

We wanted to use those beginners as people who could give us a guarantee, an assurance about the essential creative qualities of man because we find ourselves in a time where we would bitterly need them because they are taken away from us step by step. We have brought ourselves into predicaments where we seem to be in danger to lose. We are in an utterly confused situation as to all fields of human endeavor and we have spreading negative belief in modern masses: namely, the belief that human freedom is not worthwhile to strive for because it is any how impossible. This tiredness of the propositions of freedom in our time and under our mass conditions makes it necessary to assure ourselves once more about the possibilities of human freedom and that is why we undertake this whole course. Now let's grasp our predicament in modern times about which we talked in the beginning of the course such a long time, trying to find out all significant trends like boredom and so on which make our life so confused and let's try to boil it down now to a general statement – not abstract. There are no abstractions used in philosophy. Philosophy when it wants to be scientific, as many modern philosophers want, then they use abstractions because abstractions are used in science. A number is an abstraction. You can fill it with any concrete thing you want, it will always, if it is a thing, meet the number one. The number one doesn't have to mean anything in itself. It is an abstraction. Now, in philosophy we cannot use abstractions. We use generalities – a hated term because people say, ›Oh, he is talking in generalities.« Yes, we are talking in generalities: namely, we are talking about general principles that rule a certain set of phenomena that are in themselves concrete and apply to a certain set of different phenomena which are all concrete. Those generalities in the positive sense, of course, are hard to find. That is why the procedure

of philosophy, for philosophy is always such a slow one because it has to check its steps, but we checked our steps in the beginning of the course. So I think I can proceed with this one. We talk about those phenomena mostly psychologically today because there the individual feels them the hardest, and we even try to put it in psychiatric terms like manic-depressive or schizophrenia. It is true that those diseases, mental diseases, are more wide-spread in our time than they ever were before, but they do not give us the reasons. The disease that causes – among other diseases – this mental disease lies deeper; it is a disease of the wavering of the modern individual between a feeling of inferiority and a feeling of superiority. All our situations make for this constant interchange in one and the same individual. That is what all our philosophers – that we are talking about here – tried to achieve for the first time: namely to show that a very substantiated relationship between all the creative capabilities of the human mind and the human person is possible, that man can reach a reasonable working creative equilibrium of all his capacities. This highest aim of man, as far as he himself is concerned, is the one that has been made most difficult in our time because those different capabilities have driven far apart; they have even been mingled up. The tremendous differentiations of labor in our time make it almost impossible for anyone to strive for such an equilibrium. We become experts and we become know-nothings, experts in one small field and know-nothings in all other fields. We are [?] between those two different positions and they tear us apart. Schizophrenia, or let's say it metaphysically, philosophically, inferiority feeling and living has become almost unavoidable in our time because we cannot grow into full-fledged human personalities, or personality is diminished step by step. We are split up into social beings on the one side and individual beings on the other. If we try to develop our individuality more, then we become experts who finally get crazy and come into a condition of hysteria because we believe being such and such an expert we can

rule the whole of human affairs. Being THE expert in sociology – the man thinks he can rule all human affairs; being THE expert in psychology – he thinks he can rule human individuals and human beings without having the slightest notion how complicated and rich this whole system of creative capabilities of the full human mind is. So we have the same individual when it gets to be individually crazy feeling himself as a specialized individual and nothing else becoming the expert – and then of course the lowest expert will always be victorious: namely the expert who really knows nothing but knows one thing: how to put everything into slogans: namely, the expert of public relations. The expert who does not have to know anything but what people want to hear at this moment – Hitler, Stalin – the greatest public relation agents of all time. Knowing nothing, being responsible for nothing, but being experts of the expertise, so to speak: namely, experts at what the people in the masses, the overwhelming masses at the moment would most like to hear which could catch their imagination, which could overwhelm and rule them most easily. Individuals driven to this point of the expert fall into the predicament of sheer absolute hysteria, those people were not psychiatric cases. Hitler was by no means ripe for a psychiatrist. They are much more dangerously ill: they have »the sickness to death«, as Kierkegaard called it – the sickness to death which means they have overstepped the boundaries of being humane absolutely; they have fallen out of the conditions of human beings; they are crazy in a much higher and more dangerous sense than a psychiatric case could ever be crazy. They are out of their minds – which is worse, they are out of our mind; they are out of the human mind, they have overstepped the framework of the human mind by becoming so one-sidedly hysterically concentrated on a mere belief of the individual in itself, in the power of the human individual, the absolute power of the human individual– which does not exist. The same individual if he fails is the one who is the best customer and follower of

the expert because then they fall into the opposite predicament – confused and not being able to relate any phenomenon in modern times to each other, they will fall for the easiest proposition and the easiest scheme proposed to them and they will become fanatical believers in such a proposition. They are not schizophrenic; they are opposing themselves in order to destroy themselves, as a schizophrenic might do; they are much more ill. They got the other portion of Kierkegaard's »sickness to death.« They also overstepped the human mind. They are out of the human mind because they don't believe any more in the possibilities of the human mind at all. They are ready to throw away every freedom and every value that they still have in them in order to feel more safe, in order not to be so frightened. They are, so to speak, not only frightened out of their wits; they are frightened out of the human mind, of the framework of the human mind. Both transgressions into nothingness, into plain nonsenses – the nonsense of the proclamation of the all-powerful absolute individual mind on the one side and the nonsense of the proclamation of the absolute uselessness and powerlessness of the human mind on the other side. They both are the poles of what Kierkegaard first called »the sickness to death,« the nihilistic condition of modern man, and both conditions are related. Kierkegaard said: The demonic condition of the modern individual is to ›desperately not to want to be one's self‹ and ›desperately to want to be one's self.‹ This paradox of desperately wanting not to be one's self and the other pole, desperately to want to be one's self, in both the common denominator is despair – desperately to want to be one's self, desperately to want not to be one's self, [means] being in despair. It was his own condition and he died by this condition, not finding a solution. He tried the most daring step, except Nietzsche perhaps, to bring us out of the nihilistic condition. He found only that we should jump into religious faith. After he had tried for years and years to overcome this condition, going back to what he thought was the original meaning of Christianity,–

namely, the human individual – and he proclaimed the power of the human individual in martyrdom. He was the first who fell out of the framework of the human mind and he proclaimed an absolute power of the human individual, being all alone, in sheer inwardness, without any communication with our fellow man. This individual, Søren Kierkegaard, this great man as we all are in the nihilistic predicament when we choose and think we can be individuals. We don't need anybody; we can do it all out of ourselves. The next day to become those little worms that feel that they can do nothing out of themselves and everything has to be done for them. He thought in humility and in Christian humility which became the more crazy because it was so absolutely humility, that he could in his own inwardness reach God and reach the Absolute and he made himself a martyr of this absolute torturing himself to death, becoming his own [Minotaur](#), in the labyrinth meeting himself and eating himself there. It makes for the greatest discoveries in psychology that this man made who almost, together with Nietzsche and [Dostoyevsky](#), founded modern psychology as a possible science by the tremendous discoveries he made by this tortuous self-analysis of the first, absolutely lonely human individual in the world that we could see, except Friedrich Nietzsche. He was the first who could say of himself as Nietzsche said, 'If I compare myself and my situation I mostly think that Spinoza might have been the nearest to me in having experienced absolute loneliness. But what am I talking about – Spinoza still had a God as his companion.'¹ He could have said the same about Kierkegaard because Kierkegaard was not an atheist in addition to everything else – Nietzsche was. So Nietzsche was absolutely alone in this predicament of the absolutely isolated, lonely individual which now tries to find out what power this individual has in order to find out that it has none if it is that isolated, that man dies when he is an individual, dies in the nihilistic predicament. And Kierkegaard thought

¹ Probably Bluecher cites two remarks on loneliness Nietzsche wrote his friend Franz Overbeck on 7/30/1881. See: Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm: Nietzsche's Briefe. Ausgewählt und hrsg. von Richard Oehler. Leipzig, 1911.

and quite innocently, he thought, that he was in the tradition of Jesus of Nazareth, the thinker who had discovered to the full the value, the infinite value of the human personality. Only a little thing had happened in the meantime: one did not know any more what the personality is; one had destroyed the personality; one had divided the human being into a social being and an individual being and so having divided him into that, as he once before was divided into body and spirit, both parts could never come together again. He had become like *Humpty-Dumpty*, »and all the king's horses and all the king's men couldn't put him together again« if he has been broken that way. The tradition of the novel, of the modern novel, can show it to us. The modern novel has two not tragic heroes since *Balzac* (I mean the modern novel) because it cannot have any tragic heroes. Tragedy occurs only to persons and personalities in the world. No individual, lonesome as he might be, can ever be a hero and come into a tragic situation; he can only come into hellish and sorrowful situations; he can become a martyr, as Kierkegaard said, never a hero. The tragic does not apply. Two ›heroes‹ in the modern novel are always present, two ›hopeless heroes‹ who cannot even have the indication of tragedy because they are not deep or full enough to have it, but can only have the indication of nameless and endless torture, torturing themselves and torturing themselves mutually. Those heroes are society and the individual. They are the heroes of every modern novel – just those two poles into which modern man has been broken apart. So Kierkegaard went the wrong way not out of his own fault. He could not rediscover what was wrong, what had gone wrong, why for heaven sakes the thing did not function any more suddenly. He thought that he was in the same position as Jesus of Nazareth had been. He really thought that he was in the same position Abraham had been in. He really believed that he was in the same position the early Christians had been in and he defied

the whole Christian church of his time, denying it, negating it, saying, ›You have forgotten that God can only be found in the loneliness of the human individual in absolute inwardness.‹ But there is no such thing as absolute inwardness and the inwardness of Jesus of Nazareth has been a shared inwardness. It was not the inwardness of Jesus of Nazareth; it was the inwardness of the world shared with all people who wanted to enter the inwardness of the world, and all religious people, Christians, had one thing never forgotten, even the loneliest ones like [Pascal](#), who might have been the first [who experienced] this modern predicament of nihilism – but even he had not forgotten that there is no such a possibility as religious creativity, finding God, in the dark hollow breast of an isolated individual because there is no such thing possible as an isolated individual who can be creative. The nihilism is in ourselves as soon as we either throw the communication with other personalities away and become the lonely inward individuals, or as soon as we throw also the communication between free personalities away and become just members of a crowd that runs along and we are functions in it. In both cases in the old Christian sense, they would have said, that we have lost our souls. They meant in a way soul by that. Soul does not satisfy the philosopher, so we say they lost their quality as personalities in order not to use a religious indication like soul, or soul as a philosophical indication would be that it is of a certain substance. We pretend to know something about it, about what it is. In philosophy we pretend to know only that this thing is, that such a thing as personality exists, that it can exist – what it is we do not claim to know; we do not make any indication about its substance or whatever it might be. That is why we do not use in philosophy the term soul – but the old Christians meant something like that by it and so a real Christian would say about this great Christian, Søren Kierkegaard, who destroyed himself as a Christian that this

man had lost his soul because he tried to find his soul in his individual inwardness where it does not abide, where it is never to be found, where only one thing can be found: the nihil: that is in man, that is in every man as soon as he becomes absolutely isolated, as soon he is cut off from every other human experience but his own, the same moment he will end in the nihil—or as Luther said, 'This man will become logical only,'² and to become logical in human matters mean to make one thing follow from the other and if we follow one thing from the other without interfering permanently by check-ups of other human being's experiences then we go into an infinite strain of infinite speculations that finally must end exactly in the nihil, in nothingness and there the mere psychological, because this is merely psychological speculation in the mentality of the isolated individual himself, that Søren Kierkegaard carried on and carried on as the hero he was, the martyr he was, in philosophical consequence to the end and he showed us involuntarily what the end will be. The end will be nothingness, absolute meaninglessness of this kind of so-called inward human experience. So he who has made a sacrifice for us in quite another way than he thought – and good for him that he had that illusion, he wanted to make a sacrifice for us out of himself, become a martyr to teach others. He thought he could teach us the way back to God. He did not succeed. But he has shown us the necessity of the way into nothingness if one goes his way and so he has made a sacrifice of himself for us and we should be immensely grateful to him as soon as we understand because it takes a lot to be that consequent about a proposition that one has once made to one's self as Søren Kierkegaard has done. So he in his tragic – because this reaches tragedy and Nietzsche in their tragical failure as individuals as well as Marx in his tragical failure, to give up, to cut out anything personal in history, in himself, trying to make man sacrifice himself for the so-called social laws (and that means in the end for the crowd) – has shown a way that finally also ends in nothingness:

² Definite reference unclear.

namely in meaninglessness, in the meaninglessness of imposed social experiments on men that can change every day like in the totalitarian states. All three are wanderers, especially Kierkegaard and Marx, into nothingness – the one by representing most the isolated modern individual (Kierkegaard) and the other by representing most the modern socialized individual [Marx], the modern socialized man, both being heroes, both of tremendous personal gifts, personalities of great scope who nibbled themselves down to nothingness as personalities, never allowing themselves any personal values in order to make themselves the perfect model for this idea: the modern individual, isolated, the absolute individual – or as Marx, the perfectly socialized being that only reacts to the necessities and interests of society. Both of them we had, as I said in the beginning, and a third one Nietzsche (later when we come to Socrates we will talk about him) – those three tragic figures of the 19th Century who took the consequences of the modern predicament, of this having fallen apart of our metaphysical world, upon themselves and carried those propositions through to full clarity so that we might understand. Those we take into this course as negative teachers, so to speak, together with our other great teachers, the nine personalities, we are talking about who discovered step by step the possibility of the free human personality. What happened in the meantime – namely, how this personality that had been discovered by them could only survive under the shelter of great metaphysical systems but under the condition that it also got weaker and finally got so weak that when the roofs were falling down it was not there any more – this personality – and the barbarians in the wilderness now are not even personalities – they are either individuals, isolated individuals today, or tomorrow social functions and they cannot see any other way between those two loopholes into which we have to stumble again and again if we do not find out how this situation has been created, what does it mean, what did we neglect.

So Solon has given us a hint. We neglected one most obvious thing: namely, we neglected to make sure since the [American Revolution](#) where we the last time tried to build again a republic, where the fundamental guarantees for the possibility for everybody to become a free personality have been given politically – since then we didn't care any more. That was the last try. We have still fragments of that and especially in America – Thank God! – which give us a certain background but we are going to lose those things more and more and everywhere else they are almost lost entirely. Those are the political guarantees. They are not enough – by far not enough—as soon as we try by scientific superstition (and that means to think that science is everything) to rule out philosophy and try to rule it scientifically, we destroy philosophy. That means we destroy the central capacity of man to take care of his own freedom. As soon as with superstitious science we try to rule erotics scientifically and create the hygienic [Eros](#), we will destroy love, and we will destroy another, possible guarantee of human creativeness as soon as by our sophisticated aestheticians we try to measure modern art and art scientifically and try to judge it scientifically – according let's say to organizational shapes on a canvas, we will destroy the creativeness in art and we will destroy a third factor that has to be taken care of in order to become free personalities again if we try to bring in religion then and by religion to overrule philosophy, saying philosophy isn't worth a thing, that all has to be decided religiously, (we have ›philosophers‹ like that now as we have ›philosophers‹ who try to ruin philosophy by their scientific pretensions, so we have those who try to ruin it by their religious pretensions: namely, by saying that is all nothing; we have to get the mystical insight into human freedom. If we try to get a mystical insight into human freedom we will have obscured and lost it in a jiffy. That is the other possibility to ruin everything – by saying religion will rule our erotics, it will rule our politics, it will rule our science, our philosophy

and our art, and everything else will go to hell. So any of those capabilities we are looking into here is in a way overgrown today. That is a great advantage. It means that they all have developed freely; they have developed a little bit too freely: namely, so that every one claims to be the decisive one that could rule the others – and now we get something that looks very much like myth. In myth we had a conglomeration of all of them; now we get a bad blend of them, a mixture, a muddle. They are muddling up and destroying each other by that in this destructive movement. The more reason we have to go back to our philosophical purpose – namely, to find out what they [are], those different capabilities like science, what can they do, what can they not do, where do they belong, where do they not belong, to find out that all of them belong certainly somewhere – namely all of them belong to the mind of every free human being that has to find an equilibrium of them in his own personality and to know how to apply judgment to them, to know how to judge them, to keep them in their borders, to use them rightly – that means not to get muddle-headed himself. And there is only one method which can help us here and that is the philosophical method because philosophy is the capability of human beings to learn judgment. No knowledge is taught in philosophy. Philosophy does not compete with science. Science teaches knowledge and gives us knowledge, but science can never give us reasons and science can never give us the power of judgment. The power of judgment can only be provided by philosophy and by philosophizing and we need judgment power first in order to bring all our other creative powers into a working order. How the man who discovered first the inherent capabilities and possibilities of reasoning, of human reasoning, that means of power of judgment, is Socrates. He is the philosopher, so to speak, of philosophy – as Heraclitus was the philosopher of science, so he is the philosopher of philosophy. He tries to find out for the first time what possibly can philosophy be: Is it

a genuine capability of human beings? What kind of an activity is it? How far does its power go? What can be done with it? What cannot be done with it? How is it related to, let's say, the power of science? How does it relate to the power of art? How does it relate to the power of human relations, personal relations? How does it relate to nature? What kind of power is it? Philosophizing, the verb, not philosophy, not the noun – the verb! How to philosophize? Why philosophize? What can be done by philosophizing? Those questions have been asked, as far as we can see in human history, for the first time by Socrates. He put those questions to himself, neglecting all other positions put up to his time, he cut threw all of them, asking this entirely new question: What is the reasoning capacity of the human mind like? Why do we reason? Why are we capable of reasoning? Can we reason things out? Can we do it alone? Do we have to do it together? If we can do it together, how are we going to do it together? Those fundamental questions that apply to the philosophical capability itself were raised by Socrates, they were the ones that interested him and I think they are the ones that interest us again. We have good reason to question reason because since modern times we have first made out of reason an absolute, a goddess, so to speak, that ruled us, building rational systems all around, then we have fallen into irrationality. The same polarity as between the two sets of the modern mind – the individual and the masses – and having done so, we are needing a new orientation, an orientation first before our new orientation in the world can start, first self-orientation – namely, orientation within the orbit of our mind's capacities themselves. So the question: Is philosophy possible and necessary in our time? Do we need philosophy in the sense of Socrates? This question is the central question for all our endeavors here in this course. To this one we come when we take up Socrates in the next session. Both still before

us – Socrates and Jesus of Nazareth – have one essential thing in common: a thing that applies more to life and existence than to the mind. All our inquiries into the other philosophers have shown us that they all tried to establish the possibility for free man to become a free personality. Now we face two of them who to such a degree had become it that they both were killed and both were killed for the same reason, and the reason is solely that Socrates was killed for no other reason than that he was Socrates and that Jesus was killed for no other reason than for the reason that he was Jesus. They are the first who have shown how men become themselves – not as isolated individuals, not to become themselves with minor but with capital Self. How man can become representative of this great thing, the personality, and keep it up against everything, against every condition that does not become this personality, and getting killed for this and only for this, for nothing else but for proclaiming the right of the human being to think, feel, and judge for himself in community with others who want the same. Both Socrates and Jesus tried in their life practice just this and because they tried it much more in practice than all the other philosophers we have seen – (We have seen them very much endangered too, Heraclitus was almost killed, he was thrown out of his city, they couldn't agree with his political propositions though they were they right ones; Abraham was very often in danger as we have seen from the surrounding kings; Zarathustra had a tough time; in a way Buddha had; Lao-tze also was endangered)– but none of them was in a position that he had to live before all the world his new insight, his new level of living, of life, so obviously and so courageously as Socrates and Jesus of Nazareth did. They were in the limelight. They put themselves before the masses of their time without any consideration for their own well-being and both were killed; both suffered a death which has become very remarkable because millions have died since and thousands similar deaths, those two have become absolutely fundamental

and typical for all time because no one who is in this cultural framework of western civilization has ever been able to forget the death of Socrates or the death of Jesus of Nazareth. They are always, again and again, main topics of consideration in our teachings. We cannot forget because the significance of those two deaths is so to speak of an infinite value for man. How and what this infinite value is we have to find out in both of them. We first take up Socrates.

This little of book of [Taylor](#), an English historian, »Socrates« in Anchor Books³ I recommend to you, not because it is of any philosophical value as the author thinks but because it is of the highest historical value. The man is a great historian and he has done a marvelous job with a thing almost impossible in 300 years of Socrates' inquiry to find out how the career of the man has really gone on, how he himself scientifically, how he learned, what he did not learn, what he knew and so on ...

³ Taylor, A.E.: Socrates. Boston, 1951.