

Every Unlimited Condition of the Will

Every unlimited condition of the will leads to evil. Ambition and lust are unlimited expressions of will. As the theologians have always perceived, the natural totality of the will must be destroyed. The will must shatter into a thousand pieces. The elements of the will that have proliferated so greatly limit one another. This gives rise to the limited, terrestrial will. Whatever goes beyond them and calls for the (supreme) unity of intention is not the object of the will; it does not require the intention of the *will*. Prayer, however, can be unlimited.

Fragment written in 1918; unpublished in Benjamin's lifetime. Translated by Rodney Livingstone.

Types of History

Natural history
Cosmogony
Universal history

Developmental stages of phenomena
Divine history
Linear causality from the standpoint of which:
Natural history becomes history of creation
Universal history becomes revelation

Natural history exists only as cosmogony or as the history of creation. Herder's conception of this is mistaken, regarded from an earthly standpoint, but the earth is, in itself, a *world*-historical individual because human beings live on it.

The correspondence between phenomena is valid not just for the cosmos but also for terrestrial nature (for which the correspondence in universal history is also relevant), as well as for *anthropos* as a phenomenon—for example, as a sexual being—up to the limits of history.

Natural history does not extend to mankind, any more than does universal history; it knows only the individual. Man is neither a phenomenon nor an effect, but a created being.

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