotic protest here against familiar lexical custom. We merely wish to advise the reader that whilst we are involved in the interpretation of Klagesian thought, soul and spirit are to be treated consistently as technical philosophical terms bearing the specific meanings that Klages has assigned to them.

Our philosopher is not being needlessly obscure or perversely *recherché* in this matter, for although there are no unambiguous distinctions drawn between soul and spirit in English usage, the German language recognizes some very clear differences between the terms *Seele* and *Geist*, and Hildebrandt's article amply documents the widely ramified implications of the distinctions in question. In fact, literary discourse in the German-speaking world is often characterized by a lively awareness of these very distinctions. Rudolf Kassner, for instance, tells us that his friend, the poet Rainer Maria Rilke, inhabited a world of soul [*Seele*], not one of spirit [*Geist*]. In speaking of Rilke's world as that of the soul, Kassner is proclaiming the indisputable truth that Rilke's imagination inhabits an innocent, or pagan, world, a realm that is utterly devoid of such "spiritual" baggage as "sin" and "guilt." Likewise, for Kassner, as for Rilke, the world of spirit is the realm of labor and duty, which is ruled by abstractions and "ideals." I can hardly exaggerate the significance of the spirit-soul dichotomy upon which Kassner has shed so much light in these remarks on Rilke as the man of "soul." If the reader bears their substance in mind, he will find that the path to understanding shall have been appreciably cleared of irksome obstacles.

Therefore, these indispensable lexical distinctions are henceforth to function as our established

linguistic protocol. Bearing that in mind, when the reader encounters the Klagesian thesis which holds that man is the battlefield on which soul and spirit wage a war to the death, even the novice will grasp some portion of the truth that is being enunciated. And the initiate who has immersed his whole being in the biocentric doctrine will swiftly discover that he is very well prepared indeed to perpend, for instance, the characterological claim that one can situate any individual at a particular point on an extensive typological continuum at one extreme of which we situate such enemies of sexuality and sensuous joy as the early Christian hermits or the technocrats and militarists of our own day, all of whom represent the complete dominance of *spirit*; and at the opposite extreme of which we locate the Dionysian maenads of antiquity and those rare modern individuals whose delight in the joys of the senses enables them to attain the loftiest imaginable pinnacle of ecstatic vitality: the members of this second group, of course, comprise *the party of life*, whose ultimate allegiance is rendered to *soul*.

Before we conclude this brief digression into terminological affairs, we would advise those readers whose insuperable hostility to every form of metaphysical "idealism" compels them to resist all attempts to "place" spirit and soul as "transcendental" entities, that they may nevertheless employ our terms as heuristic expedients, much as Ampère employed the metaphor of the "swimmer" in the electric "current."

Biocentric Metaphysics in its Historical Context

Perhaps a brief summary will convey at least some notion of the sheer originality and the vast scope of the biocentric metaphysics. Let us begin by placing some aspects of this philosophical system in historical context. For thousands of years, western philosophers have been deeply influenced by the doctrine, first formulated by the Eleatic school and Plato, which holds that the images that fall upon our sensorium are merely deceitful phantoms. Even those philosophers who have rebelled against the schemes devised by Plato and his successors, and who consider themselves to be "materialists," "monists," "logical atomists," etc., reveal that have been infected by the disease even as they resist its onslaught, for in many of their expositions the properties of matter are presented as if they were independent entities floating in a void that suspiciously resembles the transcendent Platonic realm of the "forms."

Ludwig Klages, on the other hand, demonstrates that it is precisely the images and their ceaseless transformations that constitute the only realities. In the unique phenomenology of Ludwig Klages, images constitute the souls of such phenomena as plants, animals, human beings, and even the cosmos itself. These images do not deceive: they *express*; these living images are not to be "grasped," not to be rigidified into concepts: they are to be *experienced*. The world of things, on the other hand, forms the proper subject of scientific explanatory schemes that seek to "fix" things in the "grasp" of concepts. Things are appropriated by men who owe their allegiance to the will and its projects. The agents of the will appropriate the substance of the living world in order to convert it into the dead world of things, which are reduced to the status of the material components required for purposeful activities such as the industrial production of high-tech weapons systems. This purposeful activity manifests the outward operations of an occult and dæmonic principle of destruction.

Klages calls this destructive principle "spirit" (*Geist*), and he draws upon the teaching of Aristotle in attempting to account for its provenance, for it was Aristotle who first asserted that spirit (*nous*) invaded the substance of man from "outside." Klages's interpretation of this

Aristotelian doctrine leads him to conclude that spirit invaded the realm of life from outside the spatio-temporal world. Likewise, Klages draws on the thought of Duns Scotus, Occam and other late mediaeval English thinkers when he situates the characteristic activity of spirit in the *will* rather than in the intellect. Completely original, however, is the Klagesian doctrine of the mortal hostility that exists between spirit and life (=soul). The very title of the philosopher's major metaphysical treatise proclaims its subject to be "The Spirit as Adversary of the Soul" (*Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele*).

The indivisible body-soul unity that had constituted the living substance of man during the "primordial," or prehistoric, phase of his existence, in time becomes the focus of spirit's war against life. Spirit severs the vital connection by thrusting itself, like the thin end of an invasive wedge, between the poles of body and soul. History is the tragic chronicle that recounts the ceaseless war that is waged by spirit against life and soul. When the ever-expanding breach between body and soul finally becomes an unbridgeable abyss, the living substance is no more, although no man can predict how long man may endure as a hollow shell or simulacrum. The ceaseless accumulation of destructive power by spirit is accompanied by the reduction of a now devitalized man to the status of a mere machine, or "robot," who soullessly regurgitates the hollow slogans about "progress," "democracy," and the delights of "the consumer society" that are the only values recognized in this world of death. The natural world itself becomes mere raw material to be converted into "goods" for the happy consumer.

A Unified System of Thought: Graphology

Let us now turn to a more detailed survey of the elements that comprise the biocentric system of metaphysics. The thought of Ludwig Klages comprises several structural components, which form a series of interdependent and increasingly comprehensive fields of research. Although each component may be profitably examined as a discrete entity, we can only grasp the full grandeur of Klagesian thought when we study the various components in the context of their interrelationships within the comprehensive system that the philosopher has constructed, for it is only when we view his thought as a unified system that we can comprehend its truly unsurpassed metaphysical profundity. Thus, graphology constitutes one element of expression-research, which, in its turn, constitutes one element of characterology. Characterology, finally, is the indispensable element that enables us to formulate a coherent interpretation of the nature of the universe, viz. philosophy in the strict sense.

Although graphology didn't initially interest the "natural science" psychologists, the investigations that were conducted by Klages eventually evoked the interest of psychiatrists and applied psychologists, who would eventually incorporate some of his teachings in the curriculum of German universities. Graphology was also utilized in such fields as child-guidance and clinical psychology.

Klages was preceded in this field of research by a host of investigators, most of whom relied on intuitive guesses and inspired leaps of deduction in developing their own, occasionally quite profound, theories. Klages, in fact, pays explicit tribute to these pathfinders in numerous of his graphological publications. (Americans might be startled to learn that Edgar Allan Poe himself has an honorable place in the illustrious line of graphological prophets!) Nevertheless, it was only at the end of the 19th century that the interpretation of written script was erected upon an enduring scientific foundation by the Frenchman J.-H. Michon and the German Wilhelm Preyer.

The most renowned of Klages's contributions to graphology is his idea of the *Formniwo*, or "style-value." With the aid of this tool, the researcher can discriminate between various exemplars (handwritten samples) under examination, and can apply a general overall evaluation (negative, positive, or, even, ambiguous), without the guess-work and shoddy formulations of earlier students, who relied on "isolated signs" to guide them. Klages employs this concept of "style-value" to examine organic, or "holistic" entities, and his evaluation proceeds from a global perception of the personal expression through to a more detailed scrutiny. The procedure begins with an analytical inspection carried out on three levels: 1. the person's driving-forces or motivations ("interests"); 2. the person's creative impulses and level of intelligence; and 3. the person's civic or political virtues. Klages tells us frankly that if we are aware of a person's emotional makeup, the degree to which he or she is a productive and community-minded member of the *polis*, and how creative the person is, we know pretty much how that person will react to a life-situation.

We can best understand a person's emotional life and the level of his intelligence through an analysis of the characteristic *rhythm* that his handwriting displays. Rhythm is manifested in the harmony of spaces and forms, as evidenced in the margins, the spaces between the lines, and between the letters and words. Here we find the most accurate indications as to the nature of the inner life of the person, and how rich or poor is his thought. The creative elements are best observed in the *simplification* and *improvement* that we find in the person's handwriting. Just as mankind is dependent upon the creative genius for improvements in the cultural and technological fields, and upon the simplifications in technique that are brought about by the inventor, so too will these characteristics be evident in an individual's handwriting. The creative person is always interested in improving his "tools," as it were. The degree to which the person will be a coöperative and responsible member of the community is reflected in the *legibility* and *fluency* of his handwriting. The legibility of a man's exemplars is obviously going to indicate his ability to communicate successfully. The fluency will demonstrate the person's level-headedness and sincerity.

The five keys to the evaluation of style are: 1) *Rhythm*. Klages tells us that there are inherent rhythmic patterns that govern the universe. We are able to recognize and gauge these rhythms in the spatial patterns of a person's handwriting by examining whether the margins are contextually harmonious, viz., we must scrutinize a particular exemplar with an eye to determining the natural configurations (structural harmonies) formed by the gaps that intervene between the lines, between the words, and also between the individual letters. Because disharmonies are arresting—they "leap to the eye," as it were—we have no difficulty in establishing the grade of spatial rhythm in an exemplar. The rating of handwriting's rhythm is more a matter of insight and intuition than of expert reasoning. 2) *Symmetry*. In a harmonious exemplar we find that the person does not overdevelop one zone at the expense of another zone; i.e., we do not find the bottom loop of a *q* to be exaggerated as against the upper zone stroke. In short, where we find such a deviation, or loss of proportion, we must assign the exemplar a low grade. An examination of the individual character's height (as from the bottom of the *q* to its summit) cannot furnish us with a sufficient basis upon which to evaluate the overall symmetry of a person's handwriting. Where we find excessive width, pressure, slant, loops, bars, dots, flourishes, or any other such deviation, we must recognize a disturbance of symmetry. The letters, whether they are capitals or minimum letters, must be well developed in a gradual fashion, avoiding a deflated narrowness as well as an inflated width. In short a character is to be

judged both on its height as well as on the amount of space that it covers. Wide lower zone loops in an overall narrow handwriting or conjoined with deflated small letters, indicate a lack of symmetry; and unevenness of pressure or slant belong as well to the category of disproportions.

3) *Creativeness*. Although very few people exhibit a high degree of symmetry in their handwriting, it is a fact that even fewer display creativeness. Most people will not be grieved by this fact, as most people would rather belong to the bovine throng than to the creative elite—even in their handwriting! Only perhaps one in a thousand are willing to become heretics, to break away from the sweaty masses, to display the slightest signs of independence and boldness, to write an individual hand. In fact, only a genius is capable of inventing new and finer characters and connections, even though such creations might make for easier writing without impaired or compromised legibility. However, we must realize that an original hand and a creative hand can be two different things, for an original scribe is not always creative, but *a creative person always will compose an original script*. An original script must merely avoid the existing patterns; but an original script must add something to the already existing fund of patterns. A creative script must facilitate writing, and only he who writes a great deal, one who must confront and develop his ideas on the wing, as they come and go, will desire more easily written characters, and will experience the urge to create them. Such a person is ordinarily well educated, and will continue to improve his script throughout his life because he is demanding and discriminating. Klages emphatically asserts that *eccentricity alone cannot indicate the creative scribe*. All innovations in script will be simpler and easier to write—purpose is the rule for the creative scribe, and not merely *unnaturalness*.

4) *Legibility*. A letter is written in order to be read, obviously, and any letter that cannot be deciphered by the addressee has clearly failed of its purpose. We do not normally read from letter to letter, or from word to word. Instead, we read from cluster to cluster of words and only stumble when we come across an unfamiliar expression, or an illegible one. In consequence, the only method that we have to establish objectively the legibility of an exemplar is to remove words at random from their context and scrutinize them. Very often, the most intelligent writers will not pass this test.

5) *Speed*. The elementary law of creativeness is violated if the sample has not been written spontaneously, if it has required an inordinate amount of time in which to be produced. What is needed here is time saving simplicity. In fact, slowly produced writings often give evidence of criminal tendencies in the scribe. Although such scribes will attempt to furnish a genteel, legible, and conforming script, they often attempt to patch up their initially unworthy efforts by closings open letters, by straightening out faulty strokes, and by re-crossing their t-bars. The overall impression such exemplars give is one of uncleanness. A fluently produced sample, on the other hand, will show a right-slanted writing, with irregularly placed i-dots, with most dots placed ahead of the letter itself, with other letters and letter connections with garland shapes rather than angles or arcades, with the left margins tending to widen as the scribe reaches the bottom of the page, with smooth, light, and unbroken strokes.

Klages definitively refuted the doctrine of "fixed signs," which had so misled his predecessors, who erroneously ascribed "atomistic" character traits to discrete signs without perceiving the contextual matrix from which the signs are born. The biocentric investigator does not concern himself with expressive fragments: *for life can only be found in organic wholes*. To summarize: idiosyncratic traits are revealed in such formal elements as evenness, regularity, tempo, distribution, pressure, breadth, consistency, variety, connectedness, "angle of incidence," and initial stress of the handwritten sample, which is a permanent record of expressive gesture, a residue of living being, an examination of which can eventually enable us to embark upon ever

more profound investigations of the inner life of man. (The major graphological texts published by Klages are: *Die Probleme der Graphologie* ["The Problems of Graphology"], published in 1910; the *Handschrift und Charakter* ["Handwriting and Character"], of 1912, which has gone through 26 editions; and the *Einführung in die Psychologie der Handschrift* ["Introduction to the Psychology of Handwriting"], which appeared in 1928.)

A Unified System of Thought: Expression Analysis

From this brief glance at the narrow field of biocentric graphology, we now proceed to a more comprehensive division of the Klagesian system of thought, viz. the "analysis of expression" (*Ausdruckskunde*). According to Klages, the larger part of our knowledge of the inner life of those around us stems from our ability to comprehend the meanings inherent in each person's gestures and facial expressions. This knowledge is not mediated by consciousness, for we must grasp the inner life of another directly, if we would grasp it at all. Every expressive movement is the precipitate of a lived impulse, and, unlike the viewpoint advanced by certain "behaviorists," these impulses are not reducible to the simple antithetic pair: pleasure or pain. Every expressive movement can be interpreted so as to reveal the form, duration, and sequence of the inner impulses. Klages subtly differentiates between several types of movements: the expressive movement, the mechanical movement, and the volitional movement. The expressive movement is regarded as one aspect of the impulse movement; the reflex movement is regarded as an element of the expressive movement; the mechanical movements earlier existed as impulse movements and are to be grouped under this head; volitional-movement is an impulse-movement controlled by the will. The types of movements are differentiated by their relationship to their aims. Volition movements are shaped by expectations of successful outcomes. Expressive movements are symbolic enactments; thus, the facial expression that embodies terror is the symbolic performance of the motions that represent the actions of one who would escape from a situation that evokes terror.

Klages rejects the Darwinian theory of expression, which interprets all expressive movements as the rudimentary remains of actions that once were purposive. This view reflects Darwin's insistence on rationalizing the "mechanisms" of nature, in spite of the obvious fact that expressive gestures have their origins in the subjectivity of the organism in which they arise. *Pace* Darwin, Klages insists that the living being never responds to the same stimulus with the same response: it responds to similar impressions with similar reactions. Instincts are similar only in species that are similar, and the process of individuation can only be consummated after the development of judgment and will. The will is not rooted in the affects, for its task is to bind, or repress, the affective life. The power of the will can be expressed as a quantum of driving force that is non-qualitative. It harnesses life in order to direct it to a goal, and the regulation of volition-movement is completely different from expressive movement. The expressive movement has no aim other than itself; the impulse-movement derives its aims from its environment; and for the volitional-movement, the conscious willing of the aim is of the essence. Actions (in contrast to pathic, dream-like states) are volitional movements (handwriting belongs under this head). Since the personality comprises a constellation of dynamic relationships, every movement expresses personality in its essential nature, for the character of an individual is revealed in every action. However, one must study aspects of expression that are outside the realm of volition, not subject to the control of consciousness, and beyond the governance of intention and learned skills. Volitional movement expresses the personality of the willing person;

it does not originate in vitality, for it is chained to the causal nexus originating in the conscious mind. By itself, the volition is not expressive; the important thing is the individual course of the movement. There is present in all of an individual's expressive movements a unity of character, and any movement on the part of a person will assume that type or manner of movement which is characteristic of that individual. Klages asserts that the writing movement, for instance, is the manifestation of the will to express oneself with the aid of a certain writing system, the volition, which is the current state of some personality. Therefore, handwriting is a volitional movement and carries the idiosyncratic stamp of any personality.

Volitional movements cannot exist without impulse movements, but the impulse movement can exist without the volitional one. Every state of the body expresses an impulse system, and every attitude finds its appropriate expression. Every movement of the body is a vital movement that has two constituent parts, the impulse and the expressive. Therefore, an expressive movement is the visible manifestation of the impulses and affects that are symbolically represented in the vital movement of which it is a component part. The expression manifests the pattern of a psychic movement as to its strength, duration, and direction.

Now how is it possible for human beings to perceive, and to interpret, the expression of the soul? Klages answers this by explaining that the capacity for expression is coöordinated with the human being's capacity for impression. Impression is split into two functions: a passive ("pathic") one, which receives the impression; and an active one, which makes it possible for one to become aware of one's own nature as well as that of others—only through this objectification can expression have meaning. It is the very foundation of all genuine research into the study of expressive gestures.

Klages cautions the student to avoid all vain quests after *qualitative states* of expressive movement; instead, we must examine vital "essences," because, in the end, isolated segments of expression must not be divorced from their organic matrix. This point of view recapitulates Klages's criticisms of the graphological theory of "isolated signs," which can never reveal the global structure that embodies the elements of personality.

The study of expressive movement does not derive its findings from the analysis of purely "objective" states, for the entities examined by the biocentric researcher are *experienced* as living beings. Klages's affirmation of the value of expression is in perfect harmony with his high evaluation of the pathic or ecstatic abandonment of the ego in a surrender to the actuality of the living images. We can locate an individual's capacity for such self-abandonment on a continuum that is graduated according to the living content. According to the entity in which it occurs, each rhythmic pulsation gives birth to another and yet another vital content, whether it is manifested as a faint arousal of the soul or as pathic frenzy. Paradoxically, one person's rage may be shallower and feebler than the mere breathing of another person. The man who is able to observe this, and who is thereby enabled to understand the implications of his observations, so that he can distinguish authentic personality from the mere precipitate of its psychic activity, such as a handwritten exemplar, has perceived the agency through which each formal, or functional, element alternately expresses a 'minus' character or a 'plus' character. He is able to determine, as between one instance of expressive movement and another, whether he is witnessing the strength of a vital impulse or the weakness of an antagonistic inhibition, and can then correctly evaluate the character's true traits.

The power of creativity, or formative ability [*Gestaltungskraft*], which is the measure of one's capacity for enhanced intensity of expressive force, has its only source in nature. However, every vital impulse is impeded by certain binding forces, or inhibitions. This duality is referred to by Klages as the "dual significance of expression." Thus, if we witness an individual's performance of a violent act, this act may be the result of the attractive force of the goal towards which he is aiming; or it may, on the other hand, indicate merely a lack of inhibition on the part of the person in question. The will to domination may indicate strength of will, of course; but it may also indicate an embittered affective life. Likewise, sensitivity may arise from emotional delicacy; but it may also be the result of emotional irritability. Such judgments can only be validated on the basis of a global examination of the individual under review.

As we shall see shortly, Klages's philosophy holds that the historical evolution of culture can only be interpreted as murderous record, a chronicle of ever-mounting horror in the course of which the vital power of expressive forces recedes before the soulless world ruled by the will, most perfectly embodied in the all-powerful state. But the enlightened biocentrist will turn from this dead *Dingwelt* (thing-world) to seek refreshment in the en-souled *Ausdruckswelt* (expression-world).

A Unified System of Thought: Characterology

From the study of expressive movement we proceed to characterology (*Charakterkunde*). Just as graphology led to the more comprehensive science of expression, the science of expression, in turn, provides the fund of empirical observations that supports the biocentric characterology. Klagesian characterology, in fact, constitutes the most comprehensive study of the human being that has ever been formulated. (Characterology, in its turn, constitutes the indispensable structural component of the biocentric scheme of metaphysics).

The *Grundlagen der Charakterkunde* presents Klages's system of psychology in great detail, and because his *psychological* exposition in that treatise is so intimately interrelated with the *philosophical* exposition contained in *Der Geist* and in his other philosophical publications, we will treat the characterology and the metaphysics as indivisible aspects of one vast symphony of thought. However, we will say a few words at this point about the most original feature of biocentric characterology, viz., the presentation of character as a dynamic structural system, comprising such elements as the material (*Stoff*), the structure (*Gefüge*), the specific type or idiosyncratic quality (*Artung*), the architectonics (*Aufbau*), and the constitutional disposition (*Haltungsanlagen*).

The material comprises such innate capacities as recollection, cognition as it is embodied in conceptual thought, critical "penetration" (or acumen), intensity, sensibility, and many other capacities, all of which are innate, i.e., conditioned by the genetic endowment of the particular character. From the outset, Klages rejects with some contempt the inadequate "tabula rasa" tradition of British empiricism, which he correctly traces back to its source in Locke and his school. This innate material occurs in various combinations that vary from person to person, and although Klages ordinarily voices opposition to methodologies that are based upon quantitative "formalism," he agrees that the material is measurable in at least a metaphorical sense, for it constitutes our personal possession, the "capital," as it were, with which we are equipped.

The structure comprises such differentiations as: temperamental or reserved, wandering or fixed,

emotionally stable or unstable. Within each personality there is a unique tempo of affective excitability that can be analogized to an emotional wave, whose quantum of reactivity is functionally related to an individual's internal organic processes. Unlike the purely innate capacities, the characteristics can be adequately expressed as a correlation between the magnitude of an impulse and the force of resistance to that impulse (we had occasion earlier to refer briefly to this relationship as it pertains to the analysis of expressive gestures).

The quality relates to the formal aspects of volition and the tendencies of the affects, which unite to form the system of driving-forces or "interests." Specific driving-forces are by their nature directional, as we can see by examining the different goals toward which a greedy person or domineering person seem to be impelled. Architectonics constitutes the correlated interrelationships that weave all the other elements of the character together.

Finally, the dispositions (or attitudes) comprise those traits that are obvious even to the cursory glance of an external observer, and among these traits we find courage, talkativeness, diffidence, and obnoxiousness.

However, the most important of all the elements that make up the character is the qualitative estimation of an individual's capacities of feeling and volition. Volition is a limited instantiation of the will, and the will is of the very essence of spirit; in fact the will is the darkest and most destructive of spirit's manifestations, the demon of negation, the very essence of the void.

The constellation of the driving-forces constitutes the personality, and these driving forces are as diverse and multiform as life. The drive is manifest as an urge that issues in a movement, and that movement is generated under the influence of the non-conceptual, vital experience of a power to which Klages has given the name *symbol*. The driving-forces are polarized, for a drive that has its source in an excess of energy (thus entailing an impulse to discharge energy) must be contrasted with the drive that arises out of a lack of energy (which will give rise to the attempt to recoup energy). There are drives that can be stirred without regard to time, as well as drives that manifest periodicity

The instincts are opposed to the will. The will devises conscious, purposive projects that are in conflict with the immediate desire for gratification of the instincts. In opposition to the world as it is felt, the will erects conscious purposiveness and the life-hostile, moralistic codes of ethics. The authentic content of the personality is drawn from the living world, but the will ruthlessly imposes form upon that content by constricting, inhibiting, directing, or suppressing the instincts and affects. The will possesses no original, creative power of its own. The will is incarnated in man as the ego, which can be expressed metaphorically as the rudder on a vessel whose only function is controlling the vessel's course. The will-as-ego is characterized by self-awareness and insistent activity. The instinctual drives, on the other hand, give birth to an unconscious, "pathic" surrender to the living cosmos. The instincts and affects are revealed in the love for knowledge, Eros, the quest for truth, and the admiration of beauty. The will reveals its nature in duty, conscience, ambition, greed, and egomania. The will seeks to repress or extirpate the vital impulses, and the destructive effects of the will in action can even be fatal to the organism, as we can see in the case of the political revolutionary who embarks on a fatal hunger-strike. The shattered health and twisted mind resulting from the obsessive asceticism of the religious zealot is too familiar to require further elaboration.

Philosophical Works

The strictly philosophical writings of Ludwig Klages comprise a wide range of materials. In length they range from pithy articles contributed to various lexicons and encyclopedias, through extended essays and revamped lectures, and culminate in his full-dress, formal treatises, the most comprehensive of which is the epochal *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele* [3 volumes, 1929-32]. *Der Geist* contains an astonishing 1500 pages of text as well as an elaborate scholarly apparatus devoted to source notes and ancillary material, the closely-printed text of which would make a fair-sized book on its own!

One of his shorter essays, the *Brief Über Ethik*, which was published shortly after the German defeat in 1918, is of exceptional interest to the student of race. Unlike many of his optimistic contemporaries, Klages viewed the catastrophic mongelization that was poisoning the Aryan race as an ineluctable doom, the fatal and irremediable dissolution of life under the savage assault of triumphant spirit. In the *Brief*, his intense study of the psychological aspects of man's disastrous evolution, enabled him to trace the 20th century's accursed proliferation of "slave"-types and men without character to a single poisonous source, for the production of such wretched types, he proclaims, "has arisen, arises now, and will arise, always and everywhere, as the direct result of racial bastardization and pollution of the blood!" On similar grounds, he excoriates the modern world's monstrous plague of moralistic fanaticism in the *Brief*, asserting that the rapidly increasing legions of ethical preachers constitute one more manifestation of the dysgenic breeding that is destroying our culture. The moral maniac's twisted psyche within as well as his distorted physiognomy without clearly demonstrate that such a creature "is merely the spiritual expression of tainted blood!" Because the modern world regards the man of ethics, will, and reason as the sole proper vehicle of ego and spirit, no one should be surprised that traditional and healthy value must go to the wall. Race, breeding, nobility, depth of soul, beauty, courage, and blood, are one and all devoid of substance to the moralist and the egalitarian crusader. To them, man is his mind, his morals, and his ego, and the man who has given his sole allegiance to ego and spirit, has simultaneously surrendered all interest in the particular man. Henceforth he compulsively devotes his attentions to man as generality. Klages ridicules all respect for "humanity," that ghost of an abstraction, as a willful repudiation of every vital power of discrimination, and he who stubbornly refuses to immerse himself in the undifferentiated ochlocratic mob will always be assailed as an enemy of "mankind." This humanitarian insanity is, paradoxically, also the root of the murderous career of Christian and post-Christian civilization, for those who preach so incessantly of "love" and who babble so cretinously of "compassion," have but one response to those who do not endorse their "spiritual" values: that response is murder. The egalitarian can never face the obvious fact that wherever and whenever you order a man to love, you have guaranteed that he will respond with hate.

The racist theoreticians whom Klages most admired and cited most pertinently in his collected works were Gobineau, Ludwig Woltmann, and L. F. Clauss. Klages's analysis of the racial dimension of the science of expression is indebted to the analytical studies of race and expression published by Clauss, especially in the formulation by Klages of what we will call *the racial continuum of expression and excitability*. No objective observer would wish to deny the obvious fact that the Mediterranean division of the Aryan race is typically characterized by a greater ease of expression than is found in the Nordic Aryan. Klages enforces the validity of this truth quite vividly through the ingenious use of national stereotypes as illustrative heuristic

expedients; thus, his typological extremes extend from the Italian, in whom we find the maximum ease of expressive gesture as well as the greatest degree of temperamental excitability, passes through the various intermediary increments, and arrives at the opposite extreme of the racial continuum of expression, where Klages situates the only possible candidate for title of least expressive and most temperamentally reserved of European Aryans, viz., the Englishman.

In his critical exposition of the doctrine of the "temperaments," Klages extends his investigation of individual differences to encompass an analysis of the capacity for stimulation of the will that is peculiar to the different races. Several qualities that are falsely considered by many researchers to be permanently and deeply rooted in man, e.g., the tendency to seek for perfection and the adoption of an "idealistic" point of view, vanish almost completely in the course of a lifetime. On the other hand, the least variable property of a character is this "capacity for stimulation of the will," which Klages calls the "constant of temperament." The magnitude, or degree, of the capacity for such stimulation varies significantly between the races as well, and because it constitutes a temperamental "constant," it provides a permanent index of racial differences. The Oriental race, for instance, is characterized by a will that is far less excitable than the will of the Aryan, and Klages draws upon the great Count Gobineau for an illustration: "Consider...buying and selling as they are practiced in an Oriental bazaar. An Oriental will bargain for the same article with perfect equanimity for days on end, whereas the European loses patience after an hour, and often much sooner. Joseph Arthur de Gobineau makes a fine artistic use of these differences of character in his *Nouvelles Asiatiques*."

Like Gobineau, Woltmann, and Clauss, Klages was a universal scholar who possessed the same wide-ranging vision and the treasures of living wisdom that all of these men shared. And we can be apodictically certain that every one of these scholars would have rejected with utter scorn the narrow-minded theory, endorsed even by many modern writers who consider themselves to be the true heirs of the great racialists of yore, which holds that the quality of a man can be reduced to a mathematical expression. Without a doubt, Klages would have felt that the egalitarian lunacy that now rules the world is only slightly more ludicrous than the attempts that are made by modern anti-egalitarians to reduce man to his IQ. And when certain writers attempt to place characterology on a "scientific" basis through the use of factor-analysis—in other words, by pouring even more formalistic mathematics into the sauce!—we can imagine his ironic smile as he whispers: *sancta simplicitas*!

Klages traces the origins of the modern, mongrelized world's moralistic fanaticism and criminality back to its source in another devastatingly ironic essay, *Das Problem des SOKRATES*, in which he dismantles the beloved figure of Socrates as if he were a defective toaster-oven. Because Socrates is regarded by Klages as the very antithesis of the true philosopher, we will examine in some detail this unconventional and irreverent analysis of Socrates and his thought. Without qualification or proviso, Klages launches his attack. He sees Socrates as an utter fraud, a dissembling hypocrite, a complete ignoramus in scientific matters whose arrogance and lack of curiosity are truly astonishing. Why did Socrates ignore the truly epochal cosmological discoveries that were being made by the Hylozoists? A true philosopher would have been enthralled by the discoveries of these great scholars, but Socrates could care less. Heraclitus, Protagoras, and the Hylozoists were the true philosophers, not this rachitic ghoul, this professional sponger and house-guest, this most sophisticated of sophists who habitually sought to diminish the genuine achievements of his hated contemporaries, not by surpassing

them, but by dismissing them instead as contemptible—*sophists*!

No figure in the intellectual history of Greece had a more skilful touch when it came to lodging dust in his spectators' eyes. We witness the Socratic gambit par excellence when this logomach employs the most childish word-games conceivable in order to transform his blatant lack of creative talent into that which he has successfully persuaded all subsequent generations was, in reality, the most dazzling array of talents ever united within one mortal frame. Socrates obviously couldn't master science: therefore science is an unworthy avocation! A prominent Sophist has arrived in town, and the word is out that he has prepared his lectures with a scrupulous care for formal elegance and a proper observance of the canons of logic: therefore, says Socrates, he's nothing but logic-chopping hustler with a fancy prose style and a yen for a fast buck! From the dawn of time this has been, is now, and ever will remain, the bitter complaint leveled by the work-shy parasite against the gainfully employed citizen.

In addition to his other dubious gifts, Socrates is also an unparalleled expert at forestalling criticism, for his hidden motivation seems almost childishly transparent when we find him assuring his audience, with all the candor and guilelessness of a Uriah Heep, that the only thing that he knows is that he knows nothing! And this pish posh and flummery is still luring philosophical yokels to the Socratic side-show 2,400 years later!

In fact, the whole repertoire of Socratic methods is exactly what Hegel and Klages say that it is: a bare-faced and unworthy swindle. Furthermore, although hardly any commentator has drawn attention to the fact, Socrates was completely successful in one of his more sinister ploys, for his most subtle dialectical maneuvers can even be said to have ominous political implications in addition to their philosophical ones. We are alluding to the sly manipulation whereby Socrates assures his auditors that the truths that they seek are already within them, for his seemingly innocent claim conceals the fact that by this very means Socrates is engineering a monstrous and underhanded tyranny over naïve youths who can scarcely realize that, invariably, everything that they will "discover" within them has already been planted there by an autocratic and mendacious charlatan!

But what of the great martyr to "free thought," the plaster bust whom endless generations have been taught to revere as a saint and genius? Nonsense, says Klages. Not for the first, and certainly not for the last time, Klages confounds our expectations by explicitly endorsing his predecessor Hegel's view, for Hegel effortlessly proved that Socrates got just what was coming to him. Hegel found that the conduct of the court during the trial of Socrates was legally unimpeachable and he wholeheartedly endorsed the verdict of the court. Klages also draws on Hegel's account when he directs our attention to this charlatan's truly mortal offenses against Athens, for who among this sophist's accusers could forget for one moment the brutal crimes that were committed against the citizenry of Athens by Kritias, who in addition to being one of the the dearest pupils of Socrates, was also the bloodiest of all the Thirty Tyrants? And was not another cherished apostle—and, perhaps, a bit more—of Socrates, i.e., the slimy Alcibiades, known by both court and citizenry as the conscienceless traitor who bore the ultimate responsibility for the defeat and downfall of Athens in the Peloponnesian War? This obvious truth was disputed by no sane Athenian.

No Greek thinker known to history, in fact, has a flimsier claim to the august title of true philosopher than this mongrelized gargoye whose moral mania and theatrically grandiose death

anticipate both the ethical idiocy and the shabby demise of the founder of the Christian cult, and Klages explicitly speaks of Socrates as the ancient world's first Christian martyr. In the end, the only genuine achievements that can be credited to Socrates, Klages insists, were in the fields of epistemology and philosophical linguistics. And in all candor, who would seek to challenge the view that Socrates had about as much capacity for meaningful metaphysical speculation as your average floor-polisher? The rest is smoke and mirrors, a petty swindler's sleight of hand.

Another brief philosophical text by Klages has become his best-known and most controversial work. In 1913, publisher Eugen Diederichs and the organizers of the anniversary celebration of the "Battle of the Nations" (which had taken place at Leipzig during the Wars of Liberation against Napoleon) invited the philosopher to address the representatives of the German Youth Movement. He delivered his *Mensch und Erde*, a stunning and prophetic attack on the enemies of Mother Earth, which was later published in a commemorative volume featuring a striking piece of cover-art by the neo-pagan painter Fidus. This seminal work has only recently received its due as the first statement of the philosophy of "deep ecology" when a new edition was published in 1980 in coordination with the establishment of the German "Green" political party. In this "roll-call of the dead," Klages laments the destruction of wildlife and landscape by encroaching "civilization," and, in attacking the very idea of "Progress," Klages praises the chthonic gods who have been driven into the underworld. He deplores the extinction of animal species and their wild habitats, the loss of ancient forests, and the annihilation of aboriginal peoples. He condemns Capitalism, Christianity, and utilitarianism as weapons aimed at the destruction of the ecology. Even tourism is excoriated as just another agent of environmental destruction, and Klages laments the murder of the whales long before such a concern was widespread .

"Without a doubt," Klages says, "we are living in the age of the waning of the Soul," and he insists that when Spirit has finally silenced the "primal song of the landscape," the earth will be converted into "one gigantic Chicago interspersed with agriculture." Our machines are attended by machine-men, whose noisy and glittering amusements are unable to conceal the fact that the world has been stripped of all life-enhancing symbols and ritual observances. Our hearts are barren, and "their inner rivulets can no longer water the blossoms of song and holy feasts; there remains only this bleak and grey workaday world," in this age of soul-destruction.

"Progress" is simply an "unfettered lust for murder," and all of nature must perish "before its poisonous breath." Our age has lost all "knowledge of the world-creating, world-weaving force of all-unifying Eros." "Originating with Socrates and coming through Kant all the way down to the present age, the hoarse demand of the Will resonates in every one of the refractions, disguises, and transformations assumed by our ethical systems, that it is the duty of man to control himself, to subject his desires to the rule of reason, to moderate his feelings when he can't manage to exterminate them entirely." Moralistic preachers, devoted to the "improvement" of man, are nothing but criminals against life, whose immunity to the lessons of experience is reflected in their oblivion to the data of our historical experience. The "inborn" conscience, as a matter of fact, is not at all an original fact of existence, for it cannot be found anywhere else in the animal kingdom; conscience is merely spirit's poison at its work of destroying the soul of man. Under this influence, the soul can no longer dwell amid the pulsating flux of images, for a despotic rationality, in tandem with this moral mania, finally substitutes for the endless "becoming" of the actuality of the world of nature, the disconnected, dead world of "being."

"Whatever falls under the ray of intellect is immediately turned into a mere thing, a numbered object of thought connected only mechanically with other objects. The paradox enunciated by the modern sage, 'we perceive but what is dead', is a lapidary formulation of a profound truth." Klages tells us that Life must soon perish, "for the hour of returning has been missed."

The philosopher's meditations on the myths and mysteries of the ancient Mediterranean world form the substance of the treatise entitled *Vom kosmogonischen Eros*, which appeared in 1922. Paradoxically, perhaps, in view of the anti-Socratism that we've been discussing, Klages follows the classic Platonic exposition in the "Symposium" regarding the nature of Eros, which is held to be compounded of antitheses such as wealth and poverty, fullness and emptiness, possession and want. This insight accounts for the dual nature of all striving, for every impulse and every desire arises from a lack of something that we yearn to possess and perishes at the moment when that which we have yearned to possess falls into our hands.

The duality that constitutes the substance of man is also clarified in the Eros-book. In primordial ages, man's nature comprised the connected poles of body and soul, whose vital bonds it is spirit's mission to sever from the moment that man enters into the realm of recorded history. Klages also clarifies the unique status of the image in his course of his exposition of biocentric phenomenology: "Wherever we find a living body, there we also find a soul; wherever we find a soul, there also we find a living body. The soul is the meaning of the body, and the image of the body is the manifestation of the soul. Whatever appears has a meaning, and every meaning reveals itself as it is made manifest. Meaning is experienced inwardly, the manifestation outwardly. The first must become image if it is to communicate itself, and the image must be re-internalized so that it may take effect. Those are, in the most literal sense, the twin poles of actuality." (Klages's exposition had, for once, been anticipated by Friedrich Paulsen, in whose textbook, "An Introduction to Philosophy," we find the following remark: "Either we must regard the entire body, including the nervous system, as a system of means external to the soul, or we must regard the entire body as the visible expression, or physical equivalent, of life" [emphasis added]).

Life is not governed by spirit, for "the law of spirit" demands that spirit divorce itself utterly from the "rhythms of cosmic life." Only the living image possesses a truly vital autonomy, for the image alone is independent of spirit. The image remains totally unaffected by whether or not the receiver of the sensuous image recollects its visitation afterwards. The thing, on the other hand, is *thought* into the world of consciousness. It exists as a dimension of a person's inwardness. Life is not directed towards the future, for the future is not a property of actual time. The great error of Promethean man was in his elevating that which was to come to the same stage of actuality as the past. The "man of 'world-history'" is a man dedicated to voids. He has annihilated and is annihilating the actuality of what has been in order to devote himself more completely to the projects of a hallucination called the future. He insists on shattering the fruitful connection of the near and the far in order to erect in its place the present's Wandering Jew-like fascination "with a distant phantasm of futurity." Actual time is a "stream coursing from the future into the past."

This "cosmogonic Eros" of which Klages speaks is the life-creating son of the Mother Goddess of the prehistoric Aegean world, and must not be confused with the vapid cupids that can still be found on ancient Roman frescoes, whose pale plaster descendants so gaudily adorn the walls and ceilings of the palaces of rococo Europe. A more authentic incarnation is found in the Theogony

of Hesiod, in which the poet calls Eros one of the first beings, born without father or mother. Likewise, in the Orphic hymns, Kronos is his father; Sappho calls him the offspring of Earth and Heaven; and Simonides traces the descent of Eros to the union of Aphrodite and Ares. Hesiod's treatment, by far the most profound, portrays Eros as the force of attraction upon which the very existence of the material world depends. When Hesiod makes Eros the offspring of the rainbow and the westwind, he is indicating, by the use of metaphor, that spring, the season in which they prevail, is the time of love. For Hesiod, Eros is "the most beautiful of all the deathless gods." The historical aspect of Klages's text is largely an apologia for the *Weltanschauung* of Bachofen, with its forthright celebration of the "world of woman" and the life of "primitive" peoples (his most elaborate presentation of the *Magna Mater* and her world will appear in the crucial chapter on the "Great Mother" in *Der Geist*, which bears the telling subtitle "Marginal Observations on Bachofen's Discoveries").

Eros is to be distinguished from "love" and "sex," both of which are tied to that obnoxious entity the "self" (*Selbst*), which tends to become the center of gravity in the life of man as history progressively tears his soul from the earth, turning the richly-endowed individual into a hollow mask and robot, divorced from Eros and earth. ***All Eros is Eros of distance (Eros der Ferne)***, and a moment's reflection will suffice to demonstrate that nothing is more characteristic of our modern planetary technology than its tendency toward the annihilation of distance. Likewise, the will-to-possession, the impulse for domination, and the thoughtless addiction to "information" that characterizes modern man are all condemned by Klages as attempts to lift the veil of Isis, which he sees as the ultimate "offense against life." "The intellectual will to power is the crime against life itself, causing man to meet life's vindictive retaliation." For behind the veil, there is "nothingness," which is to say spirit and the will to desubstantialize the cosmos. This "modern man" has traveled very far indeed from the *Naturvölker*, who prefer life to cogitation, and who experience the erotic bond without commingling their precious egos, whose desire is impersonal and not focused upon an insane idealization and apotheosis of the loved one. For Klages, the most vital manifestation of Eros is not the "love unto death" of sentimental "tragedy," but is, instead, a surrender of the will to the impersonal forces of the cosmos. There is an Eros of the home as well as of the homeland, an Eros of the implement that we have fashioned with our own hands as well as an Eros of the art work that we have created with the implement's aid. Eros inhabits, in fact, any object of perception to which we feel intimately connected, and all such objects and events become living symbols of our joys or of our sorrows. The ego has nothing to do with these erotic bonds, anymore than it has anything to do with maternal love.

Soul and Spirit

The very title of Klages's metaphysical treatise, *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele*, "The Spirit as Adversary of the Soul," refers to the ceaseless and savage battle waged by spirit against the soul. The mounting onslaught of spirit against the living soul has constituted the innermost essence of the life of man. Whereas spirit once existed in a temporary and uneasy symbiosis with the soul, in the course of human history spirit's destructive power waxes ever stronger, until spirit eventually abandons the symbiotic compromise that endured whilst the powers of life were still exalted, and erupts into the waning empire of the living soul as a savage and unyielding dæmon whose malevolent career reaches its grisly climax in our apocalyptic age of "virtual" reality, compassion-babble, hydrogen bombs, and racial chaos.

But just what is this "soul"? In the first place, the soul is not something exclusively human, for all phenomena possess soul, viz., the sea, animals, mountains, the wind, and the stars. In fact, all phenomena are "en-souled." Now the soul possesses two poles, the archetypal soul and the substantial soul, or, to look upon these matters from a slightly different angle, a passive receptor pole and an active effector pole. The passive receptor pole is, in the thought of Klages, the truly characteristic aspect for the soul's life. From its birth, the soul leads a pathic, or passive, dream-existence, in which its life is filled with visionary images. The soul only becomes released for activity in the phenomenal world when the bearer of that soul is confronted by the polarity of another soul, which forces each soul to reveal its nature to the other. The original characteristics of the soul are night, dreaming, rhythmic pulsation, infinite distance, and the realm of the unconscious.

The "elementary" substances that constitute the earth originated under the complex influence of telluric and cosmic forces, and the symbiotic interaction of all telluric phenomena was required in order to bring the animate world into being. According to the doctrine of the "actuality of the images," the plant represents the transitional stage between the element and the living creature. (The botanist Jagadis Bose performed experiments that he felt conclusively demonstrated the capacity of plants to experience pain). The plant experiences life in the form of growth and maturation, as well as in the creation of offspring through the processes familiar to natural science. Spontaneous movements of various kinds are characteristic of plant-life, viz., the turning of the leaves and buds to the light, the sending of the root-system into the soil in order to extract nourishment from the earth, the fixing of supportive tendrils to fixed surfaces, etc. Klages draws our attention to the fact that there are several varieties of plant that are indubitably capable of self-motility. There are, at this threshold of another realm of being, organisms such as sea squirts, mussels, oysters, sponges, and zoophytes, which become fixed in their habitat only after the early stages of the lives. (When Verworn published his experiments on the psychical life of the protista in 1899, he attributed sensation to these organisms, a position that certainly has much to recommend it. But when he attempted to demonstrate that even the will is in evidence at this stage of life, one can only shake one's head in disbelief, for that which this author adduces as evidence of volition in the protista is the simple phenomenon of reaction to stimuli! Thus, Verworn equates the reactive responses in the protista to the action of the will in man, in whom the "volitional" processes are more highly developed. This is certainly a case of blindness to a difference of essence.)

In the next developmental stage, i.e., that of the animal, the soul is now captured in a living body. The drives and instincts make their first appearance during this phase. The characteristic functions of the creature comprise physical sensation (as represented by the body-pole) and contemplation (the psychical pole). The living body is the phenomenon of the soul, and the soul is the meaning of the living body. However, in opposition to the realm of the lower animals, wherein sensation dominates contemplation, we find that in the higher animals, contemplation is strengthened at the expense of the physical sensations, as the result of spirit's invasion of the life-cell, which occurs at this time. Now if one were to consider "the waking state" to be synonymous with consciousness itself, than one must conclude that consciousness is present in animal and man alike. According to Klages, however, it is only the capacity for conceptual thought that characterizes consciousness, so that we must attribute consciousness proper only to man. In the animal, the image cannot be divorced from the sensory impression. In man, on the other hand, the content of the visual image can be separated from the act of perception that

receives that content through the sensorium. Therefore, although the animal undoubtedly possesses instincts, only man is truly conscious.

The biological processes that constitute plant life and animal life are also operative in man, but with the intervention of spirit (at least during the initial phase of development, during which spirit and life maintain some kind of balance), he is capable of creating symbolic systems of communication and expression, viz., art and poetry, as well as myth and cult. The processes of life establish the polar connection between the actual images of the world (or, the "macrocosm") and the pathic soul that receives them (or, the "microcosm").

The *human* soul comprises the totality of the immediate experiences of man. It is the soul that receives its impressions of actuality in the shape of images. "The image that falls upon the senses: that, and nothing besides, is the meaning of the world," Klages insists, and one such immediate act of reception can be seen in the manner in which one comprehends the imagery employed by a great poet or the skillfully drawn portrait executed by a gifted artist. The actualities received by the "pathic" soul are experienced in the dimensions of space and time, but they have their coming-to-be and their passing-away solely within the temporal order. In sharp contrast to the traditional Christian insistence that virtue constitutes a valorization of the "spirit" at the expense of a denigrated body, Klages sees man's highest potential in the state of ecstasy, i.e., the privileged state of rapture in which the connected poles of body and soul are liberated from the intrusive "spirit." What the Christian understands by the word *soul* is, in fact, actually *spirit*, and *spirit*—to simplify our scheme somewhat for the sake of expediency—is the mortal *adversary of the soul*. Another way to express this insight would be the formula: *spirit is death, and soul is life*.

Spirit manifests its characteristic essence in formalistic cognition and technological processes and in the hyper-rationalism that has pre-occupied western thought since the Renaissance. Both mathematical formalism and "high" technology have reared their conceptual skyscrapers upon a foundation formed by the accumulation of empirical data. Spirit directs its acolytes to the appropriation and rigidification of the world of things, especially those things that are exploitable by utilitarian technocrats. Spirit fulfils its project in the act, or event, that occurs within the spatio-temporal continuum, although spirit itself has its origin outside that continuum. Spirit is manifest in man's compulsive need to seize and control the materials at hand, for only "things" will behave consistently enough for the spirit-driven utilitarian to be able to "utilize" them by means of the familiar processes of quantification and classification, which enable "science" to fix, or "grasp," the thing in its lethal conceptual stranglehold.

We must draw a sharp distinction between the thing and its properties on one side, and the "essence" (*Wesen*) and its characteristics on the other. Only an essence, or nature, can be immediately experienced. One cannot describe, or "grasp," an essence by means of the conceptual analysis that is appropriate only when a scientist or technician analyzes a thing in order to reduce it to an "objective" fact that will submit to the grasp of the concept. The souls of all phenomena unite to comprise a world of sensuous images, and it is only as unmediated images that the essences appear to the pathic soul who receives their meaning-content. The world of essences (*phenomena*) is experienced by the pathic soul, which is the receptor of the fleeting images that constitute actuality [*Wirklichkeit der Bilder*]. These images wander eternally in the restless cosmic dance that is the Heraclitean flux. The image lives in intimate connection with the poles of space and time.

The world of things, on the other hand, is rationally comprehended as a causally connected system of objects (*noumena*). In the course of historical time man's ability to perceive the living images and their attendant qualities is progressively impoverished until finally spirit replaces the living world of expressive images with the dead world of mere things, whose only connections are adequately expressed in the causal nexus, or, to use the language of science, the "laws of nature."

In the final act of the historical tragedy, when there is no longer any vital substance upon which the vampire spirit may feed, the parasitic invader from beyond time will be forced to devour itself.

Paradise Lost

We see that the philosophy of Klages has both a metaphysical dimension as well as a historical one, for he sees the history of the world as the tragic aftermath to the disasters that ensued when man was expelled from the lost primordial paradise in which he once enjoyed the bliss of a "Golden Age." When man found himself expelled from the eternal flux of coming-to-be and passing-away of the lost pagan paradise, he received in exchange the poor substitute known as consciousness. Paradise was lost, in effect, when man allowed his temporally-incarnated life-cell to be invaded by the a-temporal force that we call spirit.

Klages is quite specific in putting forward a candidate for this "Golden Age" which prospered long before spirit had acquired its present, murderous potency, for it is within the pre-historic Aegean culture-sphere, which has often been referred to by scholars as the "Pelasgian" world, that Klages locates his vision of a peaceful, pagan paradise that was as yet resistant to the invasive wiles of spirit.

Now who are these "Pelasgians," and why does the Pelasgian "state of mind" loom so largely in Klages's thought? According to the philosopher, the development of human consciousness, from life, to thought, to will, reveals itself in the three-stage evolution from pre-historic man (the Pelasgian), through the Promethean (down to the Renaissance), to the Heracleic man (the stage which we now occupy). For Klages, the Pelasgian is the human being as he existed in the pre-historic "Golden Age" of Minoan Crete, Mycenaean Hellas, and the related cultures of the Aegean world. He is a passive, "pathic" dreamer, whose predominant mode of being is contemplation. He consorts directly with the living Cosmos and its symbols, but he is doomed.

The "Pelasgians" occupy a strategic place in the mythos of Ludwig Klages, and this "Pelasgian Realm" of Klages closely resembles the mythic Golden Age of Atlantis that looms so large in the *Weltanschauung* of E. T. A. Hoffmann. But who, in fact, were these Pelasgians? According to the pre-historians and mythologists, the Pelasgians were an ancient people who inhabited the islands and seacoasts of the eastern Mediterranean during the Neolithic and Bronze Age periods. Homer, in a well-known passage in the *Odyssey* (XIX, 175 ff), places them on Crete, but another writer, Dionysius Halicarnassus, could only tell us that the Pelasgians were *autokhthonoi*, or "indigenous" throughout Hellas. Homer also refers to "Lord Zeus of Dodona, Pelasgian," in the *Iliad* (II, 750). Plutarch says of them that "they were like the oak among trees: the first of men at least in Akhaia," while Pliny believes that Peloponnesian Arkadia was originally called Pelasgis; that Pelasgos was an aristocratic title; and that the Pelasgians were descended from the daughters of Danaos.

The most famous Pelasgian settlement was at Dodona, and Thucydides (we discover with relief) informs us that *all Greece was Pelasgian before the Trojan war* (approximately 1200 B. C.): "Before the Trojan War no united effort appears to be made by Hellas; and to my belief that name itself had not yet been extended to the entire Hellenic world. In fact, before the time of Hellen, son of Deucalion, the appellation was probably unknown, and the names of the different nationalities prevailed locally, the widest in range being 'Pelasgians.'" (Book One of the "History of the Peloponnesian War," Oxford text, edited by H. Stuart-Jones; translated by Arnold J. Toynbee). Homer mentions them in the *Iliad* (ii, 840), and, in the *Odyssey* (xix, 172-7), the poet describes them as "divine." Racially, there seems to be no doubt that the Pelasgians were an Aryan people, and physical anthropologists inform us that the twenty skulls discovered at the Minoan sites of Palakaistro, Zakro, and Gournia turn out to be predominantly dolicocephalic, with the cranial indices averaging 73.5 for the males, and 74.9 for the women (*Prehistoric Crete*, by R. W. Hutchinson, London, 1962). The historian Herodotus, like Thucydides, groups all of the pre-classical peoples of the Hellenic world under the name Pelasgian: "Croesus made inquiries as to which were the greatest powers in Hellas, with a view to securing their friendly support, and, as a result of these inquiries, he found that the Lacedaemonians and the Athenians stood out among the people of the Dorian and Ionian race respectively. Of these people that had thus made their mark, the latter was originally a Pelasgian and the former a Hellenic nationality....As regards the language spoken by the Pelasgians, I have no exact information; but it is possible to argue by inference from the still-existing Pelasgians who occupy the city of Creston in the hinterland of the Tyrrhennians; from the other Pelasgians who have settled in Placia and Scylace on the Hellespont; and from the various other communities of Pelasgian race which have changed their national name. If inferences may be legitimately drawn from this evidence, then the original Pelasgians were speakers of a non-Greek language, and the Athenian nation must have learned a new language at the time when they changed from Pelasgians into Hellenes. At all events, the inhabitants of Creston and of Placia, who in neither case speak the same language as their present respective neighbors, do speak the same language as one another... In contrast to this, the Hellenic race has employed an identical language continuously, ever since it came into existence. After splitting off from the Pelasgian race, it found itself weak, but from these small beginnings it has increased until it now includes a number of nationalities, its principal recruits being Pelasgians. It is my further opinion that the non-Hellenic origin of the Pelasgians accounts for the complete failure of even this nationality to grow to any considerable dimensions" (Herodotus, Book I, chapters 56 to 58; translated by Arnold J. Toynbee). The rest, as they say, is silence (at least in the Classical sources), and we can see why this obscure people should appeal to the mythologizing "Golden Age" bent of Klages. Modern authorities regard the Pelasgians as inhabitants of a purely *Neolithic* culture pertaining only to the area of Thessaly bounded by Sesklo in the east and the Peneios valley in the west (the area which is now known as Thessaliotis).

Although the philosopher's alluring portrait of the Pelasgians was formulated before modern archaeology had completed our image of Aegean prehistory, the picture which Klages paints, in the Eros-book and in the "*Magna Mater*" chapter of *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele*, of a vibrant, healthy, and physically beautiful people, in touch with the gods and with Nature, requires little—if any—correction in the wake of the new researches. The figures who move so gracefully through the enchanted atmosphere of the Palace frescoes at Knossos, as they carry their brightly-colored gifts of vase, flowers, and *pyxis*, to the Goddess, are straight out of a poet's dream. The young women walk barefoot, and wear hip-hugging, flared skirts to which flounces

are attached at knee and hem; their long raven-tresses are worn in a chignon, adorned with red and white ribbons, and their jackets are brightly colored, usually pink or sky-blue. The gifts that they bring to the Mother Goddess are also brilliantly colored: a porphyry *pyxis*; poppies of red and white, and a bottle striped with silver, gold, and copper bands. They wear bracelets and necklaces dressed with strands of beads. They appear graceful and serene with their white breasts in profile in the *tholos* tombs as well.

This Minoan, or "Pelagian," world was characterized by a dialectical fusion of two strains of religiosity: on the one hand, we meet with the Aegean worship of the Mother Goddess, with all that entails with regard to ritual and style of living; and, on the other, we confront the Indo-European sky-god, or Father God, and the two strains seem to co-exist in an uneasy, unstable—but certainly fruitful—truce. Mythologists tell us that this heritage is reflected in the tales that indicate the marriages between the Indo-European sky-god Zeus with various incarnations of the Aegean Mother-Goddess (in some of the myths, Zeus is, himself, born on Crete!). In time, of course, the Father God will achieve dominance in the Hellenic world, but Klages is more interested in traces of the religion of the Goddess as it survives from the Stone Age into the world of the second millennium B.C. Our philosopher, in effect, merges the misty Neolithic and Bronze Age cultures of the ancient Aegean into a single magical world-space, wherein an innocent race lives at one with Nature and the Goddess. Klages treats the Pelagians as *the primeval Hellenes*, who worshiped the Goddess, as she was embodied in female idols in the form of figurines of the famous steatopygous Fertility-Goddess type, with huge belly and swollen buttocks (even though this iconographic image, represented most clearly in the "Venus of Willendorf," proceeds from a much-earlier cultural stratum, the Palaeolithic. The later Greeks celebrated Demeter, the Life-Mother, in the Eleusinian mysteries). The Palace Culture of Minoan Crete would exemplify the matriarchalist style of the (late) Pelagian world, especially as prehistoric Knossos had a far more sophisticated attitude toward women than did, say, the later Periclean Athens. For instance, in the legend of Ariadne, the fact that her presence is indicated at the funeral games shows us that women were free to mingle with men at their will, and the version of the myth which shows Ariadne as in charge of the palace in her father's absence shows the great value which the Cretans placed on women. This centrality of woman is indicated in all of Minoan art, which depicts her as beautifully-animated; in fact, one of the most elegant of the ebon-tressed, slim-waisted, and crimson-lipped women depicted on the frescoes on the Palace of Knossos, was nicknamed *La Parisienne* by a French visitor at the turn of the century! Klages is drawn more toward the "pacifist," thalassocratic (sea-ruling) aspect of the Minoans of the second millennium B.C., than toward the covetous Bronze Age Greeks of the mainland with their heavily-fortified cities and unending wars (the Bronze Age mainlanders seem to have loved war for its own sake; another troubling element in their civilization is their reliance on slavery, especially of women). These are the Mycenaeans, who would eventually sack, and destroy, the Minoan Culture. It is a notable fact that most of our evidence about the "Pelagian" religious beliefs and practices stems from Minoan Crete: very little material survives from Mycenae and the other mainland sites. On Crete, however, we find the dove-goddess image and the snake-goddess image, the stepped altars and shrine models, in religious sanctuaries overflowing with such sacred items. Clearly, the Goddess ruled on Minoan Crete, and, in fact, the Goddess Potnia, whose name crops up repeatedly in the Linear B tablets, might indeed be the "Lady of the Labyrinth," which is to say, the Lady of the Place of the *labrys*, or the double ax—the Palace of Knossos itself. Another Knossos cult-figure was the *anemo ijereja*, of "Priestess of the Winds"; there is also *qerasija*, which could well mean "the Huntress." According to some historians,

offerings to the Goddess were entirely bloodless, and were usually gifts of honey, oil, wine, and spices like coriander and fennel; sheep and their shepherds were associated with Potnia, but certainly not in the aspect of blood-sacrifices. On the mainland, however, we find the Mycenaeans slaughtering rams, horses, and other animals in their vaulted tombs. We also find the cult of the Goddess on the Cycladic islands (to which "Greek islands" American "millionaires" and other arch-vulgarians habitually cart their flatulent girths on "vacations"). The famous Cycladic figurines represent the Mother Goddess as well, under the aspects of "the divine nurse" or the "Goddess of Blessing." In these figurines the Goddess is almost invariably represented with the pubic delta and the stomach emphasized. I will have more to say about this religion of the "Mother Goddess" later on, in the section devoted to the ideas of Bachofen, but for now I'd like to note that in the early phase of Minoan religion, the relationship of ruler and deity was not that of father-and-son, but of *mother-and-son*. For Minoan Crete, the Mother Goddess was represented on earth by the priest-king. Some lovely manifestations of this reverence for the Goddess can be found in the faience statuettes of the bare-breasted Mother Goddess which were found by Sir Arthur Evans in the Palace of Knossos: one of them shows the Goddess holding up a serpent in each of her hands; the other statuette shows the snakes entwining themselves around her arms. These figures appear in both "peak sanctuaries" and in household shrines, and have been designated by pre-historians as the "Snake Goddess" or the "Household Goddess." The "Household Goddess" is often associated with the motif of the double-axe, the emblem of the Palace at Knossos, and also with the horns-of-consecration, which associate her with the sacred bull of the Palace of King Minos.

One inhabitant of the Palace of King Minos was the princess Ariadne, to whom we alluded briefly above. After the loss of Theseus, the fate of Ariadne would be intimately intertwined with that of Dionysus, the problematical Greek divinity whose cult excited so much controversy and such fierce opposition among the Greeks of the Classical Age. Dionysus was the orgiastic god in whom Klages, following Nietzsche, locates the site of an untrammelled sensuous abandon. This Thracio-Grecian deity, whose nature was so brilliantly interpreted by Nietzsche in the latter half of the 19th century, and by his worthy successor Walter F. Otto in the first half of the 20th century, becomes in the Klagesian view the ultimate symbol of heathen life, the epiphany of that frenzied ecstasy that the god's followers achieved by means of the drunkenness and wild dancing of the maenads, those female adherents of the god of the vine, who experienced genuine enthusiasm, i.e., "the god within," as they followed the progress of their far-wandering god, who gave to man the inestimable gift of wine. These maenads celebrated their secret Dionysian cultic rituals far from the accustomed haunts of man, and any man was slaughtered on the spot if he should be apprehended whilst illicitly witnessing the ceremonies reserved for the gods' female followers. These maenads were alleged to be in the possession of magical powers that enabled the god's worshipers to bring about magical effects at great distances. And "all Eros is Eros of distance!"

Philosophical Roots and Biological Consequences

Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele contains a comprehensive survey of the philosophical literature that relates to "biocentric" concerns, and in these pages Klages closely scrutinizes the troubled seas and fog-shrouded moorlands of philosophy, both ancient and modern, over which we, unfortunately, have only sufficient time to cast a superficial and fleeting glance. We will, however, spend a profitable moment or two on several issues that Klages examined in some

detail, for various pivotal disputes that have preoccupied the minds of gifted thinkers from the pre-Socratics down to Nietzsche were also of pre-eminent significance for Klages.

One of the pre-Socratic thinkers in particular, Heraclitus of Ephesus (c. 536-470 B.C.E.), the "dark one," was looked upon by Ludwig Klages as the founding father of "biocentric," or life-centered, philosophy. Klages and Heraclitus share the conviction that life is ceaseless change, chaos, "eternal flux" [*panta rhei*]. Both thinkers held that it is not matter that endures through the ceaseless patterns of world-transformation: *it is this ceaseless transformation itself* that is the enduring process, which alone constitutes this ever-shifting vibrancy, this soaring and fading of appearances, this becoming and passing away of phenomenal images upon which Klages bestowed the name *life*. Likewise, Klages and Heraclitus were in complete accord in their conviction that natural events transpire in a succession of rhythmical pulsations. For both thinkers, nothing abides without change in the human world, and in the cosmos at large, everything flows and changes in the rhythmical and kaleidoscopic dance that is the cosmic process. We cannot say of a thing: "it is"; we can only say that a thing "comes to be" and that it "passes away." The only element, in fact, in the metaphysics of Heraclitus that will be repudiated by Klages is the great pre-Socratic master's positing of a "Logos," or indwelling principle of order, and this slight disagreement is ultimately a trivial matter, for the Logos is an item which, in any case, plays a role so exiguous in the Heraclitean scheme as to render the notion, for all practical and theoretical purposes, nugatory as far as the basic thrust of the philosophy of the eternal flux.

Another great Greek philosopher, Protagoras of Abdera (c. 480-410 B.C.E.), is fulsomely acclaimed by Klages as the "father of European psychology and history's pioneer epistemologist." When Protagoras asserted that the content of perception from moment to moment is the result of the fusion of an external event (the world) with an inner event (the experiencing soul), he was, in effect, introducing the Heraclitean flux into the sphere of the soul. No subsequent psychologist has achieved a greater theoretical triumph. The key text upon which Klages bases this endorsement is Sext. Emp., *Pyrrh.* I (217): "...matter is in flux, and as it flows additions are made continuously in the place of the effluxions, and the senses are transformed and altered according to the times of life and to all the other conditions of the bodies." (218) "Men apprehend different things at different times owing to their differing dispositions; for he who is in a natural state apprehends those things subsisting in matter which are able to appear to those in a natural state, and those who are in a non-natural state the things which can appear to those in a non-natural state." Thus, the entire sphere of psychical life is a matter of perception, which comprises the act of perception (in the soul) and the content of perception (in the object). This Protagorean insight forms the basis for the distinction between *noumenon* and *phenomenon* that will exert such a fructifying influence on Western thought, especially during the period of German Romanticism.

Greek thought has a significant bearing on crucial discoveries that were made by Klages. We have learned that there are two forces that are primordially opposed to each other, spirit and life; in addition, we have seen these forces cannot be reduced to each other, nor can they be reduced to any third term; body and soul constitute the poles of unified life, and it is the mission of spirit to invade that unity, to function as a divisive wedge in order to tear the soul from the body and the body from the soul. Thus, spirit begins its career as the disrupter of life; only at the end of history will it become the *destroyer* of life. We find a piquant irony in the oft-expressed view

that accuses Klages of inventing this "spirit" out of whole cloth, for those who have sneered at his account of the provenance of spirit as a force that enters life from outside the sphere of life, dismissing the very idea from serious consideration by reducing the concept to a caricature ("Klagesian devil," "Klages with his spirit-as-‘space-invader’," and so on), offer quite an irresistible opening for a controversialist's unbuttoned foil, because such statements reveal, at one and the same time, an ignorance of the history of philosophy in our professors and commentators that should curdle the blood of the most trusting students, as well as an almost incomprehensible inability, or unwillingness, to understand a scrupulously exact and closely-argued text. This intellectual disability possesses, one must confess, a certain undeniable *pathos*. As it happens, the question as to the provenance of spirit has always enjoyed a prominent position in the history of philosophical speculation (especially in the narrow field of epistemology, i.e., the "theory of cognition"), and the Klagesian viewpoint that has been so ignorantly and persistently excoriated is explicitly drawn from the philosophy of—Aristotle! It was Aristotle, "the master of those who know," who, in discussing the divided substance of man, discovered that he could only account for the origin of one of the components, viz., spirit [Gk. *nous*], by concluding that spirit had entered man "from outside"! Likewise, the idea of a "tripartite" structure of man, which seems so bizarre to novice students of biocentrism, has quite a respectable pedigree, for, once again, it was Aristotle who viewed man as having three aspects, viz., Psyche-Soma-Nous (Soul-Body-Spirit).

The speculations of the Greek philosophers who belonged to the Eleatic School provided the crucial insights that inspired Klages's masterful formulation of the doctrine of the "actuality of the images." The specific problem that so exercised the Eleatics was the paradox of motion. The Eleatics insisted that motion was inconceivable, and they proceeded from that paradoxical belief to the conclusion that *all* change is impossible. One of the Eleatics, Zeno, is familiar to students of the history of philosophy as the designer of the renowned "Zeno's Paradoxes," the most famous of which is the problem of Achilles and the Tortoise. Zeno provided four proofs against the possibility of motion: 1) a body must traverse in finite time an infinite number of spaces and, therefore, it can never ever begin its journey; 2) here we have Zeno's application of his motion-theory to the "Achilles" problem that we've just mentioned—if Achilles grants a lead or "head start" (analogous to a "handicap") to the tortoise against whom he is competing in a foot-race, he will never be able to overtake the tortoise, because by the time Achilles has reached point A (the starting-point for the tortoise), his opponent has already reached point B. In fact, Achilles will never even reach point A, because before he can traverse the entire distance between his starting-point and point A, he must necessarily cover one-half of that distance, and then one-half of the remaining distance, and so on and so on *ad infinitum*, as it were! 3) the arrow that has just been launched by the archer is always resting, since it always occupies the same space; and 4) equivalent distances must, at equivalent velocity, be covered in the identical time. But a moving body will pass another body that is moving in the opposite direction (at the identical velocity) twice as quickly as when this body is resting, and this demonstrates that the observed facts contradict the laws of motion. Betraying a certain nervousness, historians of philosophy usually dismiss the Eleatics as superficial skeptics or confused souls, but they never condescend to provide a convincing refutation of their "obvious" or "superficial" errors.

Klages, on the other hand, finds both truth and error in the Eleatics' position. From the standpoint of an analysis of *things*, the Eleatics' are on firm ground in their insistence on the impossibility of change, but from the standpoint of an analysis of *appearances*, their position is

utterly false. Their error arose from the fact that the Greeks of this period had already succumbed to the doctrine that the world of appearances is a world of deception, a reservoir of illusory images. This notion has governed almost every metaphysical system that has been devised by western philosophers down to our own time, and with every passing age, the emphasis upon the world of the things (Noumena) has increased at the expense of the world of appearances (Phenomena). Klages, on the other hand, will solve the "Problem of the Eleatics" by an emphatic demonstration that the phenomenal images are, in fact, the only realities.

During the Renaissance, in fact, when ominous temblors were heralding the dawn of our "philosophy of the mechanistic apocalypse," there were independent scholars (among whom we find Giordano Bruno and Paracelsus) who speculated at length on the relationship that exists between the macrocosm and the microcosm, as well as on the three-fold nature of man and on the proto-characterological doctrine of the "Temperaments."

But the key figure in the overturning of the triadic world-view is undoubtedly the French thinker and mathematician René Descartes (1596-1650), who is chiefly responsible for devising the influential schematic dualism of thinking substance and extended substance, which has dominated, in its various incarnations and permutations, the thinking of the vast majority of European thinkers ever since. Descartes explicitly insists that all of our perceptions as well as every "thing" that we encounter must be reduced to the status of a machine; in fact, he even suggests that the whole universe is merely a vast mechanism (*terram totumque hunc mundum instar machinae descripsi*). It is no accident, then, that Cartesian thought is devoid of genuine psychology, for, as he says in the *Discours de la méthode*, man is a mere machine, and his every thought and every movement can be accounted for by means of a purely mechanical explanation.

Nevertheless, there have been several revolts against Cartesian dualism. As recently as two centuries ago, the extraordinarily gifted group of "Nature Philosophers" who were active during the glory days of German Romanticism, pondered the question of the "three-fold" in publications that can be consulted with some profit even today.

We have seen that the specifically Klagesian "triad" comprises body-soul-spirit, and the biocentric theory holds that life, which comprises the poles of body and soul, occurs as processes and events. Spirit is an intruder into the sphere of life, an invader seeking always to sever the poles, a dæmonic willfulness that is characterized by manic activity and purposeful deeds. "The body is the manifestation of the soul, and the soul is the meaning of the living body." We have seen that Klages was able to trace proleptic glimpses of this biocentric theory of the soul back to Greek antiquity, and he endeavored for many years to examine the residues of psychical life that survive in the language, poetry, and mythology of the ancient world, in order to interpret the true meanings of life as it had been expressed in the word, cult, and social life of the ancients. He brilliantly clarifies the symbolic language of myth, especially with reference to the cosmogonic Eros and the Orphic Mysteries. He also explores the sensual-imagistic thought of the ancients as the foundation upon which objective cognition is first erected, for it is among the Greeks, and only among the Greeks, that philosophy proper was discovered. During the peak years of the philosophical activity of the Greek thinkers, spirit still serves the interests of life, existing in an authentic relationship with an actuality that is sensuously and inwardly "en-souled" [*beseelt*]. The cosmological speculation of antiquity reveals a profound depth of feeling for the living cosmos, and likewise demonstrates the presence of the intimate bonds that connect man to the natural world; contemplation is still intimately bound-up with the primordial, elemental powers.

Klages calls this "archaic" Greek view of the world, along with its later reincarnations in the history of western thought, the "biocentric" philosophy, and he situates this mode of contemplation as the enemy of the "logocentric" variety, i.e., the philosophy that is centered upon the Logos, or "mind," for mind is the manifestation of spirit as it enters western thought with the appearance of Socrates. From Plato himself, through his "neo-Platonic" disciples of the Hellenistic and Roman phases of antiquity, and down to the impoverished Socratic epigones among the shallow "rationalists" of 17th and 18th century Europe, all philosophers who attempt to restore or renew the project of a philosophical "enlightenment," are the heirs of Socrates, for it was Socrates who first made human reason the measure of all things. Socratic rationalism also gave rise to life-alien ethical schemes based upon a de-natured creature, viz., man-as-such. This pure spirit, this distilled ego, seeks to sever all natural and racial bonds, and as a result, "man" prides himself upon being utterly devoid of nobility, beauty, blood, and honor. In the course of time, he will attach his fortunes to the even more lethal spiritual plague known as Christianity, which hides its destructive force behind the hypocritical demand that we "love one's neighbors." From 1789 onwards, a particularly noxious residue of this Christian injunction, the undifferentiating respect for the ghost known as "humanity," will be considered the hallmark of every moral being.

The heirs of the Socratic tradition have experienced numerous instances of factional strife and re-groupings in the course of time, although the allegiance to spirit has always remained unquestioned by all of the disputants. One faction may call itself "idealistic" because it considers concepts, ideas, and categories to be the only true realities; another faction may call itself "materialistic" because it views "things" as the ultimate constituents of reality; nevertheless, both philosophical factions give their allegiance, *nolentes volentes*, to the spirit and its demands. Logocentric thought, in fact, is the engine driving the development of the applied science that now rules the world. And by their gifts shall ye know them!

The bitterly antagonistic attitude of Klages towards one of the most illustrious heirs of Socrates, viz., Immanuel Kant, has disturbed many students of German thought who see something perverse and disingenuous in this opposition to the man whom they regard uncritically as the unsurpassed master of German thought. Alfred Rosenberg and the other official spokesmen of the National Socialist movement were especially enraged by the ceaseless attacks on Kant by Klages and his disciple Werner Deubel. Nevertheless, Kant's pre-eminence as an epistemologist was disputed as long ago as 1811, when Gottlob Ernst Schulze published his "Critique of Theoretical Philosophy," which was then, and remains today, the definitive savaging of Kant's system. Klages endorses Schulze's demonstration that Kant's equation: actuality = being = concept = thing = appearance (or phenomenon) is utterly false, and is the main source of Kant's inability to distinguish between perception and representation. Klages adds that he finds it astonishing that Kant should have been able to convince himself that he had found the ultimate ground of the faculty of cognition in—*cognition*! Klages cites with approval Nietzsche's "Beyond Good and Evil," in which Kant is ridiculed for attempting to ground his epistemology in the "faculty of a faculty"! Klages shows that the foundation of the faculty of cognition lies not in cognition itself, but in experience, and that the actuality of space and time cannot have its origins in conceptual thought, but solely in the vital event. There can be no experienced colors or sounds without concomitant spatio-temporal characteristics, for there can be no divorce between actual space and actual time. We can have no experience of actual space without sensory input, just as we have no access to actual time without thereby participating in the ceaseless transformation of the

phenomenal images.

Formalistic science and its offspring, advanced technology, can gain access to only a small segment of the living world and its processes. Only the *symbol* has the power to penetrate all the levels of actuality, and of paramount importance to Klages in his elaborate expositions of the biocentric metaphysics is the distinction between conceptual and symbolic thought. We have previously drawn attention to the fact that drive-impulses are manifest in expressive movements that are, in turn, impelled by the influence of a non-conceptual power that Klages calls the symbol. Likewise, symbolic thinking is a tool that may profitably be utilized in the search for truth, and Klages contrasts symbolic contemplation with the logical, or "formalistic," cognition, but he is at pains to draw our attention to the errors into which an unwarranted, one-sided allegiance to *either* type of thought can plunge us. Although Klages has been repeatedly and bitterly accused by Marxists and other "progressives" as being a vitriolic enemy of reason, whose "irrationalism" provided the "fascists" with their heaviest ideological artillery, nothing could be further from the truth. On occasions too numerous to inventory, he ridicules people like Bergson and Keyserling who believe that "intuition" lights the royal road to truth. His demolition of the Bergsonian notion of the *élan vital* is definitive and shattering, and his insistence that such an entity is a mere pseudo-explanation is irrefutable and might have been published in a British philosophical journal. In the end, Klages says, "irrationalism" is the spawn of—*spirit*!

Our ability to formulate and utilize concepts as well as our capacity to recognize conceptual identities is sharply opposed to the procedure involved in the symbolic recognition of identities. The recognition of such conceptual identities has, of course, a crucial bearing on the life of the mind, since it is this very ability that functions as the most important methodological tool employed by every researcher involved in the hard sciences. Symbolic identification, on the other hand, differs widely from its conceptual counterpart in that the symbolic type derives its meaning-content from the "elemental similarity of images." Thus, the process of substantive, or conceptual, identification confronts its opposite number in the "identity of essence" of symbolic thought. It is this "identity of essence," as it happens, which has given birth to language and its capacity to embody authentic meaning-content in words. Jean Paul was quite right, Klages tells us, in describing language as a "dictionary of faded metaphors," for every abstraction that is capable of verbal representation arose from the essentiality of the meaning-content of words.

He draws a sharp distinction between the true symbol (Gk. *symbolon*, i.e., token) and the mere sign whose significance is purely referential. The true meaning of an object resides in its presence, which Klages refers to as an *aura*, and this aura is directly communicated to a sensory apparatus that resists all purely linguistic attempts to establish formulas of equivalence or "correspondence." The sensual imagination participates in an unmediated actuality, and intuitive insight (*Schauung*) allows us to gain access to a realm of symbols, which rush into our souls as divine epiphanies.

Life resists rules, for life is eternal flux. Life is not rigid being, and therefore life will always evade the man-traps of mind, the chains of the concept. Life, comprising the poles of body and soul, is the physical event as phenomenal expression of the soul. There can be no soul-less phenomena and there can be no souls without (phenomenal) appearances, just as there can be no word-less concepts and no words without meaning-content. The physical world is the image-laden appearance (phenomenon) that manifests a psychical substance. When the dæmonic object encounters the receptive, or "pathic," soul, the object becomes a symbol and acquires a

"nimbus," which is a pulsating radiance surrounding the moment of becoming. This nimbus is referred to as an "aura" when applied to persons, and both nimbus and aura represent the contribution of the object to the act of perception.

Non-symbolic, formalistic thought, on the other hand is irreverent, non- contemplative, and can best be characterized as an act that is enacted in the service of spirit, which imperiously and reductively ordains that the act of perception must also be an act of the will. Thus the will attains primacy even over the de-substantialized intellect, and Klages—who has persistently been dismissed as an obscurantist and irrationalist—never misses an opportunity to re-iterate his deep conviction that *the essence of spirit is to be located in the will and not in the intellect*.

As we've seen, Klages holds that the living soul is the antithesis of the spirit. The spirit seeks to rigidify the eternal flux of becoming, just as the soul, in yielding passively to the eternal flux, resists the raging Heracleic spirit and its murderous projects. Body and soul reach the peak of creative vitality when their poles are in equipoise or perfect balance, and the high point of life is reached in the experience of sensuous joy. Spirit's assault upon the body is launched against this joy, and in waging war against the joy of the body, spirit also wages war against the soul, in order to expel the soul, to make it homeless, in order to annihilate all ecstasy and creativity. Every attempt that has been made by monistic thinkers to derive the assault on life from the sphere of life itself has misfired. Such troublesome anomalies as the supernatural visions and cases of dæmonic possession that transpired during the Middle Ages, as well the crippling cases of hysteria so familiar to psychologists in our own time, can never be satisfactorily explained unless we realize that the souls of these unfortunates were sundered by the acosmic force of spirit, whose very essence is the will, that enemy and murderer of life. The conceptual "Tower of Babylon" reared by monists in their ludicrous efforts to derive the force that wages war against life from life itself is no less absurd than would be the foredoomed attempt of a firefighter to extinguish a blaze by converting a portion of the fire into the water that will extinguish the fire!

There is, however, one privileged example of a manifestation of the will in the service of life, and this occurs when the will is enlisted for the purposes of artistic creation. The will, Klages insists, is incapable of creative force, but when the artist's intuition has received an image of a god, the will functions "affirmatively" in the destructive assaults of the artist's chisel upon the marble that is to embody the image of the divinity.

Actuality (the home of the soul) is experienced; being (the home of spirit) is thought. The soul is a passive surrender to the actuality of the appearances. Actuality is an ever-changing process of coming to be and passing away that is experienced as images. Spirit attempts to fix, to make rigid, the web of images that constitutes actuality by means of conceptual thought, whose concrete form is the apparatus of the scientist. Cognition represents identical, unfaltering, timeless being; life is the actuality of experience in time. When one says of time that it "is," as if it were something rigid and identical behind the eternal flux, then time is implicitly stripped of its very essence as that which is "temporal"; it is this temporal essence which is synonymous with becoming and transformation. When one speaks of a thing or a realm that is beyond, i.e., that "transcends," the unmediated, experienced actuality of the living world, one is merely misusing thought in order to introduce a conceptual, existential world in the place of the actual one, which has the inalienable character of transitoriness and temporality.

It is within the "pathic" soul that the categories of space and time originate. Acosmic spirit, on

the other hand, invaded the sphere of life from outside the spatio-temporal cosmos. Klages scorns the schemes of philosophical "idealists" who attempt to ground the structures of space and time in some transcendental world. He also distinguishes a biocentric non-rational temporality from "objective" time. Biocentric thought, true to its immanentist ("this-worldly") status, recognizes that the images that pulsate in immanentist time are excluded by their very nature from any participation in objective time, for the images can only live within the instantaneous illumination of privileged moments. Klages savages the platitudes and errors of logocentric thinkers who adhere, with almost manic rigidity, to the conventional scheme of dual-axis temporality. In ordinary logic, time is viewed as radiating from the present (that extension-less hypostasis) backward into time-past and forward into time-to-come: but the whole scheme collapses in a heap as soon as we realize that the future, the "time-to-come," is nothing but a delirious void, a grotesque phantom, a piece of philosophical fiction. Only the past possesses true actuality; only the past is real. The future is merely a pale hallucination flitting about in deluded minds. True time is the relationship that binds the poles of past and present. This union occurs as a rhythmical pulsation that bears the moment's content into the past, as a new moment is generated, as it were, out of the womb of eternity, that authentic depository of actual time. Time is an unending cycle of metamorphoses utterly unrelated to the processes of "objective" time. True time, cyclical time, is clocked by the moments that intervene between a segment of elapsed time and the time that is undergoing the process of elapsing. Time is the soul of space, just as space is the embodiment of time. Only within actual time can we apprehend the primordial images in their sensuous immediacy. Logic, on the other hand, can only falsify the exchange between living image and receptive soul.

Let us examine the biological—or, more properly, *ethological*—implications of the doctrine of "primordial images" [*Urbilder*]. Bear in mind, of course, the crucial distinction that is drawn by Klages between the science of fact (*Tatsachenwissenschaft*) and the science of appearances (*Erscheinungswissenschaft*): factual science establishes laws of causality in order to explain, e.g., physiological processes or the laws of gravitation; thus, we say that factual science examines *the causes of things*. The science of appearances, on the other hand, investigates the *actuality of the images*, for images are the only enduring realities.

The enduring nature of the image can be seen in the example of the generation of a beech-tree. Suppose a beech-tree sheds its seed upon the forest floor, in which it germinates. Can we say of the mother-tree that it lives within the child? Certainly not! We can chop down the mother tree and burn it to ashes, whilst the offspring continues to prosper. Can we say that the matter of which the old tree was composed survives intact within the younger tree? Again, no: for not an atom of the matter that made up the seed from which the young beech grew exists within it. Likewise, not an atom of the matter of which a man's body is composed at the age of thirty survives from that same man's body as it was on his tenth birthday. Now, if it is not the matter of which the organism is composed which endures through the ages, what then is it that so endures? "The one possible answer is: an image." Life and its processes occur outside the world of things. On the contrary: life comprises the events in the world of the images.

Thus, we see that the doctrine of the "actuality of the images" [*Wirklichkeit der Bilder*] holds that it is not things, but images, that are "en-souled" [*beseelt*], and this proposition, Klages tells us, forms the "key to his whole doctrine of life [*Lebenslehre*]." Things stand in a closed chain of causality, and there is no reciprocal action between the image and the thing, no parallelism, and

no connection, and the attempts that have been undertaken by various philosophers to equate the thing and the image merely serve to rupture the chain of causality in its relevant sphere, i.e., the quantitative scientific method. The receptive soul is turned towards the actuality of the image, and when we say on one occasion that an object is "red," and on another that this same object is "warm," in the first case the reference is to the reality of things, whereas in the second case the reference is to the actuality of images. By using the name of a color, we indicate that we are differentiating between the superficial qualities, or surface attributes, of things; when we say that a colored object is "warm" or "cold," on the other hand, we are pointing to the phenomenal "presence" that has been received by the pathic soul. In fact, there are a whole host of common expressions in which this attribution of subjective, psychical states to visible phenomena occurs. We say, for instance, that red is "hot" and that blue is "cold." In the *Vom Wesen des Bewusstseins* (1921), a treatise on the nature of consciousness, Klages adduces an astonishingly vast inventory of words that are routinely utilized in descriptions of *subjective* as well as *perceptual* phenomena. Someone will speak of his a "bitter" feeling of resentment at some slight or injury. The expression that love is "sweet" occurs in almost every language. Likewise, joy is often described as "bright," just as grief or sorrow are often referred to as "dark." We also have "hot" anger (or the familiar variant, the "heat" of the moment").

Images are the charged powers, or natures, that constitute the basis of all phenomena of cosmic and elemental life as well as of cellular, organic life. All that exists participates in the life of the images. Air, fire, earth, and water; rocks, clouds, planets and suns; plant, animal and man: all of these entities are alive and have souls that share in the life of the cosmos. It isn't matter that constitutes the stuff of reality, for matter perishes; but the image, which remains alive as it wanders through the rhythmically pulsating cosmos, never dies. It changes through the processes of maturation and growth in the organism, and it transforms itself through the millennia in the species. The images alone have life; the images alone have meaning. The souls of those who now live are images that are temporarily wedded to matter, just as the souls of the dead are images that have been released from matter. The souls of the dead revisit us in their actual form in dreams (*Wirklichkeitsform der Traumerscheinung*), unconstrained by the limitations of material substance. The souls of the dead are not expelled from the world to live on as immortal "spirits" housed in some transcendent "beyond"; they are, instead, dæmonically vital presences, images that come to be, transform themselves, and vanish into the distance within the phenomenal world that is the only truly existing world.

The human soul recalls the material palpability of the archaic images by means of the faculty that Klages calls "recollection," and his view in this regard invites comparison with the Platonic process of "anamnesis." The recollection of which Klages speaks takes place, of course, without the intervention of the will or the projects of the conscious mind. Klages's examination of "vital recollection" was greatly influenced by the thought of Wilhelm Jordan, a nineteenth century poet and pioneer Darwinist, whose works were first encountered by the young philosopher at the end of that century. In Jordan's massive didactic poem *Andachten*, which was published in 1877, the poet espouses a doctrine of the "memory of corporeal matter." This work had such a fructifying influence on the thought of Klages, that we here give some excerpts:

"It is recollection of her own cradle, when the red stinging fly glues grains of sand into a pointed arch as soon as she feels that her eggs have ripened to maturity. It is recollection of her own food during the maggot-state when the anxious mother straddles the

caterpillar and drags it for long distances, lays her eggs in it, and locks it in that prison. The larva of the male stag-beetle feels and knows by recollection the length of his antlers, and in the old oak carves out in doubled dimensions the space in which he will undergo metamorphosis. What teaches the father of the air to weave the exact angles of her net by delicate law, and to suspend it from branch to branch with strings, as firm as they are light, according to her seat? Does she instruct her young in this art? No! She takes her motherly duties more lightly. The young are expelled uncared-for from the sac in which the eggs have been laid. But three or four days later the young spider spreads its little nest with equal skill on the fronds of a fern, although it never saw the net in which its mother caught flies. The caterpillar has no eye with which to see how others knit the silken coffins from which they shall rise again. From whence have they acquired all the skill with which they spin so? Wholly from inherited recollection. In man, what he learned during his life puts into the shade the harvest of his ancestors' labors: this alone blinds him, stupefied by a learner's pride, to his own wealth of inherited recollections. The recollection of that which has been done a thousand times before by all of his ancestors teaches a new-born child to suck aptly, though still blind. Recollection it is which allows man in his mother's womb to fly, within the course of a few months, through all the phases of existence through which his ancestors rose long ago. Inherited recollection, and no brute compulsion, leads the habitual path to the goal that has many times been attained; it makes profoundest secrets plain and open, and worthy of admiration what was merely a miracle. Nature makes no free gifts. Her commandment is to gain strength to struggle, and the conqueror's right is to pass this strength on to his descendants: her means by which the skill is handed down is the memory of corporeal matter."

The primordial images embody the memory of actual objects, which may re-emerge at any moment from the pole of the past to rise up in a rush of immediacy at the pole of the present. This living world of image-laden actuality is the "eternal flux" [*panta rhei*] of Heraclitus, and its cyclical transformations relate the present moment to the moments that have elapsed, and which will come around again, *per saecula saeculorum*.

Thus we see that the cosmos communicates through the magical powers of the symbol, and when we incorporate symbolic imagery into our inmost being, a state of ecstasy supervenes, and the soul's substance is magically revitalized (as we have already seen, genuine ecstasy reaches its peak when the poet's "polar touch of a pathic soul" communicates his images in words that bear the meaning of the actual world within them).

When prehistoric man arrives on the stage, he is already experiencing the incipient stages of the fatal shift from sensation to contemplation. Spirit initiates the campaign of destruction: the receptor-activity is fractured into "impression" and "apperception," and it is at this very point that we witness, retrospectively, as it were, the creation of historical man. Before the dawn of historical man, in addition to the motor-processes that man possessed in common with the animal, his soul was turned towards wish-images. With the shift of the poles, i.e., when the sensory "receptor" processes yield power to the motor "effector" processes, we witness the hypertrophic development of the human ego. Klages is scornful of all egoism, and he repeatedly expressed bitter scorn towards all forms of "humanism," for he regards the humanist's apotheosis of the precious "individual" as a debased kowtowing before a mere conceptual abstraction. The

ego is not a man; it is merely a *mask*.) In the place of psychical wishes, we now have aims. In the ultimate stages of historical development man is exclusively devoted to the achievement of pre-conceived goals, and the vital impulses and wish-images are replaced by the driving forces, or interests.

Man is now almost completely a creature of the will, and we recall that it is the will, and not the intellect, that is the characteristic function of spirit in the Klagesian system. However, we must emphasize that the will is not a creative, originating force. Its sole task is to act upon the bearer of spirit, if we may employ an analogy, in the manner of a rudder that purposively steers a craft in the direction desired by the navigator. In order to perform this regulative function, i.e., in order to transform a vital impulse into purposeful activity, the drive impulse must be inhibited and then directed towards the goal in view.

Now spirit in man is dependent upon the sphere of life as long as it collaborates as an equal partner in the act of perception; but when the will achieves mastery in man, this is merely another expression for the triumph of spirit over the sphere of life. In the fatal shift from life to spirit, contemplative, unconscious feeling is diminished, and rational judgment and the projects of the regulative volition take command. The body's ultimate divorce from the soul corresponds to the soullessness of modern man whose emotional life has diminished in creative power, just as the gigantic political state-systems have seized total control of the destiny of earth. Spirit is hostile to the demands of life. When consciousness, intellect, and the will to power achieve hegemony over the dæmonic forces of the cosmos, all psychical creativity and all vital expression must perish.

When man is exiled from the realm of passive contemplation, his world is transformed into the empire of will and its projects. Man now abandons the feminine unconscious mode of living and adheres to the masculine conscious mode, just as his affective life turns from bionomic rhythm to rationalized measure, from freedom to servitude, and from an ecstatic life in dreams to the harsh and pitiless glare of daylight wakefulness. No longer will he permit his soul to be absorbed into the elements, where the ego is dissolved and the soul merges itself with immensity in a world wherein the winds of the infinite cosmos rage and roar. He can no longer participate in that *Selbsttödung*, or self-dissolution, which Novalis once spoke of as the "truly philosophical act and the real beginning of all philosophy." Life, which had been soul and sleep, metamorphoses into the sick world of the fully conscious mind. To borrow another phrase from Novalis (who was one of Klages's acknowledged masters), man now becomes "a disciple of the Philistine-religion that functions merely as an opiate." (That lapidary phrase, by the way, was crafted *long* before the birth of the "philosopher" Karl Marx, that minor player on the left-wing of the "Young Hegelians" of the 1840s; many reactionaries in our university philosophy departments still seem to be permanently bogged down in that stagnant morass—yet these old fogies of the spirit insist on accusing *Fascists* of being the political reactionaries!)

Man finally yields himself utterly to the blandishments of spirit in becoming a fully conscious being. Klages draws attention to the fact that there are in popular parlance two divergent conceptions of the nature of consciousness: the first refers to the inner experience itself; whilst the second refers to the observation of the experience. Klages only concerns himself with consciousness in the second sense of the word. Experiences are by their very nature unconscious and non-purposive. Spiritual activity takes place in a non-temporal moment, as does the act of conscious thought, which is an act of spirit. Experience must never be mistaken for the cognitive

awareness of an experience, for as we have said, consciousness is not experience itself, but merely thought about experience. The "receptor" pole of experience is sharply opposed to the "effector" pole, in that the receptive soul receives sensory perceptions: the sense of touch receives the perception of "bodiliness"; the sense of sight receives the images, which are to be understood as pictures that are assimilated to the inner life. Sensation mediates the experience of (physical) closeness, whilst intuition receives the experience of distance. Sensation and intuition comprehend the images of the world. The senses of touch and vision collaborate in sensual experience. One or the other sense may predominate, i.e., an individual's sense of sight may have a larger share than that of touch in one's reception of the images (or vice versa), and one receptive process may be in the ascendant at certain times, whilst the other may come to the fore at other times. (In dreams the bodily component of the vital processes, i.e., sensation, sleeps, whilst the intuitive side remains wholly functional. These facts clearly indicate the incorporeality of dream-images as well as the nature of their actuality. Wakefulness is the condition of sensual processes, whilst the dream state is one of pure intuition.)

Pace William James, consciousness and its processes have nothing to do with any putative "stream of consciousness." That viewpoint ignores the fact that the processes that transpire in the conscious mind occur solely as interruptions of vital processes. The activities of consciousness can best be comprehended as momentary, abrupt assaults that are deeply disturbing in their effects on the vital substrata of the body-soul unity. These assaults of consciousness transpire as discrete, rhythmically pulsating "intermittencies" (the destructive nature of spirit's operations can be readily demonstrated; recall, if you will, how conscious volition can interfere with various bodily states: an intensification of attention may, for instance, induce disturbances in the heart and the circulatory system; painful or onerous thought can easily disrupt the rhythm of one's breathing; in fact, any number of automatic and semi-automatic somatic functions are vulnerable to spirit's operations, but the most serious disturbances can be seen to take place, perhaps, when the activity of the will cancels out an ordinary, and necessary, human appetite in the interests of the will. Such "purposes" of the will are invariably hostile to the organism and, in the most extreme cases, an over-attention to the dictates of spirit can indeed eventuate in tragic fatalities such as occur in terminal sufferers from *anorexia nervosa*).

Whereas the unmolested soul could at one time "live" herself into the elements and images, experiencing their plenitudinous wealth of content in the simultaneous impressions that constitute the immediacy of the image, insurgent spirit now disrupts that immediacy by disabling the soul's capacity to incorporate the images. In place of that ardent and erotic surrender to the living cosmos that is now lost to the soul, spirit places a satanic empire of willfulness and purposeful striving, a world of those who regard the world's substance as nothing more than raw material to be devoured and destroyed.

The image cannot be spoken, it must be lived. This is in sharp contradistinction to the status of the *thing*, which is, in fact, "speakable," as a result of its having been processed by the ministrations of spirit. All of our senses collaborate in the communication of the living images to the soul, and there are specific somatic sites, such as the eyes, mouth, and genitalia, that function as the gates, the "sacred" portals, as it were, through which the vital content of the images is transmitted to the inner life (these somatic sites, especially the genitalia, figure prominently in the cultic rituals that have been enacted by pagan worshipers in every historical period known to us).

An Age of Chaos

In the biocentric phenomenology of Ludwig Klages, the triadic historical development of human consciousness, from the reign of life, through that of thought, to the ultimate empire of the raging will, is reflected in the mythic-symbolic physiognomy which finds expression in the three-stage, "triadic," evolution from "Pelagian" man—of the upper Neolithic and Bronze Ages of pre-history; through the Promethean—down to the Renaissance; to the Heracleic man—the terminal phase that we now occupy, the age to which two brilliant 20th century philosophers of history, Julius Evola and Savitri Devi, have given the name "Kali Yuga," which in Hinduism is the dark age of chaos and violence that precedes the inauguration of a new "Golden Age," when a fresh cycle of cosmic events dawns in bliss and beauty.

And it is at this perilous juncture that courageous souls must stiffen their sinews and summon up their blood in order to endure the doom that is closing before us like a mailed fist. Readers may find some consolation, however, in our philosopher's expressions of agnosticism regarding the ultimate destiny of man and earth. Those who confidently predict the end of all life and the ultimate doom of the cosmos are mere swindlers, Klages assures us. Those who cannot successfully predict such mundane trivialities as next season's fashions in hemlines or the trends in popular music five years down the road can hardly expect to be taken seriously as prophets who can foretell the ultimate fate of the entire universe!

In the end, Ludwig Klages insists that we must never underestimate the resilience of life, for we have no yardstick with which to measure the magnitude of life's recuperative powers. "All things are in flux." That is all.