

THE “WORLD” OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT TO COME (EXCEPTION, CALCULATION, SOVEREIGNTY)*

by

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ABSTRACT

Taking as its point of departure Edmund Husserl’s 1935–36 text *The Crisis of European Sciences*, this essay attempts to develop a new conception of reason by means of a thoroughgoing critique of some ideas often used to support and define it. Because the notion of “enlightenment” has been tied since the time of Kant to a certain coming of age of reason or rationality, the “enlightenment” to come must at once draw upon the resources of this reason and open reason to some of the aporias it has traditionally rejected. Reducible neither to a simple irrationalism nor to a mere mode of calculative thought, such reason must ultimately challenge, it is argued, not only the sovereignty and identity of the (human) subject but the very concepts of sovereignty and identity. Only such a renewed thinking of reason or of what is reasonable, the essay suggests, can help us diagnose, analyze, and help treat some of the aporias posed by a whole host of contemporary issues, from cloning to the erosion of the nation-state to globalization and terrorism. Only in this way can we at once “save the honor of reason”—to use a phrase that runs throughout the essay—and help reorient the reason of politics, of the sciences, and, indeed, of philosophy along the lines of a more fundamental and urgent ethical imperative.

Before even venturing a first word, please allow me too to pay my respects [*saluer*], from the depths of my extreme sorrow, to my friend Dominique Janicaud. For more than thirty-five years his friendship and support, the vigilance of his thought, have accompanied me. I shared so much with him. (And he in fact liked this word *share*, and precisely concerning reason; toward the end of his *Powers of the Rational*, in speaking about what he called “the future *as such*,” he added after a colon: “its *partage*,” its sharing out).¹ I was fortunate to share so many things with him in life and in philosophy; my respect for him grew from so many sources that I would be unable to do it justice in just a few words. Like many among you, I was so looking forward to seeing him here today, and that was no doubt one of the good reasons for being here.

Unable to say anything more right now, I shall simply cite as exergues to my remarks a couple of fragments from *Powers of the Rational*:

To grasp the Incalculable within the general order of calculation: this is, here, no magical operation but the revelation of what is *eventful* in the epoch.²

And at the end of the book, as a next-to-last word:

The incalculable is there, but we ought not exempt ourselves from counting—counting with it, though not on it—from measuring ourselves against time, always our adversary.... There is no need to invoke our certain death. Finitude is inscribed in the very structure of life, in the fragile destiny of the planet as well as of all other beings. (*PR*, 261)

I. *Teleology and Architectonic: The Neutralization of the Event*

At the moment when, fearful—as I am at this very instant—of being unable to measure up to the *task* (and, yes, I said *task*) that has been at once entrusted and assigned to me; at the moment when, feeling myself so unworthy of the *honor* (and, yes, I said *honor*) that has been conferred upon me, I began to prepare myself for this exposition, this exposing of myself, this exposing of my inadequacies in the course of a *finite* exposé (and, yes, I said *finite*)—especially in terms of time: an hour and a half, I've been told—well, at that moment, it was these very words I just emphasized by repeating them (*task*, *honor*, *finitude*) that came in advance to obligate me.

These words obligated me to retain them, to recall them. They themselves asked me to be responsible for them, and to do so in a responsible way. They insisted on telling me something about the *obligation* or the *responsibility* that is here mine, as well as, I would like to assume, ours.

These words, let me repeat them, are the words *task* or *obligation* (whether finite or infinite), and thus *responsibility* (whether finite or infinite), but also *honor*. But why honor, you will ask?

A terribly ambiguous hypothesis came at the time, as any good *hypothèse* [in Greek] must, *to place itself beneath* [*se mettre dessous*]. A hypothesis imposed itself *beneath* what I had just heard myself say. The idiomatic phrasing of its credo or rallying call could be squeezed into six words: “to save the honor of reason.” Someone in me whispered to me: “Perhaps it would be a matter of saving the honor of reason.” “Perhaps on that day, in the daylight of today, in the light of the enlighten-

ment of this day, it would be a matter of saving the honor of reason." Perhaps it would even be necessary. *It would be a matter of* here means *it would be necessary*. Slipping in under every word, the hypothesis opened an abyss beneath each of my steps.

This abyssal hypothesis will never leave me, even if in the future I must silence it. Here, then, let me emphasize it, is its first figure, the first "if . . .": what *if* we were called here "to save the honor of reason," or, if you prefer the fiction of the *as if* to a hypothesis, the fiction of the *als ob* honored in philosophy, and in the name of reason itself, by Kant and others, "it would be *as if* we were called here to save the honor of reason." What if we were called to this end by those who took the initiative to organize this conference and give it its title? What if it were we who had called *ourselves*, *as if* we philosophers, in these times of danger or distress, these tempestuous times of loss, had to save the honor of reason, *so as to* save the honor of reason and, in the same and single, indivisible gesture, to do so in the French language, if not in the name of the French language, which is to say, in a European language of Latin, rather than Greek or German, lineage (*reor* means *I believe, I think, I calculate*, and *ratio*: reason or calculation, account and proportion). In a Latin language, therefore, already burdened with translations, already bearing witness to an experience of translation that, as we will later see, takes upon itself the entire destiny of reason, that is, of the world universality to come? It is as if we were called upon to take this responsibility here and now, the responsibility of saving the honor of reason, as philosophers of the French language, on the shores of the Mediterranean, in a city in France with a Greek name fixed by war, like the monument of a victory that consists always in winning out over [*avoir raison de*] the other, over and against the other. We would already begin to make out, at dawn, in the mist of beginnings, a shoreline and the ports of Europe. Whether armed or disarmed, the great question of reason would already begin to unfurl its sails for a geo-political voyage across Europe and its languages, across Europe and the rest of the world. Is reason (*logos* or *ratio*) first of all a Mediterranean thing? Would it have made it safely to port, with Athens or Rome in view, so as to remain until the end of time tied to its maritime shores? Would it have never really lifted anchor or been set adrift? Would it have never broken away, in a decisive or critical fashion, from its birthplaces, its geography and its genealogy?

In a first moment, I am tempted to trust naively in a very first

hearing of this expression that came to surprise me: “to save the honor of reason.” The honor of reason—is that reason? Is honor reasonable or rational through and through? The very form of this question can be applied analogically to everything that evaluates, affirms, or prescribes reason: to prefer reason, is that rational, or, and this is something else, reasonable? The value of reason, the desire for reason, the dignity of reason—are these rational? Do these have to do wholly with reason? What authorizes one to inscribe again or already under the authority of reason a particular *interest* of reason (*Interesse der Vernunft*), this interest *of* reason, this interest *in* reason, this interest *for* a reason that, as Kant reminds us, is at once practical, speculative, and architectonic, though first of all architectonic?³ For Kant declares, and this will be important for what follows, “human reason is by nature architectonic.”⁴ That is what motivates Kant in the antinomies to privilege the moment of the thesis over against an antithesis that threatens the systemic edifice and thus disturbs the architectonic desire or interest, most often so as to take into account, antithetically, themes that should be important to us today, namely, divisibility, eventfulness, and conditionality.

If reasons passes for being disinterested, in what is it still interested? Would this “interest” of reason still have to do with reason? With the rationality of a reason that is past, present, or still to come? If this architectonic vocation of reason is indeed systemic and unifying, what risks threatening it today are not only the figures of the antithesis in the antinomies of the transcendental dialectic. It is also the just as rational necessity, rational, that is, from the point of view of a history and of a development or becoming [*devenir*] of the sciences, to take into account plural rationalities. Each of these has its own ontological “region,” its own necessity, style, axiomatics, institutions, community, and historicity. These plural rationalities thus resist, in the name of their very rationality, any architectonic organization. They do so through their distinct historicity, through the figures and configurations that inform them, however they might be named or interpreted by means of such categories as *paradigm*, *themata*, *episteme*, the supposed *epistemological break*, and so on; and they do so through all the differences between mathematics, the natural or life sciences, the human sciences, the social sciences or the humanities, physics as well as biology, law and political economy, politology, psychology, psychoanalysis, and literary theory, along with all the techniques and institutional communities that are inseparable from their knowledge. Such an architectonic organization would do these violence by bending their untranslatable

heterogeneity, one that is without analogy, and inscribing them in the unity of a “world” that Kant spoke of as a “regulative idea of reason,” one for which the unification of experience that totalizes it requires an “as if” (*als ob*). It is as if all the modal, rhetorical, logical, or phenomenological trajectories of the “as,” the “as such,” and the “as if” (phenomenality, fiction, analogy, *logos* of proportion, simulacrum and simulation, art and *techné*, technique and artifact) converged upon and confronted one another here so as to provoke or defy this architeconic desire, this unifying and appropriating order of reason. A reason that is essentially *analogical*. Is it not then in the name of these heterogeneous rationalities, in the name of their specificity and their future, their history, and their “enlightenment,” that we must call into question the masterly and mastering authority of architectonics and thus of a certain “world,” that is, the unity of the regulative idea of the world that authorizes that world in advance? Which presupposes, therefore, a veritable genealogy of the world, of the concept of world, in the discourses concerning *mondialisation* [worldwide-ization] or, what should be something else altogether, *globalization* or *Globalisierung*.

On first hearing, the expression “to save the honor of reason” speaks not only of the respectful saving [*salut*] and honoring of reason. *Salut* is also the security, the assurance, or honorable rescue [*sauvetage*] of reason. Its indemnity or its immunity. The saving or rescue of a reason that perhaps also consists in saving, in saving itself—which is also to say, in running for safety. “To save the honor” might suggest the imminent failure, the announcement of a *loss*—where reason risks *losing* or *getting lost*, where reason is lost, for example, in madness, through some aberration or mental illness, or where consciousness, conscience, or science, that is, responsible lucidity in general, is lost, or where reason has become a lost cause. Wherever reason *gets lost*, wherever it is lost or losing, we would say to ourselves, let’s save its honor. When everything seems to be breaking down or in decline, darkening or going under, in the vanishing twilight of an imminent default or failure [*d’une échéance ou d’un échec*], it would be as if reason, *this* reason that we so quickly claim to be “ours” or “human,” had to choose between only two ends, two eschatologies, two ways of going aground [*échouer*]: between running aground [*échouement*] and grounding [*échouage*]. With the coast in view, in mind, and, in keeping with the maritime metaphor that interests us here, in view of or far from shore, without any assured arrival, between earth and sea.

Running aground [*l'échouement*]: that is the moment when a ship,

touching bottom, gets accidentally immobilized. This accident is an event: it happens, it happens because, without foreseeing it and without calculation, one will have been sent down to the bottom [*fond*]. (And I don't need to remind you of the proximity between figures of reason and those of the bottom or the ground, the foundation, the groundwork, the principle of sufficient reason, the *principium rationis*, the *nihil est sine ratione* as *Satz vom Grund*, the *Satz vom zureichenden Grunde* of the Leibnizian Theodicy and its reinterpretable repetition by Heidegger. Indeed I would have wanted, had I the time, and if the economy of a conference on reason were reasonable, to try to reread this text of Heidegger's with you, patiently, literally, paragraph by paragraph, attempting the probing and problematizing analysis that such a text seems to me to call for. (We would have especially questioned its epochal periodizations, its denied teleology, its interpretation of representation in the rationalisms of the seventeenth century, its resounding silence concerning Spinoza, and so on.) And I would have wanted to show how everything here gets played out at the limit between the calculable and the incalculable, there where the *Grund* opens up onto the *Abgrund*, where giving reasons [*rendre-raison*] and giving an account [*rendre-compte*]—*logon didonai* or *principium reddenda rationis*—are threatened by or drawn into the abyss, indeed by more than one abyss, including the abyss of translation between the different languages I just juxtaposed. For I did not juxtapose them so as to suggest their transparent equivalence, but on the contrary, and I want to underscore this again, so as to gesture toward a hypothetical and problematic universal translatability that is one of the fundamental stakes of reason, of what we have called, and will still call tomorrow, reason, and reason in the world.)

As for *grounding* [échouage], this is not the same as *running aground*. Grounding is the moment when, this time intentionally, freely, deliberately, in a calculable and calculated, autonomous manner, the captain of a ship, failing to keep his heading, takes responsibility for touching bottom—and this decision too resembles an event. And yet the accident of running aground, as we said, is also an event. Between running aground and grounding, we would endure the desperate attempt to save from a disastrous shipwreck, at the worst moment of an admitted defeat, what remains honorable at the end of a battle lost for a just cause, a noble cause, the cause of reason, which we would wish to salute one last time, with the eschatological melancholy of a philosophy in mourning. When nothing more can be saved, one tries to save

honor in defeat. To save honor would thus be not the salvation [*salut*] that saves but the salutation [*salut*] that simply salutes a departure, at the moment of separation from the other. A philosophy in mourning, I said, either because the world would be on the verge of *losing reason*, indeed of *losing itself* as world, or else because reason itself, reason as such, would be on the verge of being threatening; it would be a power, it would have the power to threaten itself, to lose the meaning and humanity of the world. To lose itself all by itself, to go down on its own, to *auto-immunize* itself, as I would prefer to say in order to designate this strange illogical logic by which a living being can spontaneously destroy, in an autonomous fashion, the very thing within it that is supposed to protect it against the other, to immunize it against the aggressive intrusion of the other. By speaking in this way of *auto-immunity*, by determining in so ambiguous a fashion the threat, the danger, the default or the failure, the running aground and the grounding, but also the salvation, the rescue, the safeguarding, health or security, as so many diabolically *auto-immunitary* assurances, virtually capable not only of destroying themselves in suicidal fashion, but of turning a certain death drive against the *autos* itself, against the ipseity that any suicide worthy of its name still presupposes, I am trying to suggest in passing that I would like to situate the question of life and of the living being, of life and of death, of life-death, at the heart of my remarks.

But in this first hearing of the phrase “to save the honor of reason,” how are we not to recall, so as to formulate a rather overdetermined question, the important warnings Husserl issued in 1935–36, between the two so-called world wars, between two globalizations or worldwide-izations [*mondialisations*] of war? We will return to these dates later—as well as to these two concepts, that of the “world” or of the end of a world (in globalization [*mondialisation*] and in *world war*), and especially that of “war,” a wholly other end of war that we are perhaps living at this very moment, an end of war, the end of the very concept of war, of the European concept, the juridical concept, of war (of every war: international war, civil war, and even, as Schmitt would call it, “partisan war,” which, whether in a form called terrorist or not, would still be fought, in the end, within the horizon of a nation-state to be combatted, liberated, or founded). And we will also return to what links this juridical concept of war to the supposed sovereignty of the state, of the enemy as state or nation-state. This end of the concept of war would be anything but peace. Its stakes will appear inseparable, in fact, from the future of reason, that is, of philosophy,

everywhere that the concepts of international law, nation-state sovereignty, or sovereignty in general, tremble from this same tremor that is so confusedly called “globalization [*mondialisation*].”

What would have changed for us since 1935–36, since this Husserlian call to a philosophical and European coming to awareness in the experience of a crisis of the sciences and of reason? Would we be able to repeat this call? Should we displace it? Should we contest its premisses or its teleology? Or should we seek to reactivate it and found it anew? Are we going through a time that can in fact be gone through, hoping to go through it so as one day to get beyond it in the course of a *critical*, dangerous, but provisional or periodic, passage, one that we would thus have the right to call a *crisis*? And all this in the course of a long circumnavigation whose circuit or odyssey would lead us in circular fashion safely back to the shores of an origin that Husserl thought might simply be reactivated? Perhaps we must try to think, on the contrary, something other than a crisis. Perhaps we are enduring a tremor at once more and less serious, something other, in any case, than a crisis of reason, beyond a crisis of science or of conscience, beyond a crisis of Europe, beyond a philosophical crisis that would be, to recall a title of Husserl, a *crisis of European humanity*.

Were I able to develop this question further, without however reconstituting Husserl’s entire, well-known itinerary in these texts, I would do so in *five* directions, of which I will indicate here only the heading.

1. As I have done on other occasions, I just granted to this auto-immunity schema a range without limit, one that goes far beyond the circumscribed biological processes by which an organism tends to destroy, in a quasi-spontaneous and more than suicidal fashion, some organ or other, one or another of its own immunitary protections. Now, let me recall that in one of the texts of the *Crisis* (the so-called Vienna Lecture from 1935),⁵ Husserl evokes, in the name of phenomenological reason, the inevitability of a transcendental pathology. As a sickness of reason. The medical model is deployed from the very outset of the lecture. Though Husserl distinguishes between “scientific medicine” and the “nature cure” (*Crisis*, 269), that is, between medicine as a science of nature (*Naturwissenschaftliche Medizin*) and a natural medicine (*Naturheilkunde*), though he distinguishes, within life, between living (*Leben*) in the physiological sense and living in the spiritual and teleological sense, though he recalls that there is “no zoology of peoples” (*Es gibt wesensmässig keine Zoologie der Völker*) (*Crisis*, 275), he does

not hesitate to say that the difference between health and sickness (*Gesundheit und Krankheit*) holds for all communities, peoples, and states. With this word “health,” and thus with the notion of a certain public health or historical health, it becomes a question of what “*sauver*” means, in one of its senses, namely, the safe, the sound, the healthy, the unharmed or the immune (*heilig*), salvation (*Rettung*) itself, right up to and including the expression “to save the honor.” Husserl wonders why we have never developed a “scientific medicine for nations and supranational communities.” “The European nations are sick; Europe itself, it is said, is in crisis (*Die europäischen Nationen sind krank, Europa selbst ist, sagt man, in einer Krisis*)” (*Crisis*, 270).

There was already, even before the irruption in spiritual Greece of the infinite *telos* of scientific and philosophical rationality, a form of mythical and mystical speculation, a sort of “speculative knowledge” (*spekulative Wissen*), says Husserl, that aimed to serve man and his life in the world (*Weltleben*). Such knowledge had to immunize man against sicknesses, distress, and even death. But beyond and following the speculation of this pre-theoretical and pre-philosophical knowledge, I would risk speaking, in the wake of Husserl, of a transcendental pathology and even a transcendental auto-immunity. For the Husserlian diagnosis implicates an evil that concerns the very thing that, in inaugurating a “perpetual transformation in the form of a new [type of] historicity” [*Crisis*, 277], inscribed and prescribed the spiritual *telos* of European humanity, namely, the infinite idea (in the Kantian sense) of an infinite task as *theoria*, as theoretical attitude, and then as philosophical *theoria*. Now, it is precisely this ideal of a “new sort of praxis” [*Crisis*, 283], namely, says Husserl, “universal scientific reason,” that produces this amnesic evil called *objectivism*. Reason itself produces this evil as if by an irresistible internal secretion that is nothing other than finitude. Finitude, that is, the inevitable forgetting of the origin of subjective and historical acts. Husserl singles out objectivism and denounces it in a passage from the so-called Vienna Lecture. Rationality can become an “evil” when it is one-sided and specialized (*So kann einseitige Rationalität allerdings zum Übel werden*) [“a one-sided rationality can certainly become an evil,” *Crisis*, 291]. Because of this specialization (which is, however, so necessary, each regional science having its own rationality), the infinite task of pure rationality is, to slip in a maritime metaphor that I find appropriate but that is not Husserl’s here, *arraisonnée*—that is, boarded and inspected, its identity verified by a division of labor and a model of some specific knowledge or rationality. Just before

speaking of this “ill” or “evil” (*Übel*), Husserl names the danger, an interior and intimate danger, an immanent danger or risk that philosophical reason *made itself run*, as if it wrongly gave itself reason—as if it wrongly considered itself right—to win out over itself [*se donnait raison d'avoir raison d'elle-même*], as if what it did were ill-suited to what it has to do, as if it did itself ill [*se faisait mal*] in winning itself over to winning out over itself, between the factual finiteness of its determined figures and the idea of its infinite task. For Husserl says he has been convinced that it is a mode of thought (*Denkweise*), that is, rational prejudices and presuppositions, that bear some of the responsibility for the sickness of Europe (*mitschuldig wäre an der europäischen Erkrankung*):

But now this is the danger point! “Philosophy” (the danger is indeed named “philosophy” here and Husserl puts an exclamation point, a danger point, just before putting the name “philosophy” in quotation marks: “*Aber hier liegt nun der Gefahrenpunkt! ‘Philosophie’!*”—and then he picks up after a dash)—here we must certainly distinguish between philosophy as a historical fact at a given time and philosophy as idea, as the idea of an infinite task. Any philosophy that exists at a given historical time is a more or less successful attempt to realize the guiding idea of the infinity and at the same time even the totality of truths. (*Crisis*, 291)

Let us simply note in anticipation that this infinite task of philosophy as theory is, before all else, as task and as duty (*Aufgabe*), a “practical ideal,” one that is itself *unconditional*. I underscore here this *unconditionality*. Husserl notes it more than once. We will have to return to it, for there is contained here the question of a certain honor of reason that governs but also exceeds theoretical or scientific reason. The Husserlian critique of the transcendental evil of a putatively rationalist objectivism is inscribed, in May 1935, in the critique of a certain irrationalism, one whose popularity and air of political modernity in the German and European atmosphere of the 1930s it seemed necessary to denounce. This was the first concern and the ultimate target of the author of the *Crisis*. He is thus going to reject at one and the same time both irrationalism and a certain rationalist naïveté that is often confused with philosophical rationality.

I said that the way of philosophy passes through naïveté. This is the place for the criticism offered by the irrationalism that is so highly esteemed (*des so hoch gerühmten Irrationalismus*), or rather the place to unmask the naïveté of that rationalism which is taken for philosophical rationality as such, which is admittedly characteristic of the philosophy of the

whole modern period since the Renaissance and which takes itself to be the true, i.e., universal, rationalism. In this naïveté, then, unavoidable as a beginning stage, are caught all the sciences whose beginnings were already developed in antiquity. To put it more precisely, the most general title for this naïveté is *objectivism*, taking the form of the various types of naturalism, of the naturalization of the spirit. Old and new philosophies were and remain naïvely objectivist. In fairness we must add, though, that the German Idealism proceeding from Kant was passionately concerned with overcoming this naïveté, which had already become very troublesome, though it was unable to attain the higher stage of reflexivity which is decisive for the new form of philosophy and of European humanity. (*Crisis*, 292)

Husserl knows it and says it: objectivist naïveté is no mere accident. It is produced by the very progress of the sciences and by the production of ideal objects, which, as if by themselves, by their iterability and their necessarily technical structure, cover over or consign to forgetting their historical and subjective origin. Scientific reason, in its very progress, spontaneously produces the crisis. It is reason that throws reason into crisis, in an autonomous and quasi-auto-immunitary fashion. It could be shown that the ultimate “reason,” in the sense of cause or foundation, the *raison d'être* of this transcendental phenomenological auto-immunity, is located in the very structure of the present and of life, in the temporalization of what Husserl called the Living Present (*die lebendige Gegenwart*). The Living Present is produced only by altering and dissimulating itself. I don't have the *time*, precisely, to pursue this path here, but I would like to note its necessity whenever the question of the becoming [*devenir*] and thus of the time of reason appears inseparable from the enormous question, the old and completely new question, of life (*bios* or *zōē*), which is at the very heart of the question of being, of presence and of beings, and thus of the question of “being and time,” of *Sein und Zeit*—a question accentuated this time on the side of life rather than death, if this still makes, as I am tempted to believe it does, something of a difference.

2. Let us try to sharpen the paradox of this critical moment of the *Crisis*. Husserl's critique takes aim explicitly at the irrationalism in vogue, the objectivist irrationalism born on the inside of reason itself, the danger of a certain perverse and amnesic use of reason that stems, as we have just heard, from the specialization of multiple knowledges, indeed of regional ontologies. This irrationalist effect also resembles a

certain development or becoming [*devenir*] of plural logics and rationalities, and thus a certain future or to-come [*avenir*] of reason that resists the *teleological* unity of reason, and thus the idea of an infinite task that presupposes, at least as its horizon, an organized totalization of truths, that “totality of truths” that I cited a moment ago and that philosophical responsibility would consist in making effective. It is necessary—and this is the infinite, teleological task—to effectuate, to make effective, “to realize this totality of truths (*die Allheit der Wahrheiten zu verwirklichen*)” [Crisis, 291] What, in the name of rationalities in the process of becoming [*en devenir*], resists this teleological unity, which is none other, in the end, than the ideal pole of philosophy as transcendental phenomenology, resembles to some extent—and this is hardly fortuitous—that which, in the Kantian antinomies, resisted the architectonic design. Moreover, the teleology or teleologism that so powerfully governs the transcendental idealisms and rationalisms of Kant and Husserl is also that which limits or neutralizes the event. Teleologism seems always to inhibit, suspend, or even contradict the eventfulness of what comes, beginning with the scientific event, the techno-scientific invention that “finds” what it seeks, that finds and finds itself finding, and thus is possible as such, only when invention is im-possible, that is, when it is not programmed by a structure of expectation and anticipation that annuls it by making it possible and thus foreseeable.

This teleology is not only a general and universal teleology. It can also be that which orients a determined configuration: *paradigm*, in Kuhn’s sense, or *episteme* in Foucault’s sense, along with so many other supposed infrastructures of techno-scientific discovery. Whenever a *telos* or teleology comes to orient, order, and make possible a historicity, it annuls that historicity by the same token and neutralizes the unforeseeable and incalculable irruption, the singular and exceptional alterity of *what* [*ce qui*] comes, or indeed of *who* [*qui*] comes, that without which, or the one without whom, nothing happens or arrives any more. It is not only the question of the *telos* that is being posed here, but that of the horizon and of any horizontal *seeing-come* in general. And it is also the question of the Enlightenment of Reason. For the critical denunciation of objectivist irrationalism born out of the forgetting of subjective origins and out of the specialization of the techno-sciences is not the only paradox in the Crisis. Indeed it is at this same moment and with this same gesture that Husserl also wishes to distance himself from a certain Enlightenment and a certain rationalism. He does not want to present himself as a conservative and reactionary ratio-

nalist. He struggles against a certain misunderstanding that would reduce phenomenology to this “old rationalism (*der alte Rationalismus*)” (*Crisis*, 298) incapable of a radical and universal self-understanding (*Selbstverständigung*) of spirit in the form of a responsible universal science. He even goes so far as to disavow, giving in to the prevailing atmosphere of the time, the Enlightenment, the *Aufklärung*, and in an even more denigrating and pejorative fashion, the *Aufklärerei*. This word, which in fact goes back to Hegel, designates a sort of mechanical mania or fetishism of the *Aufklärung*, of this “*must*” of the Enlightenment. To deny that he is proposing a rehabilitation of rationalism and of the Enlightenment, Husserl uses a curious word. Granel translates it well by “*réhabilitation*.” It is, in truth, *Ehrenrettung*: rehabilitation, an apology or defense, but literally a salvation or rescuing of honor, an “attempt to save the honor of rationalism,” a rationalism that had compromised itself in the affair of the *Aufklärerei* (*Crisis*, 289). Husserl does not want to save the honor of *that* rationalism; he wants nothing to do with this *Ehrenrettung des Rationalismus, der Aufklärerei*. He considers it a point of honor not to save the honor of a cheap *Aufklärung*, of an *Aufklärerei*, of an *Ehrenrettung des Rationalismus, der Aufklärerei*. (I again resist the temptation of a detour here through Heidegger’s way of interpreting and recalling the meaning of *retten*: to save, immunize, but also to economize, save, spare, or liberate, to make free and open up the openness of freedom.) In any case, Husserl at this time would rather pass for a radical revolutionary than a reactionary. He marks this by diagnosing the error or the errancy of a certain rationalism. We must consider the historical and political climate between the two world wars, the rise of Nazism as well as European fascism. This is absolutely necessary if we are to hear today what Husserl said then, if we are to understand him as historians and philosophers concerned about our current responsibilities. These responsibilities are at once different and analogous. Husserl said for example:

I would like to think that I, the supposed reactionary (*der vermeintliche Reaktionär*), am far more radical and far more revolutionary than those who in their words proclaim themselves so radical today (*als die sich heutzutage in Worten so radikal Gebärdenden*). I too am certain that the European crisis has its roots in a misguided rationalism (*in einem sich verirrenden Rationalismus wurzelt*). But we must not take this to mean that rationality as such is evil. . . . On the other hand we readily admit (and German Idealism preceded us long ago in this insight) that the stage of development of *ratio* represented by the rationalism of the Age of Enlightenment

was a mistake (*eine Verirrung*), though certainly an understandable (*begriffliche*) one. (*Crisis*, 290)

3. If this crisis remains ambiguous, if this double critique calls into question a certain rationalism and a certain irrationalism, the only possible conclusion is that the crisis can be overcome. It is not an irreversible failure. The failure of which we are speaking, if it indeed fails or goes aground (the event of an accidental running aground or the event of an intentional grounding, linked, therefore, to some freedom or transcendental evil), fails only in appearance and indicates only the *apparent failure* of rationalism. An apparent failure of rationalism—that is precisely Husserl's conclusion. It is going to inspire a call not to save the honor of reason (Husserl wants no such rescue) but to endure a heroism of reason, which, I think you will grant me, is not too far away. In any case, it is a question of undoing an appearance, of doing away with this nothing that the appearance is:

In order to be able to comprehend the disarray (the word here is *Unwesen*, which my friend, Gérard Granel, whose memory and work I would here like to honor, translates precisely by “*renversement de l'essence*,” that is, the nothing or the negligible, [indeed] the degradation of being in the insignificant or apparent) of the present “crisis,” we had to work out the *concept of Europe as the historical teleology of the infinite goals of reason*; we had to show how the European “world” (Husserl puts “world” (*Welt*) into quotation marks) was born out of ideas of reason, i.e., out of the spirit of philosophy. The “crisis” could then become distinguishable as the *apparent failure of rationalism* (*deutlich werden als das scheinbare Scheitern des Rationalismus*). The reason for the failure (*Der Grund des Versagens*) of a rational culture, however, as we said, lies not in the essence of rationalism itself but solely in its being rendered superficial (*Veräusserlichung*), in its entanglement in [or in the cocoon of] “naturalism” and “objectivism” (*in seiner Versponnenheit in “Naturalismus” und “Objektivismus”*) [Granel's translation: *dans le fait qu'il s'enrobe du cocon du “naturalisme” et de “l'objectivisme”*]. [*Crisis*, 299]

I would be tempted to take somewhat seriously this metaphor of the cocoon, of the *Versponnenheit* that objectivizes, animalizes, indeed naturalizes a non-natural movement: reason spontaneously envelops itself in the web and threads that it itself weaves, after having itself secreted them—like a silkworm. The threads of this web come at once to reveal and veil the unveiling of truth. This reason resembles the *physis* of a silkworm, which, from the inside, on its own, produces and objectivizes

on the outside the veil of naturalism and objectivism in which it will shut itself up for a time. Up until the point when the heroism of reason makes it appear, resuscitates it, and lets it be reborn. Like a phoenix, now, coming into the light.

A few lines later, and these are the last words of the text, Husserl in fact invokes the phoenix.

the phoenix of a new life-inwardness and spiritualization as the pledge of a great and distant future for man: for the spirit alone is immortal.
(*Crisis*, 299)

In the interval, Husserl will have appealed to the responsibility of a "heroic" decision: not so as to save honor but so as to save us from night and from death, there where we might ask ourselves yet again, as if for the sake of honor, whether the heroism of reason indeed stems, in an immanent fashion, from reason: and whether faith in reason remains, through and through, something rational—something reasoned or reasonable.

Before specifying why, in Husserl's eyes, the answer has to be "yes," let me cite again. It is indeed a question of life and death:

There are only two escapes from the crisis of European existence: the downfall of Europe in its estrangement from its own rational sense of *life* (my emphasis) its fall into hostility toward the spirit (*Geistfeindschaft*) and into barbarity; or the rebirth of Europe from the spirit of philosophy through a heroism of reason (*Heroismus der Vernunft*) that overcomes naturalism once and for all. (*Crisis*, 299)

Why does this heroism of the responsible decision remain, for Husserl, a heroism of *reason*? It is not because faith in reason would exceed reason. It is because theoretical reason is first of all, and finally, for him as for Kant, a prescriptive or normative task through and through, a practical reason, or, as others might say, a metaphysics of free will. In *Philosophy as Mankind's Self-Reflection*, certain lines recall this in an at once constative and prescriptive mode (as do certain statements in the *Cartesian Meditations*):

It is rational to seek to be rational. . . . Reason allows for no differentiation into "theoretical," "practical," "aesthetic," or whatever. Being human is teleological being and an ought-to-be.⁶

We will have to ask later whether this idea of an "ought"—of "duty"—exhausts the ethical law, the practical law, and especially the law of

unconditional justice. Well before Husserl, Kant had also claimed the inseparable unity of theoretical reason and practical reason. He too had especially marked the inflexible subordination of theoretical to practical reason. This is even the title of one of the subsections of the *Critique of Practical Reason*, on the subject of the sovereign good: “On the Primacy (*Von dem Primal*) of Pure Practical Reason in Its Association (*Verbindung*) with Speculative Reason.” Kant there insists:

But if pure reason of itself can be and really is practical, as the consciousness of the moral law shows it to be, it is only one and the same reason which judges a priori by principles, whether for theoretical or for practical purposes.⁷

And just a few lines later:

Thus in the combination of pure speculative with pure practical reason in one cognition, the latter has primacy (*Primal*). . . . Without this subordination (*Unterordnung*), a conflict (*Widerstreit*) of reason with itself would arise. . . .

It is here that this singular “interest” of reason is rooted, the one we spoke of earlier and to which I will return in a moment.

4. If naturalism and objectivism are critical perversions of reason, the risk that is run has to do with what links the ideality of the ideal object to *exactitude*, and thus to a certain type of *calculability*. Husserl, as we know, distinguished with all possible rigor between *rigor* and *exactitude*. Certain types of objects might, for phenomenological science and for science in general, give rise to a rigorous knowledge, and even, for what concerns a phenomenological *cogito*, an indubitable knowledge, even though, in essence, this knowledge *can* not and thus *must* not claim exactitude. In renouncing calculability in this way, such knowledge actually loses nothing of its rationality or its indubitability. I will not develop here, for lack of time and because I have treated this elsewhere, the logico-mathematical question of undecidables and Gödel’s theorem of 1931, which I tried long ago to trace in Husserl’s thought of the transcendental historicity of, for example, geometry. For reasons that will later lead us outside phenomenology, outside the “as such” of ontology and phenomenology, outside transcendental idealism, outside its determination of beings as objects for an egological subject, for the consciousness of an indubitable “I think,” outside its teleology and the very idea of idea (light and intelligible visibility of

the *eidos*, the idea in the Kantian sense, the idea of an infinite task), I am simply situating at this point the possibility of an incalculable that is neither irrational nor dubitable. I am simply noting that a rational and rigorous incalculability presented itself *as such* in the greatest tradition of rationalist idealism. The rationality of the rational has never been limited, as some have tried to make us believe, to calculability, to reason as calculation, as *ratio*, as account, an account to be settled or an account to be given. We will later draw some of the consequences of this. The role that “dignity” (*Würde*), for example, plays in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* belongs to the order of the incalculable. In the kingdom of ends, it is opposed to what has a price on the market (*Marktpreis*) and so can give rise to calculable equivalences. The dignity of a reasonable being (the human person, for example, and this is, for Kant, the only example) is incalculable as an end in itself. It is at once universal and exceptional. “Morality, and humanity so far as it is capable of morality, is the only thing which has dignity.”⁸

Leaving aside whatever questions this might raise, we must recognize that this incalculable dignity, which Kant sometimes calls “sublime,” remains the indispensable axiomatic, in the so-called globalization [*mondialisation*] that is under way, of the discourses and international institutions concerning human rights and other modern juridical performatives; consider, for example, the concept of a crime against humanity, or else the project of the International Criminal Tribunal that this concept inspired, a project that is still opposed by the interests of so many sovereign nation-states (from the United States to Israel, and sometimes even France), who, by reason of these interests, are intent on holding on to their sovereignty.

How is one to relate this just incalculability of dignity to the indispensable calculation of law? How is one to articulate together a justice and a law that are equally rational? These are just some of questions that await us. Since I intend to speak later, in another register, of sovereignty, of calculation and the world, of the world in the worldwide movement [*mondialisation*] under way, I am simply indicating here the direction in which we should continue to accompany this Kantian concept of a dignity that is incalculable and thus transcends the marketplace at all costs. For Kant, the world of rational beings, the *mundus intelligibilis* as kingdom of ends (*Reich der Zwecke*), a kingdom Kant calls “possible,” depends, as he himself says, twice on an “as if” and on the *logos* of an analogy, that is, on a *logos* as proportion. *On the one*

hand, the formal principle of maxims for every reasonable being who acts *as if (als ob)* he were legislator is: “act *as if (als ob)* your maxims had to serve at the same time as a universal law (for all rational beings)” (*G*, 106). *On the other hand*, the kingdom of ends, and thus of incalculable dignity, is possible only by analogy (*nach der Analogie*) with a kingdom of nature (*Reich der Natur*) where this kingdom is considered as a machine (*als Machine*), that is, subject to the constraints of calculable laws.

5. Finally, for the same reasons, and because I will later, as I often do, make great use of the theme of unconditionality, let me recall here two additional traits. *On the one hand*, unconditionality remains, and in this name, in German translated from Greek, the ultimate recourse, the absolute principle of pure reason, for Kant as well as for Husserl. *On the other hand*, unconditionality remains, and in this name, what binds practical reason to the theoretical reason it subordinates. It is the ultimate truth of an “interest of reason.” I cite as proof or indication of this the frequent, literal recourse to unconditionality *both* in the texts of the *Crisis* (if philosophy must exercise an archontic function in humanity, Husserl tells us, it is because it requires an “unconditional truth”: the idea of the truth of science “wants to be unconditional truth (*Sie will unbedingte Wahrheit sein*)” (*Crisis*, 278)—this essential association of truth and unconditionality thus attesting in truth to the fact that unconditionality is the truth of truth) *and* in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, where Kant explains to us that the subordination of speculative to practical reason is an irreversible hierarchy because what is at stake is the very “interest” (*Interesse*) of reason. The interest of speculative reason is thus only conditioned (*nur bedingt*), while that of practical reason is unconditioned (*unbedingt*) (*CPR*, 126–28).

Up until now we have relied on what I have called a first hearing of the phrase “to save the honor of reason.” Before trying to hear it in a completely different way, I would like, from within the very resonance of this first hearing, to lend an ear to a more distant provenance of this *unconditional rationalism of the unconditional* in the great, exacting, respectable, and singular forms it took in transcendental idealism, whether in Kant or in Husserl. As the responsible guardians we must be of this heritage, we also have the duty to recognize in it, in both cases, and within the horizon of an infinite *idea* as an infinite task for practical reason, a powerful *teleology*. It is precisely in relation to this supremacy of *idea* and of *telos*, the reason or *logos* that is ordered

by them or that orders them, *ideo-log*y and *teleo-log*y themselves, this reason of *ideality* and this reason of the *telos*, that we will have to pose the question of the event, of the coming and of the to-come, that is, the future, of the event. We must ask ourselves whether, in their very historicity (for there is an undeniable thought of history in Kant and in Husserl, and even a place for a certain history of reason), these great transcendental and teleological rationalisms grant a thought of—or expose themselves to—that which *comes*, the *event of what comes and of who comes*, of what arrives or happens *by* reason and *to* reason, according to this *coming*, according to this verbal noun that links such notions as event, advent, future, and mutation to a vocabulary of the *coming*, a verbal noun twice inscribed—in a phrase that is rather untranslatable French—in the title of our conference, “la raison et son *avenir*, le *devenir* des rationalités” [reason and its to-come, the becoming of rationalities].

Let's stay within the resonances of this first hearing, but so as to make out, in a more genealogical or more archeological fashion, the vibration of an even older marking of the bow. If I allow myself to play a bit with this sonorous register, it is in order to get closer to this essence of the event, of *what comes to pass* only once, a single time, a first and last time, in an always singular, unique, exceptional, irreplaceable, unforeseeable, and incalculable fashion, of *what* happens or arrives as well as of *who* arrives by coming precisely there where—and this is the end not only of the horizon but of teleology, the calculable program, foresight, and providence—one no longer *sees it coming*, not horizontally: *without prospect or horizon*.

To indicate it already in advance, it will be a matter for me of asking whether, in thinking the event, in thinking the coming [*venir*], the to-come [*avenir*], and the becoming [*devenir*] of the event, it is possible and in truth necessary to distinguish the experience of the unconditional, the desire and the thought, the exigency of unconditionality, the very reason and the justice of unconditionality, from everything that is ordered into a system according to this transcendental idealism and its teleology. In other words, whether there is a chance to think or to grant the thought of the unconditional event to a reason that is other than the one we have just spoken about, namely, the classical reason of what presents itself or announces its presentation according to the *eidos*, the *idea*, the ideal, the regulative idea or, something else that here amounts to the same, the *telos*.

Let us not abandon this first hearing. Let us listen from further away in order to try to be more responsible for our reason as well as

for our heritage and to try to attune ourselves to them in a more responsible manner.

“To save the honor of reason”: what, we have been asking ourselves, might this first mean? What might it signify? Would this question of signification be the first question of a philosopher worthy of this name? Committed to the question, would such a philosopher feel that he first of all had to understand, analyze, give reasons, and be responsible for the presupposed meaning of his language? Or, even before understanding and knowing the meaning thus signified or assigned, would he have to ask himself what this might or should *signify or assign to him*, as we might say of a task or of a mission, of an obligation or a responsibility; not only that they mean, that they have some assigned meaning or that they designate something, but that they assign, notify, or serve notice, like an order, like a legal performative? But how are we to hear this?

I had called this, perhaps a bit too quickly, a *hypothesis*, a series of *hypotheses*. Now there’s a word, *hypothesis*, that I must be content, at least for the moment and for lack of time, simply to salute in passing without stopping at all the signals it sends us toward the future of reason and the development of rationalities. One will not treat this subject without speaking of the *hypothesis* [in Greek].

Hypothesis [in Greek] will have signified before all else the base or basis, the infrastructure *posed* beneath or at the bottom of a foundation. As such, it will have been a figure for the bottom or the basement, the groundwork or the foundation, and thus the principle of a thing, the reason of an institution, the *raison d’être* of a science or a reasoning, of a *logos* or a logic, of a theory, rationalization, or ratiocination. It will have also done this as the subject, substance, or supposition of a discourse, as a proposition, design, or resolution, but most often as a *condition*. The rationality of reason is forever destined, and universally so, for every possible future and development, every possible to-come and becoming, to contend *between*, on the one hand, all these figures and conditions of the hypothetical and, on the other hand, the absolute sovereignty of the anhypothetical, of the unconditional or absolute principle, a principle that I qualify as *sovereign* so as at once to give one of the notes, and not just a political note, of my words today, but also so as to recall in advance, having already had to cite it, whether I wanted to or not, a moment within the canonical text of Plato’s *Republic* that I would be tempted to consider quasi-inaugural. It is the moment when, for the first time, in Greek, the *question* is posed, when the *demand*, rather, is made, in Greek, a demand that just

might be, still today, here and now, at once our postulation and our common, inflexible, and demanding interrogation. It is the question of or demand for knowledge as power, for truth and for capacity (*dynamis*, *Vermögen*), namely, for the power to know, for power-knowledge, for the power of knowledge, for knowledge as power. We must let this question resonate right up to us, here and now, yesterday, today, and tomorrow, this question about *dynamis*, about a force and a power but also about the possible and its limits, about the possible and the impossible, about a sovereign “I can” and an “I cannot,” about the potential and the virtual; we must let this question resonate whenever what is at stake is the calculable and the incalculable in ethical, juridical, and political reason, to be sure, but also, inseparably, in the technical reason of what is called a bit too quickly today the techno-sciences, bio-politics, and so on.

We have not yet left Plato. Will we ever leave him? This interrogation concerning *dynamis* in the *Republic*, this concern about power and capacities, about the power of knowing, about a power assured of knowing or assured by knowledge, is first of all an interrogation into the cause of science and truth (*aitian d'epistémés ousan kai alétheias*) insofar as they are known. Now, this cause, namely, that which gives us the capacity, the force, the power, the potential (*dynamis*) of knowing and that thus gives truth (*alétheia*) to the things to be known, is, we must not forget, an idea of the good (*idea tou agathou*). It is thus necessary at least to recall, for what orients or disorients our *here now*, the four following traits, which are so many markers or opening gestures.

1. The idea of the Good is situated, at once inscribed and de-inscribed, on a divided *line* cut into two unequal parts, each of which is itself cut according to the calculable reason of a *logos*, and this is Plato's word, a *logos* that divides things up, according to the *analogy*, into the sensible visible, the mathematical (which itself, from the inside, will have ordered the line and its *logos*), the intelligible visible, and the invisible as the source of the visible, the invisible visibility of the visible, the condition of visibility that is itself invisible and unconditional.
2. This idea of the Good, which at once orders the *logos* and is itself ordered by the *logos* and the calculation it exceeds, is an *anhypotheton*, the first figure of the “unconditional,” the principle and anhypothetical archon toward which the soul ascends (*to ep'arkhén anupotheton*) (510b), without icons and on the basis of hypothetical conditions.

3. It is to this idea of the Good that, in accordance with political or politicizable figures, the ultimate sovereign power is granted. I specify and emphasize: *sovereign*. I do so not only to get a bit more quickly and literally to the concerns that guide me here, but because Plato speaks throughout this famous passage about force and dialectical power, about what the *logos* touches through its dialectical power (*ho logos haptetai té tou dialegesthai dunamei*) (511b), about the sun and the good, which, analogically, have the *power* and *right to reign* (*basileuein*), each one as a king (*basileus*) over his realm or over his visible world, the one over the sensible visible world, the other over the intelligible visible world. The word *sovereign* is further justified by the fact that Plato actually qualifies as *kurion* (508a) this Sun and this Good, which produce, analogically, sensible visibility and intelligible visibility. But it is also, and especially, justified by the fact that, at the moment of defining the Idea of the Good in a literally hyperbolic fashion as *epekeina tés ousias* (beyond being or beingness), Plato couches this idea in the language of power or, rather, super-power. It is a question of a power more powerful than power, conveyed in a sovereign superlative that undercuts in an exceptional fashion the analogy and hierarchy it nonetheless imposes. That is the essence without essence of sovereignty. Besides *basileus* and *kurion*, the words Plato uses are those that will have named sovereignty in the whole complicated, rich, and differential history of the political onto-theology of sovereignty in the West. It is the super-powerful origin of a reason that gives reason or proves right [*donne raison*], that wins out over [*a raison de*] everything, that knows everything and lets everything be known, that produces becoming or genesis but does not itself *become*, remaining withdrawn in an exemplary, hyperbolic fashion from becoming or from genesis. It engenders like a generative principle of life, like a father, but it is not itself subject to history. A single citation concerning the Good and the image of the sovereign Good will suffice here:

The sun, I presume you will say, not only furnishes to visibles the power of visibility (*tén tou horasthai dunamin*) but it also provides for their genesis and growth and nurture though it is not itself genesis (*ou genesin auton onta*). . . . In like manner, then, you are to say that the objects of knowledge not only receive from the presence of the good their being known, but their very existence (*to einai*) and essence (*tén ousian*) is derived to them from it, though the good itself is not essence but still transcends essence in dignity [or majesty] and surpassing power (*ouk ousias ontos tou agathou, all' eti epekeina tés ousias presbeia kai dunamei huperekhortos*). (509b)⁹

Chambry's French translation of *presbeia kai dunamei* by “majesté et puissance” [majesty and power] is right, to be sure; I would not add anything to the translation of *dunamis* by *puissance* or by *pouvoir*. But I will insist on the word *presbeia*, quite rightly translated by *majesté*. For *presbeia* is the honor and dignity attached to the ancientness or seniority of what precedes and comes first, the honor and dignity attached to age, to birthright, but also to the principate, to the precedence of *what* or *who* has the privilege of the predecessor or forebear, of the ancestor, the father or grandfather—and thus of that which begins and commands, of the *arché*, if you will. *Presbeion*, I also note, since honor has from very beginning held the place of honor here, is also the honor conferred upon the oldest, the dignity that distinguishes the archaic or the archontic, the firstborn in a filiation, in what is called in testamentary law not the *principium* but, still in Roman law, the *praecipuum*, from *praecipuus* (the right accorded to the first heir, from *caput* and from *capital*, yet again). In French law, we have the word *préciput*. But the translation of *presbeia* by *majesté* seems to me not only right but more fecund. Again in Roman political law, *majestas*, the grandeur of what is absolutely grand, superior to comparative grandeur itself, a grandeur most high, higher even than height itself, more elevated than magnitude itself, is the word most often translated by *sovereignty*. Bodin recalls this in the beginning of his chapter “On Sovereignty,” where, next to the Latin *majestas*, he cites the Greek family of *kurion* and of *arché*.

Although the majestic sovereignty of the idea of the Good is not the law (*nomos*), it would be easy, I think, to link its necessity to the Platonic thought of the state, of the *polis* or the *politeia*. One could argue, to put it all too briefly in the interest of time, that all these great rationalisms are, in every sense of this term, rationalisms of the state, if not state rationalisms. There is nothing fortuitous in the fact that none of these great rationalisms, with the exception perhaps of certain words of Marx, ever really confronted the state form of sovereignty.

4. Finally, in order to reconstitute just a couple of the different links in the chain of this genealogical filiation, this panoramically European and philosophical filiation of a discourse that, in this passage from the *Republic*, was also a discourse about patrimonial and capital filiation (the sun or the Good was also defined, you will recall, as a father and as a capital), I limit myself to a single indication. It is in the *Crisis*, and once again in fact in the Vienna Lecture, that Husserl cites or summons to appear a certain sun of Descartes, though he could have

just as well replaced it by the sun of Plato. (But can one really replace the sun? Can one think an original technical prosthesis of the sun? That is perhaps the question that underlies everything I'm saying here.) Husserl writes—in order to grant force to reason, if not actually to acknowledge that a certain reason—the reason of the strongest [*la raison du plus fort*]—is right [*donner raison*]:

Though the development (or the becoming of infinite ideals and tasks) weakened in antiquity, it was nevertheless not lost. Let us make the leap to the so-called modern period. With a burning enthusiasm the infinite task of a mathematical knowledge of nature and of knowledge of the world in general is taken up. The immense successes in the knowledge of nature are now supposed to be shared by the knowledge of the spirit (*der Geisteserkenntnis zuteil werden*). Reason has demonstrated its force in relation to nature (*Die Vernunft hat ihre Kraft in der Natur erwiesen*). [Crisis, 294]

Husserl then continues by citing Descartes to support what he has just advanced.

"Just as the sun is the one all-illuminating and warming sun, so reason is also the one reason" (Descartes). (Crisis, 294)

II. *To Arrive—at the Ends of the State* [Arriver—aux fins de l'Etat] (and of War, and of World War)

What would this history of reason have taught us? How are we to think this at once continuous and differentiated becoming of reason, this essential link between, on the one hand, what will have dominated, it seems to me, the philosophical genealogy in its most powerful institution, and, on the other hand, reason in more than one European language, reason as the reason and *raison d'être* of philosophy?

It would thus be, or at least this is the hypothesis or argument I submit to you for discussion, a certain inseparability between, *on the one hand*, the exigency of sovereignty in general (not only but including political sovereignty, indeed state sovereignty, which will not be challenged, in fact quite the contrary, by the Kantian thought of cosmopolitanism or universal peace) and, *on the other hand*, the unconditional exigency of the unconditioned (*anhypothéton, unbedingt, inconditionné*).

Calculative reason (*ratio*, intellect, understanding) would thus have to ally itself and submit itself to the principle of unconditionality that tends to exceed the calculation it founds. This inseparability or this alliance between sovereignty and unconditionality appears forever irre-

ducible. Its resistance appears absolute, and any separation impossible: for isn't sovereignty, especially in its modern political forms, as understood by Bodin, Rousseau, or Schmitt, precisely unconditional, absolute, and especially, as a result, indivisible? Is it not exceptionally sovereign insofar as it retains the right to the exception? The right to decide on the exception and the right to suspend rights and law [*le droit*]?

My question would thus be, in short: can we still, and in spite of all this, separate these two exigencies? Can we and *must* we separate them in the name, precisely, of reason, but also in the name of the event, of the arrival [*venue*] or the *coming* [*venir*] that is inscribed in the *to-come* [*à-venir*] as well as in the *be-coming* [*de-venir*] of reason? Is not this exigency faithful to one of the two poles of rationality, namely, to this postulation of unconditionality? I say *postulation* in order to gesture toward the demand, the desire, the imperative exigency; and I say *postulation* rather than *principle* in order to avoid the princely and powerful authority of the first, of the *arché* or the *presbeia*; and, finally, I say *postulation* rather than axiomatic in order to avoid a comparative and thus calculable scale of values and evaluations.

Let us thus ask ourselves whether it is *today* possible, in the daylight of today, to think and put to the test a separation that seems impossible and unthinkable, irreducible to *logos*, or at least to *legein* interpreted as gathering or as gathering of the self, as the collecting of oneself [*recueillement*]? Is this possible when the thought of the world to come and, first of all, of what is called man's *terra firma* is undergoing terror, the fears and tremblings of an earthquake whose every jolt is in some way overdetermined and defined by forces *in want of sovereignty* [en mal de souveraineté]—sovereignty in general but, more visibly, more decipherably, indivisible nation-state sovereignty. Can we not and *must* we not distinguish, even when this appears impossible, between, *on the one hand*, the compulsion or auto-positioning of sovereignty (which is nothing less than that of *ipseity* itself, of the selfsame of the oneself (*meisme*, from *metipsissimus*), an ipseity that includes within itself, as the etymology would also confirm, the androcentric positioning of power in the master or head of the household, the sovereign mastery of the lord or seigneur, of the father or husband, the power of the *same*, of *ipse* as the selfsame self) and, *on the other hand*, this postulation of unconditionality, which can be found in the critical exigency as well as in the (forgive the expression) deconstructive exigency *of reason*? In the name of reason? For deconstruction, if something of the sort exists, would remain above all, in my view, an unconditional rationalism that

never renounces—and precisely in the name of the Enlightenment to come, in the space to be opened up of a democracy to come—suspending in an argued, deliberated, rational fashion, all conditions, hypotheses, conventions, and presuppositions, and criticizing unconditionally all conditionalities, including those that still found the critical idea, namely, those of the *krinein*, of the *krisis*, of the binary or dialectical decision or judgment.

I will risk going even further. I will push hyperbole beyond hyperbole. It would be a question not only of separating this kind of sovereignty drive from the exigency for unconditionality as two symmetrically associated terms, but of questioning, critiquing, deconstructing, if you will, one in the name of the other, sovereignty in the name of unconditionality. This is what would have to be recognized, thought, reasoned through, however difficult or improbable, however im-possible even, it might seem. Yet what is at issue is precisely another thought of the possible (of power, of the masterly and sovereign “I can,” of ipseity itself) and of an im-possible that would not be simply negative.

The first thing to be unconditioned would be the event, the event in its essential structure, in its very eventfulness. If I insist so much on the Latin resources of the French language, it is not only to honor the intent of our conference and to take responsibility for it from the outset. It is because, in the event or the advent, in the invention of what happens or arrives, the semantic link between the *avenir*—the future—of reason, the *devenir*—the becoming—of rationalities, and the “*viens*,” the *venir*, or the *venue*—that is, the “come,” the coming, or the arrival—is best marked in Latin. This link is in fact sometimes untranslatable in all its idiomatic connections. We will thus think the *avenir* or the *devenir* in its rational necessity, we will take it into account, only when we will have given an account [*rendra compte*] of what in this “-venir” appears first of all *unforeseeable*, seeable perhaps but unforeseeable, assuming that we can ever see without in some way foreseeing and without seeing come from out of some horizon. A foreseen event is already present, already presentable; it has already arrived or happened and is thus neutralized in its irruption. Everywhere there is a horizon and where we see-coming from out of some teleology or ideal horizon, some horizon of an idea, that is, from out of the seeing [*voir*] or the knowing [*savoir*] of an *eidos*, everywhere that ideality is possible (and there is neither science nor language nor technique, nor, and we must recognize this, experience in general, without the production of some ideality), this horizontal ideality, the horizon of

this ideality, will have neutralized in advance the event, along with everything that, in any historicity worthy of this name, requires the eventfulness of the event.

As un-foreseeable, any event worthy of its name must not only exceed all teleological idealism and elude the ruses by which teleological reason conceals from itself what might come or happen to it and affect it in its ipseity in an auto-immunitary fashion. (And, notice, it is reason itself that orders us to say this, reason that gives us such a thought of the event, not some obscure irrationalism.) The event must also announce itself as im-possible; it must thus announce itself without calling in advance, without forewarning [*prévenir*], announcing itself without announcing itself, without any horizon of expectation, without *telos*, without formation, without form or teleological preformation. Whence its always monstrous, unrepresentable character, demonstrable *as* un-monstrable. Thus never as such. One thus says, one exclaims, "without precedent!", with an exclamation point. Whenever the event of, for example, a techno-scientific invention, as I tried to show at the beginning of *Psyché, The Invention of the Other*, is made possible by a set of conditions for which we can give an account and that we can identify or determine in a saturable fashion, as is done and must be done after the fact by epistemology, by the history or philosophy of the techno-sciences (politico-economic infrastructure, epistemic configuration, paradigm, and so on), we are no longer talking about an invention or an event. An event or an invention is possible only as im-possible. That is, nowhere *as such*, the phenomenological or ontological "as such" annulling this experience of an im-possible that never appears or announces itself *as such*.

To think this and to say this is not to go against reason. To be worried about an ideocracy or a teleologism that tends to annul or to neutralize the eventfulness of the event, and that does so precisely so as to immunize itself against it, is not to go against reason. It is in fact the only chance to think, rationally, something like a future [*venir*] and a becoming [*devenir*] of reason. It is also, let us not forget, that which should free not only thought but scientific research from the control or conditioning to which it is subject by all sorts of political, military, techno-economic, and capitalist powers or institutions (for example, in the appropriation through patents of bio-genetic discoveries). The same goes for "state" control of knowledge, sometimes, to cite just one example, in the distinguished and respectable form of so-called ethics committees. For just as no power (whether political, juridical,

religious, ideological, or economic) will ever be able to justify through reason the control or limitation of scientific research, of a research for the truth, of a critical or deconstructive questioning, and thus of a rational and unconditional research in the order of knowledge and of thought, so also (or reciprocally), no knowledge as such, no theoretical reason, if you will, will ever be able to found a responsibility or a decision in any kind of a sustained manner, like a cause that would produce an effect, like a *raison d'être* or a sufficient reason that would provide an account of what follows from it. It is *necessary to know*, to be sure, to know that knowledge is indispensable; we need to have knowledge, the best and most comprehensive available, in order to make a decision or take responsibility. But the moment and structure of the "*il faut*," of the "it is necessary," just like the responsible decision, are and must remain heterogeneous to knowledge. An absolute interruption must separate them, one that can always be judged "mad," for otherwise the engagement of a responsibility would be reducible to the application and deployment of a program, perhaps even a program under the refined form of teleological norms, values, rules, indeed duties, that is to say, debts to be acquitted or reappropriated, and thus annulled in a circle that is still implicitly economic. That is why what I say here, I'm well aware, involves a serious risk.

A "responsibility" or a "decision" cannot be founded upon or justified by any *knowledge as such*, that is, without a leap between two discontinuous and radically heterogenous orders. I say rather abstractly "responsibility" and "decision" here rather than "practical," "ethical," "juridical" or "political" reason, by reason of the difficulties of which I will speak, albeit all too briefly, in a moment.

In coming too slowly or too quickly toward my conclusion, I must share with you at this point a hesitation I had to overcome. In preparing for this session, I asked myself how to solve the problem of time in the most economic and least unreasonable, if not most rational, way possible. I thus went over my accounts and updated my *livre de raison*. (You know that in French a "*livre de raison*" is a book of accounts [*rations*] in which revenues and expenses are recorded and tallied.) One of my working hypotheses, which I later abandoned, was thus to sacrifice the main line of this noble rationalist and teleological tradition, the one that runs from Plato to Kant to Husserl, along with its French offshoot (running from Descartes to the Enlightenment to all those who were more attentive to a history or a becoming, that is, to a certain plasticity, of reason: Brunschvicg, Bachelard, Canguilhem,

Foucault, Lacan, and so on), so as to focus everything on an example from today, on some concrete figure, some metonymy of all the urgencies that confront us. This example, I said to myself, would force me to mobilize indirectly the philosophemes we have just been questioning and to make them all converge in the great question of reason and of life. (For we must not forget that Plato determines the Good, to *agathon*, the *epekeina tés ousias*, which is the reason of *logos*, as the source of life, the figure of paternity or of patrimonial capital, the non-genetic origin of all genesis; and Aristotle speaks of the life of pure Actuality or of the Prime Mover; and the *logos* of Christianity defines itself as the life of the living, which is also true, and literally so, of the Hegelian *logos*.) A well chosen example on the side of life, I told myself, would allow me to tie together, in as rigorous and tight a fashion as possible, reflections of an ethical, juridical, political, and, inseparably, techno-scientific nature—and precisely in a place where technicity, the great question of the technical and the logic of the prosthesis, would be not accessory but essential and intrinsic to the problematic of reason. In this hypothesis, my choice would have gravitated toward the terrible dilemma of *cloning*—whether therapeutic or reproductive. For we would there find, I said to myself, the best and the worst of reason, the newest and most terrifying in the realm of the calculable as well as the incalculable, the powers and the impotence of reason confronted with these major investigations concerning the essence of the living being, birth and death, the rights and dignity of the human person, the rights, laws, and powers of the sovereign state in these domains, the reason of State that gives itself the right to rise above all other rights, the ongoing and future development of international law (for we know that the decisions being made today by Western heads of state on this subject are determining an international jurisprudence). In summoning the two major axiomatics that are authoritative today in so many circles (in science, politics, law, the media, and so on), we would find the opposition between the calculable and the incalculable. To generalize, the proponents of cloning, and especially of therapeutic cloning, claim the rational necessity of not limiting theoretical and techno-experimental research whenever the results can be calculated and the anticipated benefits programmed, even if this calculability risks, without any assurance, exposing us to the incalculable. On the other side, one opposes not only the improbable programmation of countless armies of threatening clones in the service of an industrial, military, or market rationality, whether demonic or mad (for a certain reason

can of itself become mad), but also, and more often, therapeutic cloning (whose limits would not be rigorously secured) or cautious experimentation in the area of reproductive cloning (whose technical possibility has not even been proven). One thus objects to all cloning in the name of ethics, human rights, what is proper to man, and the dignity of human life, in the name of the singularity and *non-repetitive* uniqueness of the human person, in the name of an ethics of desire or a love of the other—which we sometimes believe or try to make others believe, with an optimistic confidence, must always inspire the act of procreation. And, finally, one objects to cloning in the name of that incalculable element that must be left to birth, to the coming to light or into the world of a unique, irreplaceable, free, and thus non-programmable living being.

What, then, does this currently prevailing ethical axiomatic in the law and politics of the West keep out of rational examination? First of all, the fact that so-called identificatory repetition, the duplication that one claims to reject with horrified indignation, is already, and fortunately, present and at work everywhere it is a question of reproduction and of heritage, in culture, knowledge, language, education, and so on, whose conditions are assured by this duplication just as much as by production and reproduction. But what is also, and especially, overlooked is the fact that this militant humanism, this discourse about ethics, about human freedom and human specificity, seems to assume that two so-called genetically identical individuals will have identical fates, that they will be indistinguishable and subservient to the calculation that has given them birth. This is yet another way of ignoring what history, whether individual or not, owes to culture, society, education, and the symbolic, to the incalculable and the aleatory—so many dimensions that are irreducible, even for “identical” twins, to this supposedly simple, naturalist genetics. What is the consequence of all this? That, in the end, this so-called ethical or humanist axiomatic actually shares with the axiomatic it claims to oppose a certain geneticism or biologism, indeed a deep zoologism, a fundamental though unacknowledged reductionism.

The problem thus calls for (and here is the reason of the Enlightenment to come) a completely different elaboration. I say this not so as to come down on one side or the other, and not out of some wide-eyed confidence in a reproductive cloning for which I see little interest, attraction, or probability. Yet I find few rational and justifiable objections to therapeutic cloning, assuming that one can in fact dis-

tinguish it from the other kind. For hasn't the path already been cleared for this, and approved in its principle, by so many prosthetic techniques, by recent developments in gene therapy using interfering RNA, by so-called information tele-technologies, structures or organizations that are themselves prosthetic and that actually situate, along with what I call iterability, the true place of the problem of reason today: that of technicity, of the proper of man, of what is proper to the living body, of the proper in general? In every field. The presuppositions shared by both parties in this debate over cloning thus call for a systematic re-elaboration, one for which the vigilance of reason must be without respite, courageous and upright, determined not to give in to any dogmatic intimidation. But I said that I will not speak about cloning.

How shall I argue my concluding propositions in as brief and economic a fashion as possible? To the value of this unforeseeable impossibility I would associate the value of *incalculable* and *exceptional singularity*. I appeal here again to good sense itself, to common sense, that most widely shared thing in the world. A calculable event, one that falls, like a case, like the object of some knowledge, under the generality of a law, norm, determinative judgment, or techno-science, and thus of a power-knowledge and a knowledge-power, is not, *at least in this measure*, an event. Without the absolute singularity of the incalculable and the exceptional, no thing and no one, nothing *other* and thus *nothing*, arrives or happens. I say "no thing and no one" so as to return to a thought of the event that awakens or is awakened before distinguishing or conjoining the "what" and the "who." It is a matter of thinking reason, of thinking the coming of its future, of its to-come, and of its becoming, as the experience of *what* and *who* comes, of what happens or who arrives—obviously as other, as the exception or absolute singularity of an alterity that is not reappropriable by the ipseity of a sovereign power and a calculable knowledge.

1. *The unconditionality of the incalculable* allows or gives the event to be thought. It gives or lends itself to thought as the *advent* [venue] or *coming* of the other in experiences for which I will name just a few metonymic figures. My recourse to the lexicon of *unconditionality* has proved useful to me because tradition and translation (*anhypotheton*, *unbedingt*, *inconditionnel*) facilitate its intelligibility, indeed its pedagogy. But I am not sure that an elaboration to come will not impose another term, one that has been freed to a greater extent from these traditional

semantic implications, which in fact differ from one language to the next: *anhypotheton*, *unbedingt*, *inconditionnel*—these are not exactly the same thing. Another language will perhaps one day help us to say better what still remains to be said about these metonymic figures of the unconditional. But whatever this other language may be, this word or this trope, it will have to inherit or retain the memory of that which, in the unconditionality of reason, relates each singularity to the universalizable. It will have to require or postulate a universal beyond all relativism, culturalism, ethnocentrism, and especially nationalism, beyond what I propose naming, to refer to all the modern risks that these relativisms make reason run, *irratio-nationalism*, *irratio-nationstate-ism*—spell them as you will.

Among the figures of unconditionality without sovereignty I have had occasion to privilege in recent years, there would be, for example, that of an *unconditional hospitality* that exposes itself without limit to the coming of the other, beyond rights and laws, beyond a hospitality conditioned by the right of asylum, by the right to immigration, by citizenship, and even by the right to universal hospitality, which still remains, for Kant, for example, under the authority of a political or cosmopolitan law. Only an unconditional hospitality can give meaning and practical rationality to a concept of hospitality. Unconditional hospitality exceeds juridical, political, or economic calculation. But no thing and no one happens or arrives without it. Another example would be that of the *gift* or of *forgiveness*; I have tried to show elsewhere exactly where the unconditionality required by the purity of such concepts leads us. A gift without calculable exchange, a gift worthy of this name, would not even appear *as such* to the donor or donee without the risk of reconstituting, through phenomenality and thus through its phenomenology, a circle of economic reappropriation that would just as soon annul the event. Similarly, forgiveness can be given to the other or come *from* the other only beyond calculation, beyond apologies, amnesia, or amnesty, beyond acquittal or prescription, even beyond any asking for forgiveness, and thus beyond any transformative repentance, which is most often the stipulated condition for forgiveness, at least in the most predominant parts of the tradition of the Abrahamic religions. In the open series of these examples, we have to think together two figures of rationality that, on either side of a limit, at once call for and exceed one another. The incalculable unconditionality of hospitality, of the gift or of forgiveness, exceeds the calculation of conditions, just as justice exceeds law, the juridical, and

the political. Justice will never be reduced to law, to calculative reason, to lawful distribution, to the norms and rules that condition law, as evidenced by its history and its ongoing transformations, by its recourse to coercive force, its recourse to a power or might that, as Kant showed with the greatest rigor, is inscribed and justified in the purest concept of law or right. For "strict right," says Kant, implies the faculty or the possibility of a reciprocal use of coercion (*wechselseitigen Zwanges*), and thus of force, of a reason of the strongest following universal, and thus rational, laws, in accordance with the freedom of each.¹⁰ To grant this heterogeneity of justice to law it is not enough to distinguish, as Heidegger did, *diké* from the legality of Roman *jus*; it is also necessary, as I tried to indicate in *Specters of Marx*, to question the Heideggerian interpretation of *diké* as harmony or as gathering. In the end, as *logos*.¹¹ The interruption of a certain unbinding opens the free space of the relationship to the incalculable singularity of the other. It is there that justice exceeds law but at the same time motivates the movement, history, and becoming of juridical rationality, indeed the relationship between law and reason, as well as everything that, in modernity, will have linked the history of law to the history of critical reason. The heterogeneity between justice and law does not exclude but, on the contrary, calls for their inseparability: there can be no justice without an appeal to juridical determinations and to the force of law; and there can be no becoming, no transformation, history, or perfectibility of law without an appeal to a justice that will nonetheless always exceed it.

To think *together both* this heterogeneity *and* this inseparability is to recognize, and so bear witness to, an *auto-delimitation* that divides reason and that is not without relation to a certain auto-immunity. What is called reason, from one language to another, is thus found on both sides. According to a transaction that is each time novel, each time without precedent, reason goes through and goes between, on the one side, the reasoned exigency of calculation or conditionality, and, on the other, the intransigent, non-negotiable exigency of unconditional incalculability. This intractable exigency wins out [*a raison de*] and *must* win out over everything. On both sides, then, whether it is a question of singularity or universality, and each time both at once, *both* calculation *and* the incalculable *are necessary*. This responsibility of reason, this experience that consists in keeping within reason [*à raison garder*], in being responsible for a reason of which we are the heirs, could be situated with only the greatest of difficulty. Indeed I would situate it

precisely within this greatest of difficulties, within the auto-immunitary aporia of this impossible transaction between the conditional and the unconditional, calculation and the incalculable. A transaction without any rule given in advance, without any absolute assurance. For there is no absolutely reliable prophylaxis against the auto-immunitary. By definition. An always perilous transaction must thus invent, each time, in a singular situation, its own law and norm, that is, a maxim that welcomes each time the event to come. There is responsibility and decision, if there are any, only at this price. If I had to attribute a meaning, the most difficult, the least mediocre, the least moderate meaning, to this well-worn, indeed long discredited word “reasonable,” I would say that what is “reasonable” is the reasoned and considered wager of a transaction between these two apparently irreconcilable exigencies of reason, between calculation and the incalculable. For example, between human rights, such as the history of a certain number of juridical performatives has determined and enriched them from one declaration to the next over the course of the last two centuries, and the exigency of an unconditional justice to which these performatives will always be inadequate, open to their perfectibility (which is more and something other than a regulative idea) and exposed to a rational deconstruction that will endlessly question their limits and presuppositions, the interests and calculations that order their deployment, and their concepts—beginning with the concepts of law and of duty, and especially the concept of man, the history of the concept of man, of man as *zoon logon ekhon* or *animal rationale*. It is rational, for example, at the very moment of endorsing, developing, perfecting, and determining human rights, to continue to interrogate, in a deconstructive fashion, all the limits we thought pertained to life, the being of life and the life of being (and this is almost the entire history of philosophy), between the living and the dead, the living present and its spectral others, but also between that living being called “human” and the one called “animal.” Though I cannot demonstrate this here, I believe—and the stakes of this are becoming more and more urgent—that none of the conventionally accepted limits between the so-called human living being and the so-called animal one, none of the oppositions, none of the supposedly linear and indivisible boundaries, resist a rational deconstruction—whether it be a question of language, culture, social symbolic networks, even technicity or work, even the relationship to life and to mourning, and even the prohibition against or avoidance

of incest—so many “capacities” of which the “animal” (a general singular noun!) is said so dogmatically to be bereft, impoverished.

I just referred in passing to the distinction between the *constative* (the language of descriptive and theoretical knowledge) and the *performative*, which is so often said to produce the event it declares (as with, for example, the juridical performative that would have constituted in 1945, against the backdrop of human rights, the concept of a crime against humanity, the ferment of a laborious transformation in international law and of everything that depends upon it). Now, just like the *constative*, it seems to me, the *performative* cannot avoid neutralizing, indeed annulling, the eventfulness of the event it is supposed to produce. A *performative* produces an event only by securing for itself, in the first person singular or plural, in the present, and with the guarantee offered by conventions or legitimated fictions, the power that an ipseity gives itself to produce the event of which it speaks—the event that it neutralizes forthwith insofar as it appropriates for itself a calculable mastery over it. If an event worthy of this name is to arrive or happen, it must, beyond all mastery, affect a passivity. It must touch an exposed vulnerability, one without absolute immunity, without indemnity; it must touch this vulnerability in its finitude and in a non-horizontal fashion, there where it is not yet or is already no longer possible to face or face up to the unforeseeability of the other. In this regard, auto-immunity is not an absolute ill or evil. It enables an exposure to the other, to *what* and to *who* comes—which means that it must remain incalculable. Without auto-immunity, with absolute immunity, nothing would ever happen or arrive; we would no longer wait, await, or expect, no longer expect one another, or expect any event.

What must be thought here, then, is this inconceivable and unknowable thing, a freedom that would no longer be the power of a subject, a freedom without autonomy, a heteronomy without servitude, in short, something like a passive decision. We would thus have to rethink the philosophemes of the decision, of activity and passivity, as well as potentiality and actuality. It is thus rational, legitimately rational, to interrogate or deconstruct—without however discrediting—the fertile distinction between *constative* and *performative*. Similarly, beyond law, debt, and duty, it would be necessary to rethink rationally a hyperethics or hyper-politics that does not settle for acting simply “according to duty (*pflichtmäßig*)” or even (to take up the Kantian distinction that founds practical reason) “from duty” or “out of pure duty (*eigentlich*

aus Pflicht, aus reiner Pflicht).”¹² Such a hyper-ethics or hyper-politics would carry us unconditionally beyond the economic circle of duty or of the task (*Pflicht* or *Aufgabe*), of the debt to be reappropriated or annulled, of what one *knows* must be done, of what thus still depends on a programmatic and normative knowledge that need only be carried out.

The hiatus between these two equally rational postulations of reason, this excess of a reason that of itself exceeds itself and so opens onto its future, its to-come, its becoming, this exposition to the incalculable event, would also be the irreducible spacing of the very faith, credit, or belief without which there would be no social bond, no address to the other, no uprightness or honesty, no promise to be honored, and so no honor, no faith to be sworn or pledge to be given. This hiatus opens the rational space of a hypercritical faith, one without dogma and without religion, irreducible to any and all religious or implicitly theocratic institutions. It is what I’ve called elsewhere the awaiting without horizon of a messianicity without messianism. It goes without saying that I do not detect here even the slightest hint of irrationalism, obscurantism, or extravagance. This faith is another way of *keeping within reason [raison garder]*, however mad it might appear. If the minimal semantic kernel we might retain from the various lexicons of reason, in every language, is the ultimate possibility of, if not a consensus, at least an address universally promised and unconditionally entrusted to the other, then reason remains the element or very air of a faith without church and without credulity, the *raison d’être* of the pledge, of credit, of testimony beyond proof, the *raison d’être* of any belief in the other, that is, of their belief and of our belief in them—and thus also of any perjury. For as soon as reason does not close itself off to the event that comes, the event of what or who comes, assuming it is not irrational to think that the worst can always happen, and well beyond what Kant thinks under the name “radical evil,” then only the infinite possibility of the worst and of perjury can grant the possibility of the good, of veracity and sworn faith. This possibility remains infinite, but as the very possibility of an auto-immunitary finitude.

2. As for *the unconditionality of the exception*, reason is found in equal measures on both sides each time that a responsibility engages or commits us before what is called, in the West and in a Latin language, *sovereignty*. Each time, which is to say, more than ever in today’s world and today’s day and age—in truth, at every moment. For it happens

that sovereignty is first of all one of the traits by which reason defines its own power and element, that is, a certain unconditionality. It is also the concentration, into a single point of indivisible singularity (God, the monarch, the people, the state or the nation-state), of absolute force and the absolute exception. We did not have to wait for Schmitt to learn that the sovereign is the one who decides exceptionally and performatively about the exception, the one who keeps or grants himself the right to suspend rights or law; nor did we need him to know that this politico-juridical concept, like all the others, secularizes a theological heritage. I don’t think I have to illustrate, and moreover time will not permit it, everything that is at stake—for Europe and the world—in this problematic of sovereignty, today and tomorrow. To conclude, I will thus settle for two telegraphic and programmatic indications.

A. *In the first place*, why did I underscore at the outset the date of Husserl’s *Crisis*? This date is inscribed between two events considered to be without precedent, two events called *world wars*, even though they were at first intra-European wars, waged by sovereign states or coalitions of sovereign states whose supposed rationality formed the very horizon of the *Crisis*. The lecture of 1935 alluded, we recall, not only to Europe and to the rest of the world but to the national communities and nation-states that formed the horizon of that lecture. Is such a warning transposable or translatable today, at a time when the concept of sovereignty as indivisible and unshareable is being put to an even more than critical test? This test testifies more and better than ever (for we are not talking about something absolutely new) to the fragility of nation-state sovereignty, to its precariousness, to the principle of ruins that is working it over—and thus to the tense, sometimes deadly denials that are but the manifestations of its convulsive death throes. But at the same time, through what remains, as I said earlier, *in want of sovereignty*, where the rationality of universal human rights encroaches upon nation-state sovereignty (in the form of humanitarian initiatives, non-governmental organizations, the laborious establishment of an International Criminal Tribunal, and so many other vehicles of international law), what then loses its pertinence, in this phase of what is so obscurely called “globalization” [*mondialisation*], is the concept of *war*, and thus of *world war*, of *enemy* and even of *terrorism*, along with the opposition between civilian and military, or between army, police, and militia. What is called just as obscurely “September 11” will have neither created nor revealed this new situation, though

it will have surely media-theatralized it. And this media-theatralization is in fact an integral and co-determining part of the event. Calculated from both sides, it calls for just as many questions and analyses as that which it seems simply to “report” through a straightforward and neutral informational process.

Consider the context we’ve inherited from the end of the Cold War: a so-called globalization [*mondialisation*] that is more inegalitarian and violent than ever, a globalization that is, therefore, only simply alleged and actually less global or worldwide than ever, where *the world*, therefore, is not even there, and where we, we who are worldless, *weltlos*, *form* a world only against the backdrop of a nonworld where there is neither world nor even that poorness-in-world that Heidegger attributes to animals (which would be, according to him, *weltarm*). Within this abyss of the without-world, this abyss without support, indeed on the condition of this absence of support, of bottom, ground, or foundation, it is as if one *bore* the other, as if I felt, without support and without hypothesis, *bome* by the other and *bome* toward the other, as if, as Celan says, *Die Welt ist fort, ich muss dich tragen*, where the world goes away, where the world disappears, I must bear you, there where the world would no longer or would not yet be, where the world would distance itself, get lost in the distance, or be still to come. It is this so-called globalization that then confiscates to an unprecedented degree and concentrates into a small part of the human world so many natural resources, capitalist riches, techno-scientific and even tele-technological powers, reserving also for that small part of the world those two great forms of immunity that go by the names public health and military security. It is precisely in this context, then, at the end of the Cold War, that clashes of force in view of hegemony no longer oppose the sovereign state to an enemy that takes either an actual or virtual state form. The United States and its allies, as well as the international institutions that depend largely on them for their daily operations (the Security Council, if not the entire UN), no longer face an identifiable enemy in the form of a “state” territory with whom they would wage what would still be called a “war,” even if it’s a war on international terrorism. Air or surface missiles, chemical, bacteriological, or nuclear weapons, covert interventions into computer networks (“cyber-attacks”)—all these weapons can destabilize or destroy the most powerful apparatuses of the state. Yet such weapons now escape all control and all state oversight. They are no longer at the sole disposal of a sovereign state or coalition of sovereign states that protect one

another and maintain a balance of terror, as was the case during the Cold War, where everyone was held in check by a reasoned game theory that calculated the risks of escalation so as to exclude, in principle and according to the greatest probability, any suicidal operation. All that is over. A new violence is being prepared and, in truth, has been unleashed some time now, in a way that is more visibly suicidal or auto-immunitary than ever. This violence no longer has anything to do with *world war* or even with *war*, even less with some right to wage war. And this is hardly reassuring—indeed quite the contrary. It is a matter, in essence, neither of classical, international war declared in accordance with old *jus europeanus*, nor of intra-national civil war, nor even of what Schmitt called “partisan war,” since even this latter, just like terrorism in its classical sense, resorted to violence or terror only with a view toward the liberation or foundation, in the short or longer term, of some nation-state community, some nation-state territory, in short, some sovereignty. In essence, there is no longer any such thing today that can be called in all rigor “war” or “terrorism,” even if there can still be, here and there, in a secondary sense, as the surviving vestiges of this paradigm, wars or terrorism in these three senses; and even if, by means of loaded rhetorical gestures, one sometimes needs to make others believe that one is going to war or preparing for war against some enemy force organized into a state or into some state structure that supports the enemy. The stir created by these war mobilizations can be terribly effective, to be sure; concrete, rational, and real, it determines and deafens the entire earth. But it cannot make us forget that we are dealing here with useful projections and ultimate denegations, with what psychoanalysis calls “rationalizations” (as when it speaks of “sexual theory”). A powerful “rationalization” would thus be under way, its calculation fully conscious or not. It consists in accusing and mounting a campaign against so-called *rogue states*, states that do in fact care little for international law. The rationalization is orchestrated by hegemonic states, beginning with the United States, which has been shown for quite some time now (Chomsky was not the first to do so) to have been itself acting like a rogue state. Every sovereign state is in fact virtually and *a priori* in a state [*en état*] to abuse its power and, like a rogue state, transgress international law. There is something of a rogue state in every state. The state’s use of power is *originally* excessive and abusive. As is, in fact, the recourse to terror and fear, which has always been—indeed it’s as old as the world, as Hobbes theorized so well—the ultimate recourse for the sovereign

power of the state, in an implicit or explicit, blatant or subtle, form, and even when it is contractual and protective. To claim the contrary involves always a denegation, a rationalization, sometimes a ratiocination that must be allowed to take us unawares.

This reminds us that we must sometimes, in the name of reason, be suspicious of rationalizations. Let it thus be said in passing, albeit all too quickly, that the Enlightenment to come would have to enjoin us to reckon with the logic of the unconscious, and so with the idea, and notice I'm not saying here the doctrine, arising out of a psychoanalytic revolution. Which, I might add, would have had no chance of emerging in history without, among other things, this poisoned medicine, this *pharmakon* of an inflexible and cruel auto-immunity that is sometimes called the death drive and that does not limit the living being to its conscious and representative form.

It is thus no doubt necessary, in the name of reason, to call into question and to limit a logic of nation-state sovereignty. It is no doubt necessary to erode not only its principle of indivisibility but its right to the exception, its right to suspend rights and law, along with the undeniable onto-theology that founds it, even in what are called democratic regimes, and even when this is denied—in what is to my eyes a questionable fashion—by experts such as Bodin, Hobbes, and Rousseau.

In speaking of an onto-theology of sovereignty, I am referring here, under the name of God, this One and Only God, to the determination of a sovereign, and thus indivisible, omnipotence. For wherever the name of God would allow us to think something else, for example a vulnerable non-sovereignty, one that suffers and is divisible, one that is mortal even, capable of contradicting itself or of repenting (a thought that is neither impossible nor without example), it would be a completely different story, perhaps even the story of a god who deconstructs himself in his ipseity.

In any case, such a questioning of sovereignty is not simply some formal or academic necessity for a kind of speculation in political philosophy, or else a form of genealogical, or perhaps even deconstructive, vigilance. It is already under way. It is at work today; it is what's *coming*, what's *happening*. It is and it *makes* history through the anxiety provoking turmoil we are currently undergoing. For it is often precisely in the name of the universality of human rights, or at least of their perfectibility, as I suggested earlier, that the indivisible sovereignty of the nation-state is being more and more called into question, along with the immunity of sovereigns, whether heads of state or military

leaders, and even the institution of the death penalty, the last attribute of state sovereignty.

B. And yet, *in the second place*, it would be imprudent and hasty, in truth hardly *reasonable*, to oppose unconditionally, that is, head on, a sovereignty that is itself unconditional and indivisible. One cannot combat, *head on*, all sovereignty, sovereignty *in general*, without threatening at the same time, beyond the nation-state figure of sovereignty, the classical principles of freedom and self-determination. Like the classical tradition of law (and the force that it presupposes), these classical principles remain inseparable from a sovereignty at once indivisible and yet able to be shared. Nation-state sovereignty can even itself, in certain conditions, become an indispensable bulwark against certain international powers, certain ideological, religious, or capitalist, indeed linguistic, hegemonies, which, under the cover of liberalism or universalism, would still represent, in a world that would be little more than a market, a rationalization in the service of particular interests. Yet again, in a context that is each time singular, where the respectful attention paid to singularity is not relativist but universalizable and rational, responsibility would consist in orienting ourselves without any *determinative* knowledge of the rule. To be responsible, to keep within reason [*garder raison*], would be to invent maxims of transaction for deciding between two just as rational and universal but contradictory exigencies of reason as well as its enlightenment.

The invention of these maxims resembles the poetic invention of an idiom whose singularity would not yield to any nationalism, not even a European nationalism—even if, as I would like to believe, within today's geopolitical landscape, a new thinking and a previously unencountered destination, along with another responsibility for Europe, are being called upon to give a new chance to this idiom. Beyond all euro-centrism. This idiom would again be a singular idiom of reason, of the *reasonable* transaction between two antinomic rationalities. At the utmost point of its extreme difficulty, indeed of its im-possibility, what I call here—in these sentences and not others—the *reasonable* would be that which, in conveying *pré-férence* itself in all that it conveys [*portant dans sa portée la pré-férence même*], will always be *preferable*—and thus irreducible to the rational it exceeds. In such sentences as these, the *rational* would certainly have to do with the *just*, and sometimes with the justness or exactitude of juridical and calculative reason. But the *reasonable* would do yet more and something else; it would take into account the accounting of juridical *justness* or exactitude, to be sure,

but it would also strive, across transactions and aporias, for *justice*. The reasonable, as I understand it here, would be a rationality that takes account of the incalculable so as to give an account of it, there where this appears impossible, so as to account for or reckon *with* it, that is to say, with the event of *what* or *who* comes.

It remains to be known, so as to save the honor of reason, how to *translate*. For example, the word “*reasonable*” [raisonnable]. And how to pay one’s respects to, how to salute or greet [saluer], beyond its latinity, and in more than one language, the fragile difference between the *rational* and the *reasonable*.

Reason reasons, to be sure, it is right [*a raison*], and it gives itself reason [*se donner raison*], to do so, so as to protect or keep itself [*se garder*], so as to keep within reason [*raison garder*]. It is in this that it is and thus wants to be *itself*; that is its sovereign ipseity.

But to make its ipseity see reason, it must let itself be reasoned with.

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NOTES

* This essay was presented at the opening of the twenty-ninth Congrès de l’Association des Sociétés de Philosophie de Langue française [ASPLF] at the University of Nice, 27 August 2002. This conference, which ran from 27 August to 1 September 2002, had as its general title: “*Avenir de la raison, devenir des rationalités*” [“The Future of Reason, the Development of Rationalities”]. It was organized under the directorship of André Tosel.

It seemed to me more appropriate to reproduce this text as such in order to respect the constraints and limits put on it, as well as its first audience. Nothing has thus been erased or modified of the particular features that this original speech situation will have marked in the text: on such a day, in such a place, before such addressees. Only a few footnotes were added after the fact.

** In this essay, square brackets are used to indicate insertions by the translators. In the four instances in which Derrida used square brackets, viz., to insert comments in the block quotations on p. 18 (concerning “philosophy”), p. 22 (concerning the word *Unwesen*), p. 23 (concerning emphasis), and p. 32 (concerning ideals and tasks), these have been changed to parentheses.

1. Dominique Janicaud, *Powers of the Rational*, trans. Peg Birmingham and Elizabeth Birmingham (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994), 260. Janicaud’s emphasis. Hereafter cited as *PR*. Originally published as *La puissance du rationnel* (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1985), 375.
2. Ibid., 46/75. Janicaud’s emphasis; translation slightly modified. This proposition belongs to the development of a reading of Heidegger. It is neither totally endorsed nor, it seems to me, explicitly criticized by Janicaud.
3. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1965), Second Division, Book II, Chapter II, Section 3, “The Interest of

Reason in these Conflicts,” A462/B490–A476/B504. It appears, though I knew nothing about this or else had buried it in forgetting, that Kant used the expression “to save the honor of reason” in an early work. Jean Ferriari, President of ASPLF, told me this just after my presentation, promising to send me the reference. Forgetfulness, symptom, the work of the unconscious, or coincidence, the *necessity* of this recurrence is here confirmed in its *meaning*; it attests, in any case, and in more than one way, to an undeniable rationality. The expression, like the question it opens up, is all the more justified by reason of that fact that, once more *after the fact*, I came across it again in Husserl (see below, p. 21).

4. Ibid., A474/B502. This thesis is more historical than it appears for someone interested in the development or the historicity of reason. For if the concern for synthetic or synchronic coherence, concern for the *arché* (as foundation, cause, or principle), has always associated reason with *architectural* organization and all its metaphors, the project of an *architectonic* system, in the strict sense of the term, is a relatively modern form of this concern. Architecture is not architectonic. All coherence is not and has not always been systemic. It seems to me that Heidegger was right to insist on this in several places.
5. Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, trans. David Carr (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 269–99. Hereafter cited as *Crisis*. [The French translation Derrida is working with is that of Gérard Granel, *La crise des sciences européennes et la phénoménologie transcendentale* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976).] German text: *Husserliana* 6 (The Hague: M. Nijhof, 1954).
6. Edmund Husserl, “Philosophy as Mankind’s Self-Reflection,” Appendix IV in *Crisis*, 341.
7. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, Book II, Chapter II, Section III, “On the Primacy of Pure Practical Reason in Its Association with Speculative Reason,” trans. Lewis White Beck (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., 1993), 126–28. Hereafter cited as *CPR*. German text: *Kantswerke*, Akademische Textausgabe (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1968), 5:121. Hereafter cited as *AK*, followed by volume and page number.
8. Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. H. J. Patton (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), 102. Hereafter cited as *G. AK*, 4:435.
9. Plato, *The Republic*, trans. Paul Shorey (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987).
10. Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Mary Gregor (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), Part I, “Metaphysical First Principles of the Doctrine of Right, Introduction to the Doctrine of Right,” §§D–E, pp. 25–26. *AK*, 6:231–33.
11. This is perhaps the place to provide, after the fact, and all too briefly, a few clarifications on the question of what might link “deconstruction,” or at least the one that has seemed necessary to me in my work for so long now, to reason as *logos*.

These clarifications are called for because of a discussion at the end of the conference around “metaphysical and post-metaphysical reason.” There was a great deal of talk there about *logos* and deconstruction. For numerous reasons, I was unable to take part in the discussion. I thus take this opportunity to recall a few facts that seem to have been oddly omitted from the discussion.

1. Heideggerian deconstruction (*Destruktion*) never really opposed logocentrism, nor even *logos*. Indeed it is often, on the contrary, in the name of a more “original” reinterpretation of *logos* that it accomplished the deconstruction of classical ontology or onto-theology.

2. The “deconstruction” I attempt or that tempts me is not only distinct (in ways too numerous and too widely discussed elsewhere for me to recall them here) from the one practiced by Heidegger. First and foremost, it never took the

objectifying form of a knowledge as “diagnosis,” and even less of a “diagnosis of diagnosis,” inscribed, taken up and comprehended, as it will have always been, and was always acknowledged to be, in the very element of the language it calls into question, struggling at the heart of metaphysical debates that are themselves in the grips of auto-deconstructive movements. Hence I never associated deconstruction with the themes that were constantly being brought up during the discussion, themes of “diagnosis,” of “before” or “post,” of “death” (death of philosophy, death of metaphysics, and so on), of “completion” or of “surpassing” (*Überwindung* or *Schritt zurück*), of the “end.” One will find no trace of such a vocabulary in any of my texts. This is not fortuitous, as you might well believe, and it is not without enormous consequence. It is not fortuitous that, as early as *Of Grammatology* (1965), I explicitly declared that it was not a question of the end of metaphysics and that the closure is certainly not the end. And this closure, I very quickly clarified, did not surround or enclose something like a single “Metaphysics” but instead traversed its heterogeneous space in a grid of complex and non-circular limits.

3. One must not only say, as was done, and not without audacity, “*Luther qui genuit Pascal*,” but perhaps also “*Luther qui genuit Heidegger*.” Which has completely other consequences. I have recalled in several different places that the theme and word *Destruktion* designated in Luther a desedimentation of instituted theology (one could also say onto-theology) in the service of a more originary truth of Scripture. Heidegger was obviously a great reader of Luther. But despite my enormous respect for this great tradition, the deconstruction that concerns me does not belong, in any way, and this is more than obvious, to the same filiation. It is precisely this difference that I attempt, though not without difficulty, to be sure, to articulate.

I would say more or less the same thing with regard to the privilege I constantly grant aporetic thought. I know and recognize quite well what this thought surely owes to the Aristotelian aporia, as well as, and I recall this in this very text, to the Kantian antinomies, but it seems to me always to mark them with a wholly other wrinkle. It is precisely this limit of analogy that decides everything and so requires the most vigilant attention. I would again say the same thing with regard to the hyper- or ultra-transcendentalism (which is thus also a hyper-rationalism) to which, in order to avoid empiricist positivism, I expressly appealed as early as *Of Grammatology*.

4. Finally, I hesitate to insist yet again on the difference between deconstruction and destruction, or between deconstruction and critique. Deconstruction does not seek to discredit critique; it in fact constantly re legitimates its necessity and heritage, even though it never renounces a genealogy of the critical idea, nor a history of the question and of the supposed privilege of interrogative thought.

All these themes, I dare say, have been the objects of long developments in numerous publications over the course of the last four decades.

12. See Book I, Chapter III, “Of the Drives of Pure Practical Reason,” in Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, trans. Lewis White Beck (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., 1993), esp. 84–85.

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