

PART THREE

Must I Remain Unable to Speak?

BERLIN, 1897–1907

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THIS QUESTION BECAME AN experience: *Must I remain unable to speak?* This was the state of my soul life, and I found it necessary to introduce an entirely new note into my outer activity. It was no longer possible to retain such a close rapport between the factors that determined my outer destiny and the guidelines that arose inwardly from my experience of the spiritual world. For some time, I had considered the possibility of letting my contemporaries know (through a periodical) about the spiritual impulses that I felt could be made public at the time. I did not want to be “mute” but to reveal as much as possible. It was impossible to start a periodical on my own. I had neither the money nor the connections needed for such a venture. Consequently, I seized the opportunity when I was asked to be editor of the *Review of Literature* (*Magazin für Literatur*).⁴⁶⁶

It was an old, established weekly, begun in 1832, the year Goethe died. First known as *The Review of Foreign Literature*, it carried translations of foreign works that the editors considered worthy of introducing to German culture. The weekly was transformed later into the *Review of German and Foreign Literature*. It published the material of culture as a whole—poetry, essays, and reviews. In a limited way, it fulfilled this task very well. In those days there were enough people in German-speaking areas who were interested in a short, weekly survey of “what was happening” in cultural life.

In the 1880s and 1890s, however, the younger generation had more modern ideas about literature and began to make their influence felt within this steady, peaceful participation in culture, and the *Review* was soon drawn into the new trend. There were fairly frequent changes of editors, who adhered to the “modern view” to varying degrees and temporarily placed their stamp on the magazine.

In 1897, when I had the opportunity to become editor, the *Review* supported modern trends without opposing other views too drastically. But it could no longer maintain itself financially strictly through its content as a magazine. Therefore, among other things it became a journal for the Independent Literary Society.⁴⁶⁷ This added to the income from its otherwise insufficient number of subscribers. Nevertheless, when I took over the *Review*, the financial situation required that we also rely more on the less dependable subscribers in order to demonstrate a minimum basis for continuing. By accepting the position of editor, I also had to accept another task, which would probably increase the number of subscribers. That task involved the Independent Literary Society. I had to arrange the content of the magazine so that the society received its due. The society sought to attract people interested in the literary creations of the younger generation. The headquarters in Berlin had been established by younger writers, and there were “branches” in many German cities—though it soon became apparent that some of them led a very modest existence. It was now my task to present lectures to the society to also give personal expression to the cultural life that was supposed to be presented through the magazine.

Thus for the *Review* I had readers whose cultural needs I had to understand. And the membership of the Independent Literary Society expected something very specific—exactly what they had always been offered. In any case, they certainly did not expect the kind of thing I could offer them from my innermost being. Then there was also the fact that the Independent Literary Society wished to be a kind of opposition to the Literary Society, where people such as Spielhagen set the tone.⁴⁶⁸

Because of my conscious experience of the spiritual world, I inwardly participated fully in all the relationships I entered at the time. I tried to identify myself completely with the readers of the *Review* and the members of the society, so that I could discover through their view how to best articulate the spiritual impulses I intended to convey.

I cannot say I approached the task with illusions that were gradually destroyed. But it was precisely my attempt to work in harmony with the reader and the listener—which I deemed appropriate—that encountered increasing resistance. Those connected with the *Review* before I took over

were not overly serious or spiritually minded. Only a few had any deeper interests, and even those few had no strong spiritual impulses but more of a general desire to participate in the various arts and cultural expressions.

Soon I had to ask myself whether I could justify my work in this group of people—both to myself and to the spiritual world. Although many of those concerned were my friends and very dear to me, they also belonged (so far as my inner experience of the spirit was concerned) among those who made me ask, *Must I remain unable to speak?*

And there was something else. Through their attitude toward me, many of my old friends and acquaintances conveyed the feeling that, whereas they did not accompany me very far in terms of my inner life, they did see something in me that, in their eyes, gave value to what I contributed, whether in the realm of knowledge or in other areas of life. Because of their experience with me, they often accepted my being without question.

But those who had published the *Review* up to that point did not share this impression. They said, “Steiner is essentially an ‘idealist’ despite his many practical qualities.” And the former owner naturally had a strong practical interest in the continuation of the weekly, because according to the purchase agreement, he was to be paid installments throughout the year; from his perspective—for his own sake and that of the business—he had to ask for more security than I represented, especially since he had no way of knowing how I might affect those already connected with the *Review of Literature* and the Independent Literary Society. Consequently, a clause in the agreement required that Otto Erich Hartleben sign as co-editor.⁴⁶⁹

Recalling the arrangements related to being the editor, I have no desire that they should have been different. As described earlier, when one experiences the spiritual world consciously, it is absolutely essential to learn the facts of the physical world through direct experience. For me this had become an obvious necessity, particularly through my soul transformation. I would have committed a sin against my experience of spirit if I had not accepted what I clearly recognized as the forces of destiny. I saw not only the external facts that linked me for a time with Otto Erich Hartleben, but also “facts of destiny” (or karma).⁴⁷⁰ Yet the relationship led to insurmountable difficulties.

Hartleben was thoroughly dominated by aesthetics. I sensed a gracious quality in the expression of his completely aesthetic philosophy and even in his gestures, despite the rather questionable milieu in which he could often be found. That disposition caused him to feel a need, every so often, to spend several months in Italy. And whenever he returned, one had an

impression of something Italian in his constitution. Also, I felt a strong love for him.

But cooperation in what was now our common area of work was indeed impossible. He was not inclined to move into the realm of ideas and interests of the magazine's readers or of those who belonged to the Independent Literary Society; he preferred to impose upon both the dictates of his sense of aesthetics. That attitude was alien to me. At times he asserted his right as co-editor, but he also went for long periods without doing so. He was also away in Italy for considerable periods. As a result, the magazine's content lacked consistency. Despite his "mature aesthetic philosophy," Otto Erich Hartleben could not overcome the "student" in himself—that is, the questionable side of being a "student," not the wonderful vitality of student days that may be carried into later life.

At the time we had to join forces, his play *Education for Marriage* had recently won him a larger circle of admirers. This was not at all a product of the charming aestheticism that made his company so stimulating. It was a product of the same abandon and lack of restraint that caused a certain superficiality, from which all of his decisions related to the magazine and his literary contributions arose, rather than from the deeper side of his nature. Few knew Hartleben intimately.

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WHEN I FIRST MOVED to Berlin to become editor of the *Review*, I naturally associated with the group of people connected with Hartleben.⁴⁷¹ After all, they were the people through whom I could get the necessary overview of everything pertaining to the weekly magazine and to the Independent Literary Society. On the one hand, that caused me great pain by preventing me from seeing and becoming better acquainted with those I knew from Weimar and with whom I already had a delightful relationship. How dear it would have been if I had been able to visit Eduard von Hartmann more frequently.

None of this was possible, however. That other side claimed me completely. Thus at one stroke, a very valuable human element that I would have gladly retained was taken from me. This, too, I recognized as a stroke of destiny (karma). On the basis of my soul disposition (as I have described), it would have been perfectly possible for me to turn my fullest attention to the two fundamentally very different circles of people I knew from Weimar and those associated with the magazine. In the long run, however, neither of these groups would have found any joy in me had I divided my time

between two groups who belonged to opposite worlds in relation to soul and spirit. Also, in such a situation I could not have avoided continually having to explain why I devoted all my labors exclusively to the magazine, as I indeed was because of the nature of the *Review*.

It became increasingly clear that I could no longer associate with people as I was privileged to do in Vienna and Weimar, as I described. In the new circle, literary minds assembled to meet other literary minds. Even very fine people—even those of distinguished character—had an interest in literature (or painting or sculpture) so deeply ingrained that the purely human element completely withdrew into the background. This



Frank Wedekind

This was my experience as I sat among those people, whom I nevertheless treasured. And this is exactly the reason I received a deeper impression of the spiritual background of those souls.

Once, I gave a lecture, and O. J. Bierbaum gave a reading in the Leipzig Independent Literary Society.⁴⁷² Afterward, I sat with a group of people that included Frank Wedekind.⁴⁷³ I was spellbound by his truly extraordinary human form. I mean *form* in a purely physical sense. What hands! In a previous earthly lifetime they must have accomplished things possible only for one who can allow the force of spirit to flow into the finest divergence of the fingers. They may well have appeared brutal because of the energy they expended; but those hands conveyed something very interesting. And his expressive head—as though shaped completely by that exceptional quality of will in his hands. His gaze and varying expressions indicated that he could be open and receptive when he so desired. But gestures of his arms in response to the sensitivity of those hands showed that he was more likely to withdraw from the world. A spirit alien to the present age spoke from his head—a spirit who placed himself *beyond* the hustle and bustle of modern humanity, but was unable to be clear about what past age he did belong to.

As a man of letters (this is not a literary judgment but merely to say what I saw in him), Frank Wedekind was like a chemist who completely rejects the modern views of chemistry and practices alchemy—yet somewhat cynically and with no real interest even in that. One could learn much about

the spirit's effect on form by contemplating Wedekind's outer appearance with spiritual perception. This certainly cannot be done through the same means "psychologists" use when attempting to "observe people"; one must see the purely human element revealed against a spiritual background of inner, spiritual occurrences of destiny—which are not looked for, but come to meet one.⁴⁷⁴

When a person becomes aware of being analyzed, a justifiable feeling of annoyance may arise. Nevertheless, the transition from a purely human social relationship to "perceiving a person's spiritual background" is also a part of a purely human relationship. It is something like the transition from a casual to a more intimate friendship.

Paul Scheerbarth was one of the most extraordinary people in Hartleben's Berlin circle.⁴⁷⁵ He had written poems that, when the reader first sees them, seem to be an arbitrary collection of words and sentences. They are so outlandish that one feels compelled to go beyond the first impression. One then discovers that a fantastic mind looks for all sorts of otherwise unnoticed meanings in words. Thus a spiritual meaning can be expressed that stems not only from a groundless soul fantasy, but one that does not even look for a foundation. Within Scheerbarth was an inner cult of the fantastic that deliberately effected eccentricity. It was my impression that he believed the work of a gifted person should be bizarre, because others drag everything down into mundane artlessness. This feeling is not a desire to develop the bizarre within a rounded artistic form, but within a lordly and deliberately careless soul disposition. The bizarre phenomena of those thought forms *must* arise from the realm of inner fantasy. It was Paul Scheerbarth's soul tendency to look for the spirit, but without clarity. That "visionary" stated that thoughtful deliberations do not attain spiritual realms. Consequently, one must avoid rationality in order to express spirit. Scheerbarth, however, did not make the slightest attempt to go beyond the merely fantastic to true imagination. As a result, his writing was interesting but caught in nightmarish, fantastic visions of whole cosmic worlds, like dreams within dreams of glittering and shimmering distortions of the spiritual world mixed together with equally distorted depictions of human experiences. An example of this is his poem "Tarub, Baghdad's Famous Cook."⁴⁷⁶

A very different impression of him arose once one got to know him personally. He struck a person as a somewhat cultivated bureaucrat. Contrary to Wedekind (whose outer appearance was so very interesting), Scheerbarth appeared very ordinary, even boorish. This impression was soon enhanced as one began to converse with him. He vehemently despised vulgar people, yet his mannerisms and way of speaking were boorish; one had the impression

that his aversion stemmed from the fact that, moving in boorish circles, he had absorbed too much of this element into his own makeup and, though he sensed it, felt incapable of transcending it. One read in the foundation of his soul a kind of confession—the desire to destroy all vulgar people, because they made him vulgar.

Nevertheless, by looking into the inner being of Paul Scheerbarth, independent of all external manifestation, one discovered a truly fine, though spiritually undeveloped, human spirit that remained stuck in the bizarre and the fantastic. Then, from his intelligence and golden heart, one could experience *his* stance in the spirit realm. One realized the potential of his strong personality—able to penetrate the spirit realm with true vision—if he had only managed to carry his spiritual development a little further. But one also realized that his “devotion to the fantastic” was already so strong that such development was no longer possible in this life.

Frank Wedekind and Paul Scheerbarth were people who, through their very natures, afforded highly significant experiences to those who knew the facts of repeated earthly lives. They did indeed present a mystery in their present life. One looked to what they had brought with them into this life, and saw that there had been a limitless enrichment of their whole personality. One also understood their imperfections as results of previous earthly lives, which could not be fully resolved in the cultural environment of the present life. It became clear that future earthly lives were needed to transform those imperfections. I had similar experiences with many of those in that circle, and I realized that *meeting them* was a part of my destiny (or karma).

I could not gain a purely human, warm relationship even with someone as thoroughly likable as Paul Scheerbarth. With him as well as with the others, the literary mind invariably asserted itself in social interactions. Thus my warm affection for him was solely the result of the attention and interest I felt compelled to give such a highly unusual personality.

Walter Harlan was the one person who came to this circle as a human being and not as a “literary mind.”⁴⁷⁷ He said little, however, and usually sat simply as a quiet observer. When he did speak, he invariably said something clever (in the best sense of the word) or truly witty. He wrote a great deal, though not exactly as a literary mind but as one who wishes to express his concerns. At that time he had just written the “Writers’ Exchange,” a description of life permeated with priceless humor. I was always pleased when, arriving early at the meeting place, I found him there alone; that was when I came to know him better. I do not include him when I say that I met no human beings in that circle, only “literary minds.” I also believe he

understood that I could experience the circle only in this way. Our very different life paths soon parted us.

Those connected with the magazine and the Independent Literary Society were clearly interwoven with *my* destiny. But I was not in the least interwoven with *theirs*. They saw me arrive in Berlin and appear in their group, and they learned that I was wanted to edit the *Review* and work for the Independent Literary Society. But they never understand why only I should do this. To their soul eye, there was nothing that enticed them to get to know me better. Although there was no trace of the theoretician in me, according to their theories and dogmas my spiritual efforts seemed theoretical. And that was something they believed, as “artistic temperaments,” they had no use for.

But, through direct experience, I came to know a certain artistic stream by its representatives. This stream was no longer so radical as those that appeared in Berlin at the end of the 1880s and beginning of the 1890s. Nor did its representatives consider complete naturalism the salvation of art as did Otto Brahm with his stage transformation.⁴⁷⁸ They did not have such a comprehensive conviction about art. Rather, they depended on the will and talents of individuals, but there was a complete lack of effort toward a uniform style.

My position became uncomfortable within that group, because, whereas I realized why I was there, the others did not.

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AN INDEPENDENT DRAMA SOCIETY was associated with the group of people around the *Review*, though not so closely as the Independent Literary Society; nevertheless, the same people were on the boards of both societies. I was elected to the board of the drama society as soon as I came to Berlin.

The task of the drama society was to produce plays not produced by the theaters for various reasons—because of their specific character, the lack of popular appeal, or similar reasons. It was not easy for the board to do justice to the many attempts of “misunderstood” playwrights. Each performance was accomplished by assembling a cast of artists otherwise engaged in the most varied kinds of theaters. They rented or borrowed a stage and performed the play in the mornings. The actors were usually willing to make sacrifices for the society, which was unable to pay proper salaries. In those days, however, neither actors nor theater managers had anything against staging unusual plays. They said only that producing such plays for the usual public as evening performances would lead to financial disaster for

any theater. The public was not mature enough to let the theater serve art exclusively.

The work with the drama society proved very appropriate for me, especially the actual staging of the plays. Otto Erich Hartleben and I participated in the rehearsals and considered ourselves, in effect, the directors. We adapted the plays for the stage. It is clear that theories and dogmas are especially useless in this art, unless they arise from a living, artistic sense that intuits the overall style in the details. General rules have to be avoided. Whatever is accomplished must happen in a flash through a sure sense of style, whether it is a gesture or the arrangement of a scene. What the producer does out of a vivid feeling for style rather than intellectual deliberation has a favorable effect on the artists, whereas they feel restricted whenever they are directed from the intellect. I have often had cause to be glad for the experiences I had in this field at that time.

The first play we produced was *The Intruder* by Maurice Maeterlinck.⁴⁷⁹ Otto Erich Hartleben did the translation. The aesthetes of that period valued Maeterlinck as a playwright who could communicate to a knowing, comprehending audience what lies hidden between life's coarser events. He achieved this through symbolic use of dialogue and what is usually termed "incident" in drama. His use of symbols attracted many who were averse to the recent phase of naturalistic presentation. People who sought "spirit," but had no desire to see the spiritual world presented too directly, found symbolism satisfying. It speaks a language that is not naturalistic, yet enters a spiritual realm just far enough to speak of it in an indefinite, blurred, mystically divining way. Certain people felt all the more ecstatic as it became harder to tell exactly what was behind the suggestive symbols.

I felt uncomfortable with such dabbling in spiritual matters. Nevertheless it was extremely fascinating to participate in staging a play like *The Intruder*. To accomplish exactly this symbolic effect through the right scenery especially required the kind of stage management I have described. Furthermore, it became my task to precede the performance with a short introductory discussion. This practice had been common in France and was adopted in Germany in certain cases—not at ordinary performances, of course, but for the types of plays produced by the drama society. It was not done at *every* performance by the society, but only rarely when it was deemed necessary to introduce the public to a work incorporating unusual artistic intent. The task of giving this short address pleased me by affording an opportunity to convey a mood that radiated from my own spirit, and I was glad that I was able to do this in an environment that generally had no ear for the spirit.⁴⁸⁰

At that time it was quite important for me to be involved in the dramatic art. I wrote the theater critiques that appeared in the *Review* myself.⁴⁸¹ I had definite ideas about such reviews, which were nevertheless not much understood. In my view, the general practice of individuals passing judgment on a play or its production was unnecessary. In any case, the kind of opinion *usually* voiced should be left to the general public.

A reviewer's task should be to evoke in the reader an artistic, conceptual image of the imaginative connections behind the play. Thoughts formed artistically should present the reader with an artistic concept of the living, though still unconscious, seed of the drama in the playwright. For me, thoughts and concepts were never a means of conveying reality in merely abstract or intellectual terms. I could see that artistic activity is possible in thought process, just as it is through the medium of color, form, or stage methods; a drama critic should create a small work of "thought art." It seemed to me that the arts must demand this when a play is performed publicly.

Whether a drama is good, bad, or mediocre is revealed by the tone and style of such "thought art," because, even when not expressed in a crude, judgmental way, it cannot be *concealed*. The reviewer's "thought art" reproduction will reveal the nature of a difficult artistic composition. One presents the thoughts behind the play, but they will prove to be empty and lifeless when a play is not written through true imagination, alive in reality. I wanted this vital cooperation with living art for the *Review*. Consequently, something had to arise that would keep the weekly from emerging as a mere discussion—a critique of art and culture on a theoretical level. It should itself participate in the arts and culture.

Everything that one can do through "thought art" for dramatic play can be done for the art of acting itself.⁴⁸² One can communicate an artistic image of the intentions behind the artistic direction in the scenery arrangement, and it is possible to enter the mind of the actor and to recreate what lives there—not as criticism but in positive terms. Then one becomes a "writer," or co-creator, of contemporary art, instead of being the dreaded, pitied, even despised and hated, "judge" standing off in the corner. By approaching all fields of art in this way, a literary and arts periodical exists in real life.

But one's experience is always the same with these things. When you point this out to people who write, either they do not really listen because such ideas go against their habitual thinking (which they refuse to change), or they do listen and then say, "Yes, that's right, but this is what I've always done." People fail to notice the difference between what is asked for and what they "have always done."

Such problems need not trouble those in a position to pursue their spiritual path independently. But for those who work spiritually with others, this situation become a major concern—and even more so once they clearly recognize their inner path and accept it so completely that, essentially, they cannot deviate from it.

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I FOUND NO INNER satisfaction either in the articles I wrote for the *Review* or in my lectures. But it is completely wrong when people read now what I wrote at that time and conclude that I was advocating materialism. That was certainly never my intention. This should be obvious from the articles and lecture extracts I have written. One merely needs to compare isolated passages that seem to impart a materialistic tone with those in which I speak of spirit and the eternal. In my article “A Viennese Poet,” for example, referring to Peter Altenberg I say, “Matters that would be most interesting to those immersed in the eternal cosmic harmony are alien to him.... No light of eternal ideas penetrate Altenberg’s eyes” (*Review*, July 17, 1897).⁴⁸³

It must be obvious that my meaning of “eternal cosmic harmony” is not at all materialistic or mechanistic when used in passages such as those in the article about Rudolf Heidenhain (November 6, 1897):

Modern science obviously tries to explain life by using the same laws used to explain lifeless nature. It looks for the laws of mechanics, physics, and chemistry in the bodies of plants and animals. The same kind of laws that govern a machine (though more complex and difficult to discern) are thought to be active also in an organism. Nothing is supposed to be amended to those laws to allow the phenomena we call life.... The mechanical view of the phenomena of life is steadily gaining ground. But such a view will never satisfy those who can go more deeply into the processes of nature.... Modern scientists are too cowardly in their thinking. When mechanistic explanations fail, the phenomena are declared unexplainable.... Courageous thinking develops a higher point of view; it attempts to explain what is not mechanical through higher laws. All scientific thinking lags behind our scientific experience. Scientific thinking is frequently celebrated today, and it is said that we live in the age of science. Yet basically, this scientific age is the most barren ever known to history. It is characteristic of our time that we cling to mere external information and explain everything according to mechanical laws. Such thinking can never understand life, because life can be explained only to a higher form of thinking than that required to explain a machine.⁴⁸⁴

Is it not self-evident that one who approaches the phenomena of *life* in this way cannot be a materialist when approaching *spirit*?

Nevertheless, I often mention the fact that *spirit* arises from the womb of nature. What do I mean by *spirit* in that case? I mean everything that gives rise to “culture” through human thinking, feeling, and willing. At that time, there would have been no reason to speak of any other kind of “spirit.” No one would have understood if I had said, Something that is not spirit and not nature, but a perfect union of the two, lies at the foundation of spirit manifested in the human being and in nature. That *unity* is the creative spirit that produces substance through formative activity. Consequently, it is not only spirit but also substance manifesting purely as spirit. The concept with which one comprehends this unity could not be further from the thought habits of that time. But one would have to speak of such a concept when describing, from a spiritual view, the original conditions of earthly and human development, and when speaking of the forces of spirit matter still active today in human beings—forces that, on the one hand, build up our body and, on the other, produce the living spirit through which culture is created. When describing external nature, the original spirit substance must be presented as having died in the abstract laws of nature.

None of this could be said. One could not go beyond relating it to scientific practice; it could not be related to scientific thinking. There was something in this empirical knowledge that, to true and spiritually strengthened thinking, illumined the mystery of the universe and humankind; through this, spirit—which had been lost in traditional beliefs and creeds—could be found again. I wanted to draw the insight of spirit nature out of the experience of nature. I wanted to speak of a living, divine reality, whose substance is both spiritual and natural and exists within this world. In the traditionally preserved creeds, this divine reality had become a world “beyond,” because spirit existing *within* this world was not acknowledged and thus separated from the world of human perception. Spirit became immersed in an increasing darkness in human consciousness. It was far from a rejection of divine spirit, but rather a plea for its restoration to *this world* that I expressed in a lecture at the Independent Literary Society:

I believe that science is in a position to restore our consciousness of freedom in a more excellent form than ever known before. There are laws at work in the human soul that are just as “natural” as those that cause the planets to circle the Sun. But those laws present something that is higher than all of nature. *It is present only in the human being. The human being is free in all*

that flows from this realm. Human beings rise above the stark necessity of laws that govern the inorganic and organic; they obey and follow only themselves. (italics not in the original article of February 12, 1898)⁴⁸⁵

Some of what I said and wrote during that period seems to contradict the way I described Christianity later on. This is because, when I wrote the word *Christianity*, I was referring to the teachings of a “world beyond” that was active in all Christian doctrines at the time. The whole meaning of religious experiences pointed to a world of spirit, one that was supposed to be unattainable by human intellect. Whatever religion might have to say and whatever precepts for moral life it might offer arise from what is revealed to human beings from outside. My own direct, inner perception of spirit objected to this; it wanted to experience the worlds of both spirit and the physical in perceptions of the human being and nature. And my ethical individualism also objected to this. It rejected the external support of commandments for morality; such support came instead as the result of spiritual soul development within the human being, where divinity lives.

That was a trying time for my soul as I looked at Christianity. This period lasted from the time I left the Weimar work until I wrote my book *Christianity as Mystical Fact*.⁴⁸⁶ These kinds of tests are obstacles, placed in one’s path by destiny (or karma), and they must be overcome through spiritual development.

I recognized that in thinking one can proceed from an understanding of nature to insight into the spiritual world (though this was not true at the time). Consequently, I stressed especially a knowledge of the fundamental structure of nature, which must inevitably lead to knowing spirit. One without direct perception of the spiritual world will experience immersion in a trend of thinking merely as mental activity. But the experience will be essentially different for one who experiences the spiritual world directly. One enters a realm of spiritual beings who are intent on making this trend of thinking singularly dominant. This is a realm where onesided knowledge results in more than abstract errors. Errors of the human world become in that realm living, spiritual interactions with certain beings. Later on, I spoke of *abrimanic* beings when I wanted to indicate this.⁴⁸⁷ The absolute reality of those beings is that the world must be a machine. Their realm is directly adjacent to that of the senses.

Not for a moment did I succumb to influences of that realm in my own realm of ideas—not even unconsciously. I took great care to make sure that all my inquiries were carefully and thoughtfully conscious. Even more

conscious was my inner struggle with those demonic powers who tried to develop natural, scientific knowledge—not through perception of spirit, but in a mechanical and materialistic way of thinking.⁴⁸⁸

Those realms must be consciously *experienced* by those who would attain spiritual knowledge. It is not enough to think about them in a merely theoretical way. At that time, I had to rescue my spiritual worldview through inner storms that took place behind the scenes of my everyday experience. I was able to make progress during that period of testing only by contemplating, through spiritual perception, the evolution of Christianity. The insight I gained is described in *Christianity as Mystical Fact*. Prior to this, my comments about Christianity referred only to a particular Christian meaning in the various Christian creeds. Nietzsche did this as well.

Earlier in this autobiography, I described a discussion about the Christ being (see chapter 19, page 61). This was a conversation I had with a learned Cistercian professor of the Catholic faculty of theology in Vienna.⁴⁸⁹ He was in a sceptical mood in relation to this subject. The Christianity that I had to find was not in any of the existing confessions. After the severe, inner struggles during that time of testing, I found it necessary to immerse myself in Christianity and, indeed, in the world where spirit itself speaks of it.

My relationship to Christianity should make it clear that my spiritual science cannot be attained through the kind of research ascribed to me by many people. They suggest that I have assembled a theory of spirit based on ancient traditions. They suppose that I have elaborated Gnosticism and other such teachings.⁴⁹⁰ The spiritual insight attained in *Christianity as Mystical Fact* is brought directly from the world of spirit itself. I examined the records of history and incorporated them into that work only because I wanted to demonstrate, both to the lecture audience and to the book's readers, the harmony between history and what is perceived spiritually.⁴⁹¹ But I took nothing from historical documents for the book's content unless I had first experienced it in spirit.

During the period when my statements about Christianity seemed to contradict my later comments, a conscious knowledge of real Christianity began to dawn within me. Around the turn of the century, this seed of knowledge continued to develop. The soul test described here occurred shortly before the beginning of the twentieth century. It was decisive for my soul's development that I stood spiritually before the Mystery of Golgotha in a deep and solemn celebration of knowledge.⁴⁹²