

On the Program of the Coming Philosophy

of a temporal experience which is regarded as the immediate, if not the only, object of that knowledge. This experience, in its total structure, had simply not been made manifest to philosophers as something singularly temporal, and that holds true for Kant as well. Especially in the *Prolegomena*, Kant wanted to take the principles of experience from the sciences—in particular, mathematical physics; yet from the very beginning, and even in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, experience itself and unto itself was never identical with the object realm of that science. Even if it had become so for him, as it did for the neo-Kantian thinkers, the concept of experience thus identified and determined would still have remained the old concept of experience, which is distinguished by its relationship not only to pure consciousness but to empirical consciousness as well.¹ But this is precisely what is at issue: the concept of the naked, primitive, self-evident experience, which, for Kant, as a man who somehow shared the horizon of his times, seemed to be the only experience given—indeed, the only experience possible. This experience, however, as already indicated, was unique and temporally limited. Above and beyond this form, which it shares with every type of experience, this experience, which in a significant sense could be called a *world view*, was that of the Enlightenment. But in its most essential characteristics, it is not all that different from the experience of the other centuries of the modern era. As an experience or a view of the world, it was of the lowest order. The very fact that Kant was able to commence his immense work under the constellation of the Enlightenment indicates that he undertook his work on the basis of an experience virtually reduced to a nadir, to a minimum of significance. Indeed, one can say that the very greatness of his work, his unique radicalism, presupposed an experience which had almost no intrinsic value and which could have attained its (we may say) sad significance only through its certainty. Of the pre-Kantian philosophers, none saw himself confronted with the task in this sense. Nor did any of them have such a free hand, since an experience whose best aspect, whose quintessence, was Newtonian physics, with all its certainty, could take rough and tyrannical treatment without suffering. For the Enlightenment there were no authorities, in the sense not only of authorities to whom one would have to submit unconditionally, but also of intellectual forces who might have managed to give a higher context to experience. Just *what* the lower and inferior nature of experience in those times amounts to, just where its astonishingly small and specifically metaphysical weight lies, can only be hinted at in the perception as to how this low-level concept of experience also had a restricting effect on Kantian thought. It is obviously a matter of that same state of affairs that has often been mentioned as the religious and historical blindness of the Enlightenment, with no recognition of the extent to which these features of the Enlightenment pertain to the entire modern era.

It is of the greatest importance for the philosophy of the future to recog-

The central task of the coming philosophy will be to take the deepest intimations it draws from our times and our expectation of a great future, and turn them into knowledge by relating them to the Kantian system. The historical continuity that is ensured by following the Kantian system is also the only such continuity of decisive and systematic consequence. For Kant is the most recent of those philosophers for whom what mattered was not primarily the scope and depth of knowledge but first and foremost its justification, and with the exception of Plato he is perhaps the only one. Both of these philosophers share a confidence that the knowledge of which we can give the clearest account will also be the most profound. They have not dismissed the demand for depth in philosophy, but have found their own unique way of meeting it by identifying it with the demand for justification. The more unpredictably and boldly the development of future philosophy announces itself, the more deeply it must struggle for certainty, whose criterion is systematic unity or truth.

Nevertheless, the most important obstacle to linking a truly time- and eternity-conscious philosophy to Kant is the following: The reality with which, and with the knowledge of which, Kant wanted to base knowledge on certainty and truth is a reality of a low, perhaps the lowest, order. The problem faced by Kantian epistemology, as by every great epistemology, has two sides, and Kant managed to give a valid explanation for only one of them. First of all, there was the question of the certainty of knowledge that is lasting, and, second, there was the question of the integrity of an experience that is ephemeral. For universal philosophical interest is continually directed toward both the timeless validity of knowledge and the certainty

nize and sort out which elements of the Kantian philosophy should be adopted and cultivated, which should be reworked, and which should be rejected. Every demand for a return to Kant rests upon the conviction that this system, which encountered a notion of experience whose metaphysical aspect met with the approval of men such as Mendelssohn and Garve, has, by virtue of its brilliant exploration of the certainty and justification of knowledge, derived and developed a depth that will prove adequate for a new and higher kind of experience yet to come.² This simultaneously presents the primary challenge faced by contemporary philosophy and asserts that it can be met: it is, according to the typology of Kantian thought, to undertake the epistemological foundation of a higher concept of experience. And precisely this is to be made the theme of the expected philosophy: that a certain typology can be demonstrated and clearly drawn out from the Kantian system—a typology which can do justice to a higher experience. Nowhere does Kant deny the possibility of a metaphysics; he merely wishes to have criteria set up against which such a possibility can be proven in the individual case. The notion of experience held in the Kantian age did not require metaphysics; the only thing historically possible in Kant's day was to deny its claims, because the demand of his contemporaries for metaphysics was weakness or hypocrisy. Thus, it is a question of finding, on the basis of Kantian typology, prolegomena to a future metaphysics and, in the process, of envisioning this future metaphysics, this higher experience.

But it is not only with reference to experience and metaphysics that philosophy must be concerned with the revision of Kant. And methodically considered—that is, as true philosophy should consider it—the revision should begin not with reference to experience and metaphysics but with reference to the concept of knowledge. The decisive mistakes of Kant's epistemology are, without a doubt, traceable to the hollowness of the experience available to him, and thus the double task of creating both a new concept of knowledge and a new conception of the world on the basis of philosophy becomes a single one. The weakness of the Kantian concept of knowledge has often been felt in the lack of radicalism and the lack of consistency in his teachings. Kant's epistemology does not open up the realm of metaphysics, because it contains within itself primitive elements of an unproductive metaphysics which excludes all others. In epistemology every metaphysical element is the germ of a disease that expresses itself in the separation of knowledge from the realm of experience in its full freedom and depth. The development of philosophy is to be expected because each annihilation of these metaphysical elements in an epistemology simultaneously refers it to a deeper, more metaphysically fulfilled experience. There is—and here lies the historical seed of the approaching philosophy—a most intimate connection between that experience, the deeper exploration of which could never lead to metaphysical truths, and that theory of knowl-

edge, which was not yet able to determine sufficiently the logical place of metaphysical research. Nonetheless, the sense in which Kant uses, for instance, the term "metaphysics of Nature" seems definitely to lie in the direction of the exploration of experience on the basis of epistemologically secured principles. The inadequacies with respect to experience and metaphysics manifest themselves within epistemology itself as elements of speculative metaphysics (that is, metaphysics that has become rudimentary). The most important of these elements are, first, Kant's conception of knowledge as a relation between some sort of subjects and objects or subject and object—a conception that he was unable, ultimately, to overcome, despite all his attempts to do so; and, second, the relation of knowledge and experience to human empirical consciousness, likewise only very tentatively overcome. These two problems are closely interconnected, and even to the extent that Kant and the neo-Kantians have overcome the object nature of the thing-in-itself as the cause of sensations, there remains the subject nature of the cognizing consciousness to be eliminated. This subject nature of this cognizing consciousness, however, stems from the fact that it is formed in analogy to the empirical consciousness, which of course has objects confronting it. All of this is a thoroughly metaphysical rudiment of epistemology, a piece of just that shallow "experience" of these centuries which has crept into epistemology. It simply cannot be doubted that the notion, sublimated though it may be, of an individual living ego which receives sensations by means of its senses and forms its ideas on the basis of them plays a role of the greatest importance in the Kantian concept of knowledge. This notion is, however, mythology, and so far as its truth content is concerned, it is the same as every other epistemological mythology. We know of primitive peoples of the so-called preanimistic stage who identify themselves with sacred animals and plants and name themselves after them; we know of insane people who likewise identify themselves in part with objects of their perception, which are thus no longer *objecta*, "placed before" them; we know of sick people who relate the sensations of their bodies not to themselves but rather to other creatures, and of clairvoyants who at least claim to be able to feel the sensations of others as their own. The commonly shared notion of sensuous (and intellectual) knowledge in our epoch, as well as in the Kantian and the pre-Kantian epochs, is very much a mythology like those mentioned. In *this* respect, so far as the naive conception of the receipt of perceptions is concerned, Kantian "experience" is metaphysics or mythology, and indeed only a modern and religiously very infertile one. Experience, as it is conceived in reference to the individual living human and his consciousness, instead of as a systematic specification of knowledge, is again in all of its types the mere *object* of this real knowledge, specifically of its psychological branch. The latter divides empirical consciousness systematically into types of madness. Cognizing man, the cognizing empirical con-

sciousness, is a type of insane consciousness. This means nothing more than that within the empirical consciousness there are only gradual differences among its various types. These differences are simultaneously differences of value, but their criterion cannot be the correctness of cognitions and is never the issue in the empirical, psychological sphere; to determine the true criteria for differentiating between the values of the various types of consciousness will be one of the highest tasks of the future philosophy. Corresponding to the types of empirical consciousness are just as many types of experiences, which in regard to their relation to the empirical consciousness, so far as truth is concerned, have the value only of fantasy or hallucination. For an objective relation between the empirical consciousness and the objective concept of experience is impossible. All genuine experience rests upon the pure "epistemological (transcendental) consciousness," if this term is still usable under the condition that it be stripped of everything subjective. The pure transcendental consciousness is different in kind from any empirical consciousness, and the question therefore arises of whether the application of the term "consciousness" is allowable here. How the psychological concept of consciousness is related to the concept of the sphere of pure knowledge remains a major problem of philosophy, one which perhaps can be set aside only through recourse to the age of Scholasticism. Here is the logical place for many problems that phenomenology has recently raised anew. Philosophy is based upon the fact that the structure of experience lies within the structure of knowledge and is to be developed from it. This experience, then, also includes religion, as the true experience, in which neither god nor man is object or subject of experience but in which this experience depends on pure knowledge as the quintessence of which philosophy alone can and must think god. The task of future epistemology is to find for knowledge the sphere of total neutrality in regard to the concepts of both subject and object; in other words, it is to discover the autonomous, innate sphere of knowledge in which this concept in no way continues to designate the relation between two metaphysical entities.

It should be made a tenet of the program of future philosophy that in the course of the purification of epistemology which Kant ensured could be posed as a radical problem—while also making its posing necessary—not only a new concept of knowledge but also a new concept of experience should be established, in accordance with the relationship Kant found between the two. Of course, as was said, neither experience nor knowledge may be bound to the empirical consciousness in this process; but here, too, it would continue to be the case, indeed it would first derive its proper significance to say that the conditions of knowledge are those of experience. This new concept of experience, which would be established on the basis of the new conditions of knowledge, would itself be the logical place and the logical possibility of metaphysics. For when he made metaphysics a problem and experience the only basis of knowledge, Kant had no other reason than

the fact that, as he proceeded from his concept of experience, the possibility of a metaphysics that would have the importance of previous metaphysics (properly understood; not the possibility of having a metaphysics at all) would have had to seem excluded. Apparently, however, metaphysics is not distinguished solely by the illegitimacy of its insights, at least not for Kant, who would otherwise hardly have written prolegomena to it. Its distinctiveness lies, rather, in its universal power to tie all of experience immediately to the concept of God, through ideas. Thus, the task of the coming philosophy can be conceived as the discovery or creation of that concept of knowledge which, by relating experience *exclusively* to the transcendental consciousness, makes not only mechanical but also religious experience logically possible. This should definitely be taken to mean not that knowledge makes God possible but that it definitely does make the experience and doctrine of him possible in the first place.

In the development of philosophy called for and considered proper here, one symptom of neo-Kantianism can already be detected. A major problem of neo-Kantianism was to eliminate the distinction between intuition and intellect, a metaphysical rudiment that occupies a position like that of the theory of the faculties in Kant's work. With this—that is, with the transformation of the concept of knowledge—there also began a transformation of the concept of experience. For there is no doubt that Kant does not intend to reduce all experience so exclusively to scientific experience, no matter how much it may belong, in some respects, to the training of the historical Kant. Certainly Kant tended to avoid dividing and fragmenting experience into the realms of the individual sciences. Even if later epistemology has to deny recourse to commonly understood experience (such as occurs in Kant), on the other hand, in the interest of the continuity of experience, representation of experience as the system of the sciences as the neo-Kantians have it is still lacking. A way must be found in metaphysics to form a pure and systematic continuum of experience; indeed, it seems that the true meaning of experience is to be sought in this area. But in the neo-Kantian rectification of one of Kant's metaphysicizing thoughts (not the fundamental one), a modification of the concept of experience occurred—significantly enough, first of all in the extreme extension of the mechanical aspect of the relatively empty Enlightenment concept of experience. It should by no means be overlooked that the concept of freedom stands in a peculiar correlation to the mechanical concept of experience and was accordingly further developed in neo-Kantianism. But here, too, it must be emphasized that the entire context of ethics can no more be absorbed into the concept of morality held by Kant, the Enlightenment, and the Kantians than the context of metaphysics fits into that which they call experience. With a new concept of knowledge, therefore, not only the concept of experience but also that of freedom will undergo a decisive transformation.

One could actually argue here that, with the discovery of a concept of

experience which would provide a logical place for metaphysics, the distinction between the realms of nature and freedom would be abolished. Yet here, where we are concerned solely with a program of research and not with proof, only this much need be said: no matter how necessary and inevitable it may be to reconstruct, on the basis of a new transcendental logic, the realm of dialectics, the realm of the crossover between the theory of experience and the theory of freedom, it is just as imperative that this transformation not end up in a confounding of freedom and experience, even though the concept of experience may be changed in the metaphysical realm by the concept of freedom in a sense that is perhaps as yet unknown. For no matter how incalculable the changes may be that will reveal themselves to research here, the trichotomy of the Kantian system is one of the great features of that typology which is to be preserved, and it, more than any other, must be preserved. One may well ask whether the second part of the system (quite apart from the difficulty of the third) must still be related to ethics or whether the category of causality through freedom might have a different meaning. The trichotomy, whose metaphysically deepest aspects are still undiscovered, has its decisive foundation within the Kantian system in the trinity of the relational categories. In the absolute trichotomy of the system, which in this threefold aspect is related to the entire realm of culture, lies one of the reasons for the world-historical superiority of Kant's system over that of his predecessors. The formalist dialectic of the post-Kantian systems, however, is not based on the definition of the thesis as categorical relation, the antithesis as hypothetical relation, and the synthesis as disjunctive relation. But besides the concept of synthesis, another concept, that of a certain nonsynthesis of two concepts in another, will become very important systematically, since another relation between thesis and antithesis is possible besides synthesis. This can hardly lead to a fourfold structure of relational categories, however.

But if the great trichotomy must be preserved for the structuring of philosophy, even while the components themselves are still misdefined, the same does not hold true for all the individual schemata of the system. Just as the Marburg school has already begun with the sublation of the distinction between transcendental logic and aesthetics (even though it is possible that an analogue of this distinction might return on a higher level), so must the table of categories be completely revised, as is now generally demanded. In this very process, then, the transformation of the concept of knowledge will begin to manifest itself in the acquisition of a new concept of experience, since the Aristotelian categories are both arbitrarily posed and have been exploited in a very one-sided way by Kant in the light of mechanical experience. First and foremost, one must consider whether the table of categories must remain in its present isolation and lack of mediation, or whether it could not take a place among other members in a theory of orders

or itself be built up to such a theory, founded upon or connected to primal concepts [*Urbegriffe*]. Such a theory of orders would also comprise that which Kant discusses in the transcendental aesthetic, and, furthermore, all the basic concepts not only of mechanics but also of geometry, linguistics, psychology, the descriptive natural sciences, and many others, to the extent that these concepts had a direct relation to the categories or the other highest ordering concepts of philosophy. Outstanding examples here are the principles of grammar. Furthermore, one must recall that, with the radical elimination of all those elements in epistemology that provide the concealed answer to the concealed question about the origins of knowledge, the great problem of the false or of error is opened up, whose logical structure and order must be ascertained just like those of the true. Error can no longer be explained in terms of erring, any more than the true can be explained in terms of correct understanding. For this investigation of the logical nature of the false and the mistaken, the categories are likewise presumably to be found in the theory of the orders; everywhere in modern philosophy the recognition crops up that categorical and related orders are of central importance for the knowledge of an experience which is multiply gradated and nonmechanical. Art, jurisprudence, and history: these and other areas must orient themselves according to the theory of categories with much more intensity than Kant oriented them. But at the same time, one of the greatest problems of the system occurs in regard to the transcendental logic, specifically the question of its third part—in other words, the question of those scientific types of experience (the biological ones) which Kant did not treat on the ground of the transcendental logic; one must also inquire why he did not do so. Furthermore, the question of the relationship of art to this third part of the system and of ethics to the second part: the fixing of the concept of identity, unknown to Kant, will likely play a great role in the transcendental logic, inasmuch as it does not occur in the table of categories yet presumably constitutes the highest of transcendental logical concepts and is perhaps truly suited to founding the sphere of knowledge autonomously beyond the subject-object terminology. The transcendental dialectic already displays, in the Kantian formulation, the ideas upon which the unity of experience rests. As already mentioned, however, for the deepened concept of experience continuity is almost as indispensable as unity, and the basis of the unity and continuity of that experience which is not vulgar or only scientific, but metaphysical, must be demonstrated in the ideas. The convergence of ideas toward the highest concept of knowledge must be shown.

Just as Kantian theory itself, in order to find its principles, needed to be confronted with a science with reference to which it could define them, modern philosophy will need this as well. The great transformation and correction which must be performed upon the concept of experience, ori-

ented so one-sidedly along mathematical-mechanical lines, can be attained only by relating knowledge to language, as was attempted by Hamann during Kant's lifetime.³ For Kant, the consciousness that philosophical knowledge was absolutely certain and a priori, the consciousness of that aspect of philosophy in which it is fully the peer of mathematics, ensured that he devoted almost no attention to the fact that all philosophical knowledge has its unique expression in language and not in formulas or numbers. This fact, however, might well ultimately prove to be the decisive one, and it is ultimately because of this fact that the systematic supremacy of philosophy over all science as well as mathematics is to be asserted. A concept of knowledge gained from reflection on the linguistic nature of knowledge will create a corresponding concept of experience which will also encompass realms that Kant failed to truly systematize. The realm of religion should be mentioned as the foremost of these. Thus, the demand upon the philosophy of the future can ultimately be put in these words: to create on the basis of the Kantian system a concept of knowledge to which a concept of experience corresponds, of which the knowledge is the teachings [*Lehre*].⁴ Such a philosophy in its universal element would either itself be designated as theology or would be superordinated to theology to the extent that it contains historically philosophical elements.

Experience is the uniform and continuous multiplicity of knowledge.

Addendum

In the interest of clarifying the relation of philosophy to religion, the contents of the preceding essay should be repeated to the extent that it concerns the systematic schema of philosophy. It is concerned first of all with the relationship among the three concepts, epistemology, metaphysics, and religion. All of philosophy breaks down into epistemology and metaphysics, or, as Kant would say, into a critical and a dogmatic part. This division, however, is—not as an indication of content but as a principle of classification—not of principal importance. With it, one is trying to say only that upon the basis of all the critical ensuring of cognitive concepts and the concept of knowledge, a theory can now be built up of that on which in the very first place the concept of knowledge is epistemologically fixed. Where the critical ends and the dogmatic begins is perhaps not clearly demonstrable, because the concept of the dogmatic is supposed to designate only the transition from critique to teachings, from the more general to particular fundamental concepts.

All philosophy is thus theory of knowledge, but just that—a theory, critical and dogmatic, of all knowledge. Both parts, the critical and the dogmatic, fall completely within the realm of the philosophical. Since this is the case, since it is not true that, for instance, the dogmatic part coincides

with that of individual sciences, the question naturally arises as to the borderline between philosophy and individual sciences. The meaning of the term "metaphysical," as introduced in the foregoing, consists precisely in declaring this border nonexistent, and the reformulation of "experience" as "metaphysics" means that so-called experience is virtually included in the metaphysical or dogmatic part of philosophy, into which the highest epistemological—that is, the critical—is transformed. (For examples of this relation in the area of physics, see my essay on explanation and description.) If the relations among epistemology, metaphysics, and the individual sciences are thus very generally outlined, two questions remain. First, that of the relation of the critical to the dogmatic moment in ethics and aesthetics, which we can leave aside here since we must postulate a solution in a manner perhaps systematically analogous to that in the domain of physics. Second, there is the question of the relation between philosophy and religion. To begin with, it is now clear that what is at stake is not the issue of the relationship between philosophy and religion but that between philosophy and the teachings of religion—in other words, the question of the relation between knowledge in general and knowledge of religion. The question of existence raised by religion, art, and so on can also play a role philosophically, but only on the path of inquiry into the philosophical *knowledge* of such existence. Philosophy always inquires about knowledge, in relation to which the question of the knowledge of its existence is only a modification, albeit an incomparably marvelous modification, of the question of knowledge in general. Indeed, it must be said that philosophy in its questionings can never hit upon the unity of existence, but only upon new unities of various conformities to laws, whose integral is "existence."—The original or primal concept of epistemology has a double function. On the one hand, this concept is the one which by its specification, after the general logical foundation of knowledge, penetrates to the concepts of specific types of cognition and thus to specific types of experience. This is its real epistemological significance and simultaneously the one weaker side of its metaphysical significance. However, the original and primal concept of knowledge does not reach a concrete totality of experience in this context, any more than it reaches a concept of existence. But there is a unity of experience that can by no means be understood as a sum of experiences, to which the concept of knowledge as teaching is *immediately* related in its continuous development. The object and the content of this teaching, this concrete totality of experience, is religion, which, however, is presented to philosophy in the first instance only as teaching. Yet the source of existence lies in the totality of experience, and only in teaching does philosophy encounter something absolute, as existence, and in so doing encounter that continuity in the nature of experience. The falling of neo-Kantianism can be suspected in its neglect of this continuity. In a *purely* metaphysical respect, the original

concept of experience in its totality is transformed in a sense quite different from the way it is transformed in its individual specifications, the sciences—that is, immediately, where the meaning of this immediacy vis-à-vis the former mediacy remains to be determined. To say that knowledge is metaphysical means in the strict sense: it is related via the original concept of knowledge to the concrete totality of experience—that is, *existence*. The philosophical concept of existence must answer to the religious concept of teachings, but the latter must answer to the epistemological original concept. All of this is only a sketchy indication. The basic tendency of this definition of the relationship between religion and philosophy, however, is to meet the demands for, first, the virtual unity of religion and philosophy; second, the incorporation of the knowledge of religion into philosophy; third, the integrity of the tripartite division of the system.

Written in 1918; unpublished in Benjamin's lifetime. Translated by Mark Ritter.

Notes

1. The Neo-Kantians sought to ground Kant's epistemology in a theory of experience based upon rigorously mathematical and scientific models. Benjamin had studied under one leading Neo-Kantian, Heinrich Rickert, and had read extensively in the work of another, Hermann Cohen.—*Trans.*
2. Moses Mendelssohn (1729–1786), prominent German-Jewish moral and aesthetic philosopher; and Christian Garve (1742–1798), moral philosopher and translator of the English philosophy of the eighteenth century.—*Trans.*
3. Johann Georg Hamann (1730–1788), German theologian and philosopher whose rhapsodic, elliptical style and appeal to affect and intuition led to controversies with eighteenth-century rationalists (Kant among them) but exerted a powerful influence on Herder and the authors of the *Sturm und Drang*.—*Trans.*
4. The word *Lehre* figures prominently in Benjamin's discussions with Gershom Scholem during this period. It signifies something between "religious doctrine" and "teachings." Scholem recalls that Benjamin understood the *Lehre* to represent the proper understanding of not only the "status and path of mankind" but also the "transcendental connectedness of things and their constitution in God." Scholem, *Walter Benjamin: The Story of a Friendship* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1981), p. 73.—*Trans.*

Stifter

I

One misunderstanding about Stifter seems to me highly dangerous because it ends up in the orbit of mistaken metaphysical convictions about what man needs in his relation to the world.¹ There can be no doubt that Stifter has given us some quite wonderful descriptions of nature, and that he has also said some marvelous things about human life insofar as it has not yet been transformed into destiny—that is to say, insofar as it is still concerned with children, as in *Bergkristall* [Mountain Crystal]. But the gigantic fallacy he commits is one that he himself has described, without recognizing it for what it is. It is found in the preface to *Bunte Steine*,² where he writes about great and small events in the world and attempts to represent the relation between them as a deceptive and unimportant, even relative one. In fact, he has no appreciation for the purity and sense of order that obtain in the basic relations between man and the world; in other words, he has no sense of justice in the highest meaning of the word. While reflecting on the way in which he unfolds the *destiny* of his characters in his various books—in *Abdias*, *Tourmaline*, *Brigitta*, and an episode in *Die Mappe meines Urgroßvaters* [My Great-Grandfather's Diary]—I have constantly been aware of the obverse, the shadow side, of his self-imposed limitation to a depiction of the apparently insignificant aspects of life. The fact is that he neither can nor wishes to restrict himself solely to describing these things, and he therefore goes beyond description to extend that simplicity to the great events of fate, even though these necessarily have a simplicity and purity of quite a different kind, namely one that cohabits with greatness or, better, justice. It then becomes evident that in Stifter a shadow is cast over