OPPOSITION (1.0.0)
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To develop a concept of opposition, we can demarcate its structural limits through the elements that give it shape, outline the forms of unity that belong to the reach of its operation, and show what it can and cannot do within thought. In its purest form, opposition consists of a movement that does nothing but oppose, a pure movement subject only to its own purity of direction, a movement that is found in the thought that only negates what is other than itself. In politics it is seen in the extreme partisanship where any argument, no matter how weak, is accepted because it supports our own side. It is where we cease questioning our allies, where they are instantly believed and our opponents are instantly dismissed, where our side can only be innocent and the other can only be guilty. It is where any source of evidence that goes against us is eo ipso necessarily corrupt. Towards our opponents' statements, there is always a ready-made defamatory context that we apply, allowing even their attempts at reconciliation to be situated in such a way as to undermine them. It is where only the most negative examples are given to illustrate the conduct of the other side. It is where there is only denunciation rather than dialogue. Whatever is loved by our enemy is hated by us; whatever is used by our enemy is useless to us: The object's inherent value and use are abstracted from it; it is determined not from what it is in itself but from its origin, its allegiance which it may be indifferent to. The object becomes more of a symbol than a thing; its sense becomes the defining character of its reality.

When our views remain within pure opposition, common sense is discarded. The movement of our thought becomes one of only opposing our opponent and nothing else. When my opponent is correct, but I still oppose the argument simply because it is the argument of my opponent, nothing other than absurdity arises. For the oppositional thought that overlooks the questioning of itself, its argument is justified not as an argument as such, but is justified by its opposition to the other. This is a process that gathers its momentum from itself: the more I oppose my opponent simply as an opponent, the more extreme must

my position become. Anything of value that the opponent speaks is immediately rejected, slowly reducing the possibility of value in the arguments of my own. But the process spirals when two sides oppose each other in this way simultaneously. The purity of the one drives the purity of the other and vice versa, where the presence of total extremes causes the extremities of the other side to flourish, a self-perpetuating movement towards a duality of worldviews that become more and more incompatible the more they interact with each other. The results of this trajectory are damaging. A divided country is where there are two opposing views that are widespread enough for both to belong to the mainstream. There is chaos in political discourse for as long as there is an impetus towards purely oppositional debate. It is where ideology gains superiority over empirical facts. It is where opposition becomes a silent yet all-encompassing guiding thought, influencing how we think and react in particular situations, forming a clear path along which habitual movements of thought can be organised.

Pure opposition always involves our thought being determined by the position that is opposed; it involves a change within our position in relation to the other. When we purely oppose something, we define ourselves in terms of being what the other is not. In its most abstract form, pure opposition is simply the opposite itself; it is not the originator but the reactor, passive rather than active, forming itself into a shape that only counteracts its opponent. It may be a potent force in itself, but it remains powerless in terms of the independence of its own self-constitution: its movement is created by the other whose position it adopts as a mirror image. In pure opposition it is through opposing that we become defined by what we oppose. Our conclusion is determined by the conclusion of our opponent; we only take the opposite direction. Our opponent defines the situation and we follow; there is no independence between us, no possibility for a new discursive situation to arise.

The problems associated with the purest form of opposition suggest a new movement for our concept; they suggest the need for a negative reaction, for a criticism of what we have seen so far. But does a paradox enter at this point? In the critique of opposition, how can opposition itself be opposed? If we can only oppose opposition, the critique immediately falls into an aporia. The opposing of opposition opposes itself; it denounces what it has to do in order to denounce. When we oppose opposition, a double negative arises: we necessarily affirm opposition when its negativity is duplicated through being directed against itself. The way beyond this is through the structural development of the concept; the aporia designates the problematic nature of *anti*-opposition. This structural element is created as the area in which this paradox resides; it is an area that is demarcated as our concept's structure becomes multifaceted.

As the negation inherent within anti-opposition results in paradox and nullity, a further structural development of the concept becomes necessary.

Within this necessity there arises the need for another form of negativity. To go beyond pure opposition, we do not simply oppose it; instead we affirm the presence of non-opposition within opposition itself. Opposition on its own is pure opposition; when non-opposition is present, opposition is impure. As both are present together, some things are still opposed but others are not within the same position. In forming the basis of the oppositional difference between 'anti-' and 'non-', this allows non-opposition to operate within our thought in a distinct way. The 'anti-' only creates another totalising opposition, whereas the 'non-' in unity with opposition does not. The non-opposition that creates this impurity is another structural element that can be found in the development of the concept of opposition in general. It is another negation but one that is necessary because it functions along lines that anti-opposition cannot reach. The latter fails because, through the aporia that belongs to it, it cannot touch and thereby cannot operate within opposition itself. It belongs to non-opposition, however, to remain alongside opposition, not to negate opposition itself but to redirect it towards less extreme forms.

In political discourse the presence of the 'non-' within opposition creates another situation in which thought thinks. It is where an ideological misdemeanour in someone who is otherwise of value to a cause does not make them an enemy of it, where someone who does not entirely conform to a presupposed worldview is not thereby its adversary. It is where our opponent is allowed to speak without immediately and by necessity being regarded as false and thereby turned towards silence. It is where critique remains possible without ostracism. It is where certain difficulties do not refute the whole, where the actions or surface appearance of a particular are not used to define the universal.

Pure opposition involves a certain logic, a certain rational operation of thought. Two extremes that are purely opposed to each other are simultaneously different and similar; the difference of their mutual opposition is in the content of discourse, but the operations of their thought are parallel. A distinct demarcation is present between our group and the opposing group, fulfilling a demand for clarity, a totalisation of one and other. The desire to grasp certainties finds an outlet as language is streamlined and condensed into a pure, simple form. But most often this logic is one of habit, of the everyday application of presupposed ideas that remains unaware of the subtlety that belongs to the world itself, where complex situations are silently reduced to sharp, hardened binary oppositions. For the most part, it is a rational thought that operates without reflection, that does not see itself and thereby does not know what it is doing. In relation to this form of reason, we cannot say that non-opposition is a reflection of the irrational. The presence of non-opposition allows the possibility of intermediacy, but it does not imply an arbitrary adoption of opposed principles. Non-opposition enters this logic in order to allow complexity to operate within it. It is where the

logic of pure opposition is loosened but not destroyed. It involves a greater re-flection upon and beyond this logic. It is where a greater complexity and effort of thought is reached.

The concept now has a variability within itself according to the relative presence of non-opposition. A new movement has become possible from pure op-position into greater proportions of non-opposition. But what if there is some-thing that we must apparently oppose in all ways, regardless of the problematic nature of opposition's extreme purity? Or is there a fundamental limit at which non-opposition should remain in all cases? To find such a limit we must expand the territory of the development of our concept. In this development our concept can become connected to another element, an element that does not constitute the structure of opposition itself but concerns the basis for a certain fundamental movement within it. At its core the structure of opposition relates to the variabil-ity of its possible positions; what becomes operative as the prevention of pure opposition therein is an element that belongs to ethics. The ground for a min-imum trace of non-opposition in political discourse is to acknowledge a basic hu-man fraternity with our opponent, a shared aspect based on the point that hu-manity belongs to all humans, that we all belong to the same group at a certain fundamental level. This ethical ground is needed for the concept to avoid its de-structive extreme. Its presence reshapes the concept by creating a movement based on the ethical weight that resides behind it. It is an ethical demand which states that the final limit of our opposition should remain outside the opposing of another's humanity.

In this context human fraternity is a guiding idea that brings all people within a shared meaning. It is a sense that is given to other individuals that cre-ates for and from them another movement of thought. Within opposition this movement provides a space for the other that cannot be opposed. Although we may not need to explicitly deny our opponents' humanity to purely oppose them, we cannot purely oppose them when it is explicitly affirmed; when this affirma-tion remains in place, our relation towards them will always include the opera-tion of non-opposition, an operation that creates a change of terrain that is vis-ible within thought itself.

Yet non-opposition also has an extreme of its own. In its completely pure state, non-opposition can generally be expressed in terms of pure ignorance, pure indifference, or pure affirmation. In the case of pure ignorance, it belongs to the thought that sees only what is immediately present to its own concerns, oblivious to the multitude of connections that go beyond it. It has either never seen the difference that transcends its own similarity or has forgotten it com-pletely. When, for example, a disagreeable political act is left hidden or lost to memory, the possibility of a subject having any opposition towards it is basically removed. Pure indifference has a similar result, except it takes place with an

awareness of itself; it sees its own thought overlook the connections that go beyond it, the way in which it fails to react to any concerns other than its own. The disagreeable act is now known, but opposition remains absent because the subject has no concern for it. In the case of pure affirmation, to only say 'yes' is to oppose nothing at all; it belongs to the thought that can only evaluate along a purely singular line, that can only give a single answer in each and every judgement. It is when the subject will affirm any political act whatsoever, whether disagreeable or otherwise.

An ethical demand concerning human fraternity can also be used to prevent total non-opposition. In the removal of pure ignorance, our fraternity with others demands that we become aware of what political acts may be imposed upon them, that such acts must be released into view as far as this is possible. In the case of pure indifference, our fraternity demands that there is a concern for such political acts, that they must be acknowledged and opposed if necessary as far as our circumstances allow. And for the pure affirmation that would even affirm evil, our fraternity demands that this evil is rejected as far as it may be defined and recognised in the ongoing movement of the world.

Any positions that remain within pure ignorance, indifference, and affirmation are ethically problematic in themselves, and it is the lack of opposition that creates this problematic nature. In the case of pure opposition, human fraternity constitutes the grounding idea that prohibits any opposition against another's humanity; in the case of pure non-opposition, human fraternity is a grounding idea that prohibits any non-opposition towards that which may compromise another's humanity. In general terms this compromise may concern either the existence or expression of humanity: in the former the destruction of life is the removal of humanity per se, leaving only the pure objectivity of the real without an inherent manifestation of sense; in the latter it is the restriction of expression as the potential for developmental growth, leaving humanity per se intact but disallowing its most fundamental operations. The ethical demand is the basis for a general opposition that rejects the pure ignorance, indifference, and affirmation which would allow such compromises to remain. As in the case of pure opposition, this demand allows impurity to be created when faced with a non-opposition that is similarly pure. A trace of opposition is needed for the latter, a trace of non-opposition for the former.

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In terms of its core function, our concept has appeared as the co-habitation of two structural elements, held in position by an ethical demand. We have found that opposition has axes within itself that are altered according to the level of purity it exhibits. There is pure opposition at one extreme and pure non-opposition at the other. In between there is the variability between the two. A concep-

tual duality has emerged, composed not of two separate concepts, but of a separation within the general concept of opposition itself. This duality is bound together, not on purely conceptual terms but on ethical terms. For the duality of oppositional elements to cease is in itself an ethical transgression.

Beyond politics the same elements are found in other areas. In modern art the pure form of opposition is seen in the radical tendencies that wish to entirely discredit their historic predecessors. It is seen in the total rejection of the classical artistic tradition, in the desire not only to criticise art history but to deface it. But in these operations, there remains a profound focus on the object we oppose. In defacing a great work of art-historical importance, we remain bound by it. Our activity will only belong within the limits and form provided by the opposed object. A cut made in a canvas can only operate within the space that the canvas provides. And if a positive move is made, a move to create rather than only destroy, the operation of pure opposition still restricts us to the mirror image. A purely oppositional art would be one that only reacts against what is other than it. Like the restriction of value we saw in the pure opposition of political discourse, here there would be a restriction of aesthetic form, purpose, and technique; our work will only be what the other is not, will only stand in another space, will only look in another direction. As its operation progresses, pure opposition closes the avenues available to it.

In this tendency art rejects its origin and development, but once they are affirmed, a certain non-opposition is seen. The non-oppositional element appears as a form of the development of art, a means by which new spaces are entered. There can be an art that is not against reaching into its history to retrieve ideas that would enhance its own position. A new movement in art will always involve opposition to its predecessors, but without the totalising negativity of pure opposition, it can nonetheless take what is useful for it. This is where our independence from history is reconciled with the lessons it provides. We can follow the basic principle of originality, that is to do what others are not, but in the avoidance of taking this to an extreme, we refrain from a dead end that only closes spaces in the process of its own creation. There is a general tendency in art to absorb rather than completely oppose its predecessors. As a fundamental aspect of its continual invention, this ensures that art does not remain static. Expressed in the terms of our concept, it can be described as a movement of non-opposition within opposition itself.

For the minimum trace of non-opposition in art, there is another form of the ethical demand that we have already seen in the case of politics. In art there is the ethical demand for a gratitude towards the previous history, a grounding idea that prevents any opposition towards the basic foundations that have been laid, for the pathways that have been opened for exploration, whether we pursue them or not, and for the existence of the possibility of being an artist itself. And

again the demand can also function in the removal of total non-opposition. If there is pure ignorance, indifference, or affirmation towards what would compromise the possibilities left open by art history, our gratitude serves to establish a trace of opposition. In the removal of pure ignorance and indifference, our gratitude demands that there must be an awareness of and a concern for the history towards which it is directed; for pure affirmation it demands that we avoid the meaninglessness where any judgement or act regarding art history is immediately affirmed a priori. Just as gratitude acts as a restraint on the most extreme opposition, it does the same for the most extreme non-opposition. The presence of gratitude towards the history of art sustains the space between the two extremes. In the movement from human fraternity to gratitude, the ethical meaning that belongs to our concept is widened as it enters the situation of art, but its basic structure remains the same.

Pure opposition is also present in philosophy. As soon as the classical form of knowledge enters, it is already purely oppositional in itself. A knowledge that declares itself metaphysically absolute must completely oppose the ordinary nature of everyday language and the physical world. Everything that the latter are the former must not be: eternal rather than temporal, static rather than mobile, whole and complete rather than subject to endless states of growth and decay. This opposition is itself opposed, but not primarily in the form of everyday language. The classical pure counter-opposition arises in the form of an absolute scepticism: as opposed to absolute knowledge, there is the idea that there is absolutely no knowledge at all. The latter anti-epistemic side remains as the entangled mirror image of the former; grounded in the same presuppositions concerning the need for absolutes, it nonetheless arrives at the completely opposite view. The conclusions of the latter are determined by the conclusions of the former. The only difference is that they take the opposite direction. The former defines the situation and the latter follows. There is no independence between them. The movement of philosophical truth becomes determined by what it perceives as false.

The basic cause of pure opposition in philosophy is dogma. Through the presence of an unmoveable belief, the urge arises to argue against whatever argument our opponents present in whatever way we can. As the mirror image reappears, the two sides are held firm in opposing positions. The epistemic dogmatic view is that true cognition must be possible. Knowledge cannot be knowledge of nothing; nothing is not known as an object of knowledge. For knowledge to be at all it must have an object that is not nothing and is known. Being as the object of knowledge must be knowable, and as thought is the medium of knowledge, thought must be the same as being. Language is given a completely new function; it is a pure reflection of pure being. Language itself is being; language itself is absolute.

The anti-epistemic dogmatic view is that true cognition must be impossible. Being can only be being and nothing: to be this is not to be that; the nothing of the 'is not' belongs to being just as essentially as the being of the 'is'. If there is nothing in being, then its absolute nature collapses; for a being that is either absolute or purely empty, if there is nothing in being, then being itself is nothing. When thought thinks, therefore, it thinks nothing. To think nothing is not to know at all. Knowledge can only be impossible; sense can only be nonsense. Language is not the pure reflection of pure being, but a pure reflection of pure nothing. There is in itself no language.

The first position says that there is absolute knowledge, the second that there is no absolute knowledge and thereby no knowledge at all. The strict nature of the latter rests upon the strict nature of the former. On the one side, language is given a pure epistemic function, while on the other it is removed. The pure certainty that language is given by the one is reflected by the pure uncertainty it is given by the other. The mode of language itself is purely opposed on each side: knowing and unknowing are both argued for as absolutes. As they begin to reach mutual points of contact, they must turn away from each other. At each conclusion an opposing form must be produced; whatever moves are made by the one, the other must make opposing moves. The one says that an absolutely pure being is; the other says that an absolutely pure being is not. As the latter undermines the being of the 'this' with the 'not this' of the 'that', the former must reinforce the 'this', presenting it as fully determined within itself and thereby impenetrable. Due to the requirement of an absolute nature for each side, there is no margin for concessions to be made between them. As the one side sees a movement of the other, this movement must be resisted because it is the movement of the other. The absolutely epistemic can grant the absolutely anti-epistemic nothing and vice versa.

Pure opposition is contained in the two opposing dogmas. Thought is then led in two directions, reaching further apart. As we look at this pure opposition, we can see what thought is doing: it is the reactive, the passive, the mirror image. The fixed point of the dogmatic ground provides the fixed position of thought; as two such positions make contact, the one can only deny the other. It is not that reason is operating in a pure, neutral way; the opposing directions are driven by the dogmatic restraints in which reason is asked to operate. These restraints form the terrain in which rational thought moves: the inclines upon which each reside present two opposing trajectories of descent; the one can only move in its chosen direction, the other only in its own. In the case of the denial of knowledge, it is not that knowledge is used to denounce knowledge; it is that rational operations of thought are used for an anti-epistemic conclusion. Just as the same unreflective reason can appear on each side of a purely opposed political debate, the operation of rational thought can appear within both sides of a

debate in philosophy. Once again we see that when two instances of pure opposition are faced with each other, it is the content that is opposed but not the operations of thought.

Non-opposition enters this situation to remove us from the strict divide between these philosophical viewpoints. This happens by loosening the demand for absolutes, by releasing the dogmatic forms, by allowing ourselves to see how language and thought actually operate in themselves. We can now acknowledge that language and thought do not grasp reality in an absolute way; there is a certain gap between sense and its referent that remains everywhere other than in the purity of sense referring only to what is immediately present within itself. Language in general cannot hope to achieve the purity displayed in mathematics and logic, but rather than taking this as the basis of its downfall, it can be taken as an essential aspect of its function. This lack of certainty is not purely opposed; the presence of non-opposition signifies that this does not mean that we live in an entirely false world, but one that is *true enough*. Language and thought can operate without the strictures of pure logic; they do so in the first instance and for the most part. This presence of non-opposition does not entirely reject opposition; we can still affirm truth and deny falsehood. Yet the two now belong together; there are shades of truth and falsehood. The one will no longer overwhelm the other, nor the other the one.

The structure of the concept asks us to search for an equivalent ethical demand at the extremes of pure opposition and pure non-opposition in philosophy. Just as we saw in art, there can be a gratitude towards the history of philosophy, but the particular circumstances of philosophical work can present another context for an ethical demand to find its fulfilment. This is found in the basic practice of philosophy itself: in the ethical demand to listen to what our opponent says. If we are to question this demand by stating that it is right to purely deny a philosophical argument that is mistaken, the point about listening here is that pure opposition is where we have already denied only on the basis of our pure opposition itself. Although this opposition is able to make itself a purely opposed mirror image of its opponent, this is not the listening of any real dialogue; what we hear is not heard in itself but is only rejected. Any opposing points have already been rejected before they have even been formed. The rejections are simply automatic. In the removal of such oppositional purity, the demand for a genuine form of listening is the grounding idea that prevents any opposition towards the general possibility of value in our opponent's arguments. This grounding relationship also allows the demand to be operative in the connection between philosophy and the extremes of non-opposition, in the removal of purity concerning the threefold formalism of ignorance, indifference, and affirmation. In this repetition of the basic conceptual structure, our demand to listen will be the ground for a trace of opposition against what would compromise the possib-

ility of value in our opponent's arguments, what would turn them towards silence, what would hinder the developmental movements that would allow their fulfilment. But this is not only an opposition towards what opposes, because such hindrances may not follow from explicit opposing; through the unintended consequences of actions, these hindrances may occur, and through acknowledging the possibility of value, these actions must themselves be opposed.

Another area where the structural elements of our concept become visible is in the relation of the self towards itself. This concerns the possibility of a pure opposition that belongs within the subject, an opposition of the subject against itself, a purely disruptive opposition turned inward. It is found in the subject that is at war with itself, in the subject whose value system requires its own self to be entirely devalued. This complete self-denial can only occur when the subject rejects what is good in itself. The totalisation of opposition makes this possible: within this absolute denial, the oppositional purity prevents the good from being acknowledged, allowing the good to be given a purely negative significance. Nothing of value is found because the subject's own movement of value-giving is purely oppositional towards the subject itself. The purely negative valuation becomes the mirror image of the good within ourselves; whatever this good may be, opposition provides the movements for its rejection.

In this way, the element of non-opposition is needed for the subject in relation to itself. What we perceive as our limitations and flaws can be accepted rather than immersed in a totalising negativity. The subject can thereby accept itself when these flaws are not positioned in such a way as to purely define it. This movement in which pure opposition is prohibited can once again be achieved in the form of an ethical demand. A connection appears here between non-opposition in politics and the subject: the minimum trace for the latter is grounded in our own belonging within human fraternity. The presence of this ethical demand creates a fundamental resilience that is operative in our value system. By accepting this fraternity, we do not let our limitations and flaws constitute a total rejection of ourselves. Yet it requires an explicit affirmation; without accepting the demand, this fraternity itself is one that remains purely valueless when the self is purely opposed. When the demand becomes affirmed, however, non-opposition is thereby operative in the self, changing the movement of thought on the basis of the loss of any oppositional purity. To acknowledge human fraternity in ourselves allows us to stand in difficulty. It is the grounding valuation that can remain under the pressure of any other valuation of the self against itself. The possibility of this affirmation is unconditional as it can persist for as long as life remains.

But within the self, there is also the possibility of an equivalent extreme of non-opposition. If one extreme concerns the subject's total denial of itself, the other concerns its total affirmation. The former consists of saying 'no' and noth-

ing else, the latter of saying 'yes' and nothing else. This extreme of non-opposition is visible in the purity of arrogance wherein a subject affirms all that it sees within itself. It is where the idea of our abilities disregards what is actual, where we applaud what is disagreeable within ourselves, where we accept it without question. It is where there is never an argument against the self within the self, where our limitations and flaws are only affirmed.

In the relationship between the self and non-opposition, ignorance and indifference can also belong with affirmation. A pure ignorance or indifference towards what belongs within ourselves—our abilities, purposes, or our limitations and flaws—will also be problematic: alongside pure affirmation, they will concern the ways that we fundamentally compromise ourselves. In this way, the same ethical demand becomes operative once again: just as human fraternity can be the ground of non-opposition towards our own humanity, it can also be the ground of opposition towards the ways in which we compromise our own humanity. This compromise may involve the loss of life through an intentional self-destruction, or an unintentional loss through a lack of awareness or concern towards risks or the affirmation of unnecessary danger; it may also involve a restriction of our humanity's expression: just as an entirely isolated incarceration compromises the humanity of others through hindering their possibilities of growth, in hindering our own growth we are incarcerating ourselves. To oppose what creates these compromises, our fraternity demands that we remove the pure ignorance that prevents these self-imposed hindrances from being brought into view; it demands that we remove the pure indifference that would see them but allow them to happen nonetheless; it demands that we remove the pure affirmation where they are not only seen but also actively encouraged. Under the influence of our fraternal belonging, these self restrictions must be opposed; in their presence, our fraternity is the grounding idea that creates the terrain for this opposition to take place.

The introduction of the concept of opposition to the confines of the subject provides a structure for the judgements that we make about ourselves. Our limitations and flaws can be accepted or even in some way affirmed within the remit of non-opposition. But this should not be a totalised acceptance or affirmation; if opposition is preserved alongside non-opposition, these possible negativities of the self are not entirely forgotten as such. We may prefer to be without these negativities, but their form and nature may even be used to bring what is good out of them as far as this is possible; there may be a purpose that they can be applied to, or they may at least constitute an area where insight can be gained into ourselves in the world. In this opposition there may well be an effort to overcome or mitigate, but there is no longer a total antagonism. This could be a necessity as we can only retain and reform the limitations and flaws that are a fundamental part of us, that concern physical aspects or cognitive dispositions

whose complete avoidance is unattainable. In the same way, there are those flaws and limitations that, although they may not be unavoidable, are inevitable nonetheless: we cannot transcend all our flaws because, where there is a choice to be made about what to do in life, this choice means that we will focus on some things while neglecting others. The subject must accept that limitations and flaws will always remain as possibilities for it, but with non-opposition, this does not result in the subject's total denial of itself by virtue of their presence. The subject can affirm itself as a whole while only accepting its flaws. The distinction here relies on the impurity of opposition and non-opposition.

Where we situate ourselves along the oppositional axes concerning our flaws belongs to the higher forms of self-development. A certain liberation from these flaws can occur that does not, via descending into pure non-opposition, result in another problematic form appearing in their place. Self-development is the movement of the subject into areas of growth. It is a movement that belongs within the self, but here the self is not only concerned with itself. Self-development also concerns others. In the context of the self and opposition, the subject that must accept it is limited and flawed must also accept that any other subject is also limited and flawed. In this way, non-opposition towards ourselves implies non-opposition towards others.

3

The core structural elements of our concept of opposition appear within the four areas of politics, art, philosophy, and the self, along with the element of an ethical demand which can prevent the formation of extremes. The movements of these elements in the world of thought and physical things create lines that allow our concept to be demarcated. From its own point of view, our concept can be seen to operate within these four areas: its movement can be understood as the movement of politics, the self, art, and philosophy, as being operative within the communal and individual lifeworlds, in artistic creation, and within the opposition inherent to conceptual thought.

Through this movement there appears a dimension that spans these four areas, an aspect of the unity between them which consists of the differential movement of opposition. This unity can be seen in the idea of development. Here there is an importance in the continued operation of opposition. To oppose is to create an operative force, a movement of change. Divisions are in some way necessary for development. If everything was the same, we would learn nothing. Banality in learning and culture creates needs to be fulfilled. Missteps in both the political and our personal worlds create corrections. The negative is an operative force in development, but it only reaches its full height when it remains impure. The totalisation of negativity in pure opposition may provide an instant of satisfaction, but it cannot be sustained. In pure opposition there is nothing to be af-

firmed and raised up out of the negativity other than negativity itself. When it is impure, however, opposition is both positive and negative; these two aspects will affect the spaces that are present to them in different ways, depending on how their respective positivity and negativity are situated in relation to each other.

The lack of purity in opposition allows us to create without the burden of attempting to start from a pure nothing each and every time. The labour of such an attempt is saved by recounting and reappraising the previous developments that have already been made. If we need to question everything, to start development from a new beginning, we can still include whatever is necessary from what already exists. The opposition remains in that, rather than presupposing their value, every pre-existing aspect must be questioned, but it remains impure as long as we can adopt them if they prove their value for the developmental movements we are aiming for.

Development shows us the temporal nature of opposition. On the basis of an impure opposition, development accepts itself as a history. It sees that all things—even if in only extremely subtle ways—are a continuation. Pure opposition only rejects the other that it is implicitly shaped by in its development; as it shapes itself through rejecting the other, it can only overlook this influence by virtue of its purely negative form. The development of pure opposition involves an inherent paradox: it purely rejects the other that is the source of its own purely negative movements. As pure opposition opposes, it becomes isolated; it only steps away from the continuation of the history to which it belongs. The histories of both art and philosophy are built on oppositions, likewise political progress and the lifetime of the subject in relation to itself. In themselves these oppositions do not cut time into discrete parts; they are oppositions that occur in time: their impurity represents their belongingness to the ongoing time of activity, of production, of the expression of humanity through the development of both culture and the self.

In opposition there is a force that moves us in relation to what is opposed. In pure opposition this force is all there is, but with the presence of non-opposition, a freedom of movement within this force arises. The structure of our concept describes the structure of these movements, but it does not provide a clear and distinct measurement, a grading which we aim to meet on every occasion. Thresholds, however, will belong to the way in which greater levels of non-opposition become present in the development of politics, art, philosophy, and the self. We cannot state proportions for them because these thresholds depend on much more than the abstract structural possibilities that our concept describes. Yet in these areas, as a threshold is breached a new movement will form: a new standing in these areas becomes possible; the terrain we occupy within them changes, allowing a different state of conditions to present themselves to the possibilities of further progress. When a threshold is breached, it will become

visible in the spaces that are now open, in our vision of opposition itself as a form of development.

There will be many drivers in our movement between pure opposition and pure non-opposition. Historic circumstances and chance events will play a role, but this myriad of influences may become focused on a single point. This point is our purpose, the guiding form which provides our developmental direction. By looking towards the movement of purposes, development can make the alterations that begin the movement towards other areas. Creating alterations in the purpose of politics, art, philosophy, and the self creates fundamental transformations within them. To search for a new purpose, we must in some way oppose the ones that precede us; for a fundamental transformation to begin, another space must be opened, a position wherein new lines of development can form.

In pure opposition it is not just that two purposes are opposed to each other. In pure opposing our purposes are shaped through the operation of pure opposition itself. What we aim towards is determined by our opposition to the other side. In pure opposition our opponent is the driver of this movement. The result is a purity of purpose that lacks any substance of its own when it can only say 'no' to what is other than it. In pure non-opposition the development of a purpose is completely blind. In removing the operation of opposition, we lack the supports that would guide us. In this case a purpose cannot gain traction. Without any driving force whatsoever, our purpose will be without any genuine relation to what is beyond itself, lacking the developmental form that opposition presents.

For development to regain control over itself, there must be an opposition that is impure. In the space between extremes, an impure opposition can open new areas when the alteration of purposes is seen as a driver of development. When opposition is directed against a purpose, it becomes a force in the movement of development. Without the purity the openings appear, but connections remain to other forms of purpose; a trace from what is opposed can still operate in the areas where it is needed. Within opposition our purpose can be transformed not only into a singularity, but also into a structure wherein purposes interoperate in order to reach the next developmental level. Certain aspects of various purposes can be adopted when opposition is impure, allowing their properties to belong within new developmental movements. The directions of trajectory that are formed on the basis of oppositional impurity belong to the purposes themselves, yet they are not against being guided by the difference that can be found outside them.

There is another dimension of the unity between politics, art, philosophy, and the self that is also expressed by the concept of opposition: this dimension is found through the ethics that the concept of opposition situates among them. The structure of our concept positions their respective forms of the ethical de-

mand according to itself. The structure of the concept is the force behind their structure. These demands are involved in a certain function that the concept requires: they are markers of problematic extremes, resolving the problems of pure opposition and pure non-opposition.

This structure is visible when the elements of this ethics are positioned according to the pure oppositional formalism of destruction, denial, and rejection, and the pure non-oppositional formalism of ignorance, indifference, and affirmation. As an example of this positioning, 'our gratitude' and 'art history' can be situated in the following syntactical formulation: if our gratitude is manifest, we can neither purely destroy, deny, or reject art history, nor can we be purely ignorant of, indifferent to, or purely affirm what would compromise it. The same basic formulation can be made for 'our obligation to listen' and 'our opponent's philosophical argument', for 'our acceptance of their belonging to human fraternity' and 'our political opponents', and for 'our own belonging to human fraternity' and 'our own self'. These ethical demands are ideas that affect the denial, destruction, and rejection that belong to pure opposition, and the ignorance, indifference, and affirmation that belong to pure non-opposition. Our gratitude, our obligation to listen, our human fraternity with our opponent, and the fraternal acceptance of ourselves can form the ground of a trace of opposition or non-opposition that is needed to prevent purity. Through the maintenance of these demands, through their ongoing presence in thought, the extremes can be removed.

Perhaps a range of similar ethical demands could be made in all cases of opposition. We can intuitively imagine that the purest opposition is always in some way unethical, just as the purest neglect of non-opposition. But there is a fluidity in the structure that becomes apparent when the ethical demands—which act to prohibit certain limits of opposition—are themselves pushed towards limits. In the case of art and philosophy, it is not the universality of human fraternity that provides the ground; it is a gratitude and a commitment to listen respectively. The cumulative form of art history as a whole provides the basic universality that the minimum trace requires for the removal of purity. It is universal because this gratitude concerns all of art history; it belongs everywhere within it. Likewise the universality of listening occupies the same role. In philosophy the minimum trace remains based in ethics. The universality is provided by the basic necessity of listening for the functioning of philosophy itself. But artistic creations can lack quality and importance, remaining inoperative in the forward movements of the development of culture; conceptual creations can lack seriousness, leaving themselves open to rejection per se. The universality of gratitude and listening may be seen to break in these instances, but this breakage reveals something about the ethical unity of opposition. In extreme cases the ethical unity is no longer a question strictly about art and philosophy themselves. In

these cases it is the universality of human fraternity that must appear again. If pushed, the ethics of art and philosophy revert to this more general ethics. As their universality collapses, they require another more fundamental one that allows the minimum trace to remain for opposition and non-opposition to avoid purity, for them to continue in their dual form: if gratitude or the obligation to listen collapse, fraternity would become the restraint on a pure denial of the other, just as it would become a restraint on a pure indifference. Human fraternity is more solidly universal as a ground to provide for this: our creations can lack quality or seriousness, but although we may have only reached a low level in the development of the self, this does not remove us from humanity, and although we can act without seriousness, we cannot be human in bad faith.

Human fraternity forms the universal ground beyond the more limited universalities of gratitude and the obligation to listen. The latter universal demands are less solid; there is a wider set of circumstances that make them non-applicable. Their universality depends upon the presence of these specific circumstances rather than on the presence of any circumstances at all. Gratitude and listening are conditional universalities, whereas human fraternity is an unconditional universality. It is not that all artworks belong to art history, just as all philosophical arguments are not made in good faith, yet it is possible to see that all humans without question belong within human fraternity. At bottom human fraternity is the dimension of the ethical unity of politics, art, philosophy, and the self. The gratitude towards art history is always a gratitude towards artists; to listen to philosophical arguments is always to listen to philosophers.

Human fraternity must be universal to be meaningful; if it is to be affirmed, it must be affirmed in all cases. But why should we affirm human fraternity? Why should we not affirm human enmity? An answer to this can be found through the structure of the concept of opposition: the concept shows how there is a fundamental connection between our relation towards others and our relation towards ourselves. In the universality of human fraternity, the fraternity of the one requires the other. If we can apprehend in ourselves a universal human fraternity, we must apprehend it in others; if we can apprehend it in others, we must apprehend it in ourselves. The point that the concept of opposition makes clear is that the same operations of thought are manifest whatever it is that might be opposed; if we can purely oppose the other, the operations are developed through which we can purely oppose ourselves: the valuations, the limits, and the forms of meaning that we apply to human life. Those who do not accept the inherent value of others will always be able to find reasons not to accept the inherent value of themselves. The cultivation of pure opposition is ultimately self-destructive.

Human fraternity operates in the actual world; if it is grounded in the difference it makes to this world, to both the self and the other, we can see that

there is a reciprocal relationship: the less denial of the self there is, the less denial of others; the less denial of others, the less denial of the self. The universality of human fraternity does, however, have limits of its own. There are other situations, other extremes that create questions for the structure of our concept as it has been described. What does it mean if someone grants us human fraternity but rejects everything else? Are there cases where non-opposition is unethical in itself, not because of its purity, but because it is used only to refrain from destruction in order to allow exploitation? At this point, however, we are going beyond the structure of the concept and the forms of unity that belong to it; at this point we are entering the remit of a pragmatic of actual opposition itself.

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In the general pragmatic of opposition, the concept remains independent from the arguments and facts of any particular debate; these belong only to the circumstances in which opposition may or may not take place. The concept remains abstract; we do not entirely learn what we should or shouldn't oppose by looking at the concept of opposition alone. It only shows us the structural possibilities of opposition that become actualised within these debates. Our description of this concept can only state what is universal. The ethical demand that functions in the prohibition of purity is such a universal. How ethics may operate beyond this is entirely dependent on the matter at hand. The ethics of the facts themselves belong to those facts. In the case of actual opposition, those facts must be taken into account.

We cannot state on the basis of the concept whether an almost pure opposition is justified in certain cases, whether a just cause justifies injustice, granting that there can be circumstances where this is compatible with a universal human fraternity. We cannot judge how far pure opposition in politics may have external causes in structural economic and cultural factors, how far the way that we oppose is conditioned by the linguistic world around us. On the side of pure non-opposition, the concept cannot show the feasibility of any particular acts delineated as ethical traces of opposition, or how far the knowledge required to remove pure ignorance can be shared among the collective rather than residing in a single individual, or how the protection of the humanity of some may create the conditions for a necessary compromise of the humanity of others. The concept says nothing about the validity of any particular political compromise; if the most uncompromising views are necessary, advocates of an impure opposition are only obliged to acknowledge the humanity of their opponents and to maintain a certain awareness of their discourse and behaviour. Our concept also presupposes that oppositions only occur within human life. Opposition concerns human opponents alongside their works and actions; the connection here is that a completely pure opposition against their works and actions will also involve a

pure opposition against them, and a trace of non-opposition towards them amounts to a trace of non-opposition towards the works. But even if the natural world beyond human life is not opposed in itself, an argument for its own rights and preservation would not have its ultimate ethical ground in our fraternity with the one who makes it. The ethical ground is instead provided by the external facts of the matter; once again we have gone beyond the question of opposition itself.

Our concept does, however, outline a general approach. It highlights that the areas without purity are the general positions to take within its structure. If we apply the structure of the concept to particular cases, this allows us to preempt their oppositional movements, their proximity to problematic extremes. In the case of opposition itself, to oppose without the extremity that disregards non-opposition is to value the negative without being ruled by it. We do not aim to go beyond opposition; we aim to avoid its wrong use, its extreme forms, a lack of thought as it enters and dictates our thinking. We should not abandon opposition; we should understand it: understand what it does to thought, what it means. Our concept provides a structure that becomes operative in thought at the moments in which this understanding is aimed for.

Although the conceptual structure of opposition does not provide a rule for every possible content, it does provide a way in which the operation of thought can be viewed. The aim is not to generate new arguments but to understand their oppositional nature; although we may not have a specific content to provide, an answer that will constitute an immediate resolution, we can nonetheless become aware of the meaning of operation and the ways in which it can be affected. The aim is to strengthen the validity of our arguments, to make them more resilient, more prone towards practical realities. The questions we ask are: How does opposition influence how we think in particular situations? How does it lead our views towards a more exaggerated, more one-sided, and weaker position? Such views may succeed if our purpose is only to arouse attention, to reaffirm the quick movements of habitual thought, but on what ground do they stand if they are not thought through with subtlety? To gain subtlety, we must understand the operation of oppositional thought. To begin to relate linguistic sense to reality in a more direct way, we must disassociate our views from the chaos of a pure opposition in which ideas and reality are disconnected.

If it feels intuitively wrong to accept that our opponent has said or done something that we agree with, this is because pure opposition has a hold on us. Pure opposition can be well-intentioned, but as it brings a form of absurdity to discourse in general, it brings absurdity to the cause it supports. If we are aiming to see what opposition does to thought, our answer is not only to observe our inner lines of thinking, not only to describe what is there, but to develop the structural form of our concept so that these lines of thinking can be affected. Once we

understand its conceptual structure, we can be aware of and affect our position within it, rather than only being affected by opposition's own movement. The development of this concept shows us at what points we become trapped and at what points we are free. These structural operations of opposition are visible in the world already; the point is to recognise them so that we can affect them from within ourselves. If there are external forces that affect the way that we oppose, our understanding of opposition's structure can be a counterforce: this understanding constitutes a resistance within our thinking, allowing us to overcome the limitations of an oppositional thought that would otherwise simply flow according to its own pre-existing channels. An ongoing effort is needed if our thought is to break from that which surrounds us on a daily basis, but the concept of opposition shows us lines of escape. It is possible to think differently to those who also belong to our surrounding world, but the required conditions must be there. In affecting thought our concept of opposition can affect these conditions. We live in the world, but we are not necessarily its prisoner. With focus and effort, we can guide ourselves away from what is purely negative.

The question is not whether a single basic principle regarding opposition can be applied to politics, art, philosophy, and the development of the self. We cannot tell anyone which specific position to adopt; we can only expose the possibilities suggested by the structure of the concept. Yet this structure suggests the need to remain aware of the structure itself. To be trapped in pure opposition or pure non-opposition is to lose sight of the structure; they are both moments in which the structure loses its essential shape. The extreme of the former is where all that is seen is the mirror image of the other; the extreme of the latter is a blindness in which nothing is truly seen of the other at all. To only see the mirror image is to be determined by the other; to see nothing is to make the same habitual mistakes again.

For our concept of opposition to achieve these aims, it does not need to bear the load of an excessive theoretical complexity; the simple duality of opposition and non-opposition allows our concept to remain operative at a practical level in thought, while nonetheless accounting for a myriad of possible situations. Here we arrive at a language of opposition that is a reflection of thought's practical negotiation of itself in the world. The structure of the concept of opposition becomes the form of expression through which thought understands itself. But at the same time, we do not need to think of the concept continually. There is no need for it to dominate thought, yet the concept can remain hidden without becoming inaccessible when it becomes instinctive: our unconscious instinct can suggest our concept to thought at the moments wherein it may operate, where the thought of opposition can occur in the form in which our current circumstances provide. We can also make the idea of human fraternity instinctive. This on its own is the preventative content for removing oppositional purity. It lies at

the bottom of all ethical positions that concern opposition. But we still retain the concept of opposition itself to understand the meaning of human fraternity, to understand that the property of removing oppositional purity belongs to it. An awareness of the structure of opposition can only become operative in our thought if the concept becomes established there. Our conscious intelligence facilitates the incorporation of this concept in its meaning for thought, allowing it to reach our intentional focus in the moments when it is needed, allowing us to remain fluent in its ethics.

The ethics of our concept show that it is ultimately the one who opposes that is responsible for the joining of opposition with non-opposition. If opposition is unseen, however, this responsibility remains unnoticed. We must attempt to bring opposition out of its silence in habit and into speech; the language of opposition is found when the operation of its structural elements is expressed through its concept. By conceptualising this operation, we are giving it a distinct voice that can be heard as it moves among language in general. In allowing the operation of opposition to speak, we begin to recognise it not just in others but also in ourselves. As a conceptual form, it begins to make a difference to both thought and physical things. To understand oppositional thought is to understand our tendencies towards opposition, to see through them, to see how they operate and the difference they make for us in the world. Thought belongs to the movement of the world, no matter how rigid or closed off it might be from the wider reality that surrounds it. The operation of opposition belongs implicitly to this thought; the purpose of our concept is to make sure it belongs explicitly.