

## Part 2 The free spirit<sup>1</sup>

### 24

*O sancta simplicitas!*<sup>2</sup> What a strange simplification and falsification people live in! The wonders never cease, for those who devote their eyes to such wondering. How we have made everything around us so bright and easy and free and simple! How we have given our senses a *carte blanche* for everything superficial, given our thoughts a divine craving for high-spirited leaps and false inferences! – How we have known from the start to hold on to our ignorance in order to enjoy a barely comprehensible freedom, thoughtlessness, recklessness, bravery, and joy in life; to delight in life itself! And, until now, science could arise only on this solidified, granite foundation of ignorance, the will to know rising up on the foundation of a much more powerful will, the will to not know, to uncertainty, to untruth! Not as its opposite, but rather – as its refinement! Even when *language*, here as elsewhere, cannot get over its crassness and keeps talking about opposites where there are only degrees and multiple, subtle shades of gradation; even when the ingrained tartuffery of morals (which is now part of our “flesh and blood,” and cannot be overcome) twists the words in our mouths (we who should know better); now and then we still realize what is happening, and laugh about how it is precisely the best science that will best know how to keep us in this *simplified*, utterly artificial,

<sup>1</sup> In German: *der freie Geist*. I have generally rendered *Geist* and words using *Geist* (such as *geistig*, *Geistigkeit*) as “spirit” and words using spirit (so: spiritual and spirituality). However, *Geist* is a broader term than spirit, meaning mind or intellect as well.

<sup>2</sup> O holy simplicity.

well-invented, well-falsified world, how unwillingly willing science loves error because, being alive, – it loves life!

25

After such a joyful entrance, there is a serious word that I want heard; it is intended for those who are most serious. Stand tall, you philosophers and friends of knowledge, and beware of martyrdom! Of suffering “for the sake of truth”! Even of defending yourselves! You will ruin the innocence and fine objectivity of your conscience, you will be stubborn towards objections and red rags, you will become stupid, brutish, bullish if, while fighting against danger, viciousness, suspicion, ostracism, and even nastier consequences of animosity, you also have to pose as the world-wide defenders of truth. As if “the Truth” were such a harmless and bungling little thing that she needed defenders! And you of all people, her Knights of the Most Sorrowful Countenance,<sup>3</sup> my Lord Slacker and Lord Webweaver of the Spirit! In the end, you know very well that it does not matter whether *you*, of all people, are proved right, and furthermore, that no philosopher so far has *ever* been proved right. You also know that every little question-mark you put after your special slogans and favorite doctrines (and occasionally after yourselves) might contain more truth than all the solemn gestures and trump cards laid before accusers and courts of law! So step aside instead! Run away and hide! And be sure to have your masks and your finesse so people will mistake you for something else, or be a bit scared of you! And do not forget the garden, the garden with golden trelliswork! And have people around you who are like a garden, – or like music over the waters when evening sets and the day is just a memory. Choose the *good* solitude, the free, high-spirited, light-hearted solitude that, in some sense, gives you the right to stay good yourself! How poisonous, how cunning, how bad you become in every long war that cannot be waged out in the open! How *personal* you become when you have been afraid for a long time, keeping your eye on enemies, on possible enemies! These outcasts of society (the long-persecuted, the badly harassed, as well as those forced to become hermits, the Spinozas or Giordano Brunos): they may work under a spiritual guise, and might not even know what they are doing, but they will always end up subtly seeking

<sup>3</sup> A reference to Miguel de Cervantes’ *Don Quixote* (1615).

vengeance and mixing their poisons (just try digging up the foundation of Spinoza's ethics and theology!). Not to mention the absurd spectacle of moral indignation, which is an unmistakable sign that a philosopher has lost his philosophical sense of humor. The philosopher's martyrdom, his "self-sacrifice for the truth," brings to light the agitator and actor in him; and since we have only ever regarded him with artistic curiosity, it is easy to understand the dangerous wish to see many of these philosophers in their degeneration for once (degenerated into "martyrs" or loud-mouths on their stage or soap-box). It's just that, with this sort of wish we have to be clear about *what* we will be seeing: – only a satyr-play, only a satirical epilogue, only the continuing proof that the long, real tragedy *has come to an end* (assuming that every philosophy was originally a long tragedy –).

26

Every choice human being strives instinctively for a citadel and secrecy where he is *rescued* from the crowds, the many, the vast majority; where, as the exception, he can forget the human norm. The only exception is when he is driven straight towards this norm by an even stronger instinct, in search of knowledge in the great and exceptional sense. Anybody who, in dealing with people, does not occasionally glisten in all the shades of distress, green and gray with disgust, weariness, pity, gloominess, and loneliness – he is certainly not a person of higher taste. But if he does not freely take on all this effort and pain, if he keeps avoiding it and remains, as I said, placid and proud and hidden in his citadel, well then one thing is certain: he is not made for knowledge, not predestined for it. Because if he were, he would eventually have to say to himself: "To hell with good taste! The norm is more interesting than the exception – than me, the exception!" – and he would wend his way *downwards*, and, above all, "inwards." The long and serious study of the *average* man requires a great deal of disguise, self-overcoming, confidentiality, bad company (all company is bad company except with your equals); still, this is all a necessary part of the life story of every philosopher, perhaps the least pleasant, most foul-smelling part and the one richest in disappointments. But if he is lucky, as befits knowledge's child of fortune, the philosopher will find real shortcuts and aids to make his work easier. I mean he will find so-called cynics – people who easily recognize the animal, the commonplace, the "norm" within themselves, and yet still have a degree of spiritedness and

an urge to talk about themselves and their peers *in front of witnesses*: – sometimes they even wallow in books as if in their own filth. Cynicism is the only form in which base souls touch upon that thing which is genuine honesty. And the higher man needs to open his ears to all cynicism, crude or refined, and congratulate himself every time the buffoon speaks up without shame, or the scientific satyr is heard right in front of him. There are even cases where enchantment mixes with disgust: namely, where genius, by a whim of nature, is tied to some indiscreet billy-goat and ape, like the Abbé Galiani, the most profound, discerning, and perhaps also the filthiest man of his century. He was much more profound than Voltaire, and consequently a lot quieter. But, as I have already suggested, what happens more often is that the scientific head is placed on an ape's body, a more subtle and exceptional understanding is put in a base soul. This is not a rare phenomenon, particularly among physicians and physiologists of morals. And wherever even one person is speaking about man without any bitterness but instead quite innocuously, describing him as a stomach with dual needs and a head with one; wherever someone sees and seeks and *wants* to see only hunger, sex-drive and vanity, as if these were the sole and genuine motivating forces of human action; in short, wherever somebody is speaking “badly” of people – and not even *wickedly* – this is where the lover of knowledge should listen with subtle and studious attention. He should keep his ears open wherever people are speaking without anger. Because the angry man, and anyone who is constantly tearing and shredding himself with his own teeth (or, in place of himself, the world, or God, or society), may very well stand higher than the laughing and self-satisfied satyr, considered morally. But considered in any other way, he is the more ordinary, more indifferent, less instructive case. And nobody *lies* as much as the angry man. –

27

It is hard to be understood, particularly when you think and live *gangasro-togati*<sup>4</sup> among people who think and live differently, namely *kurmagati*<sup>5</sup> or at best “walking like frogs,” *mandeikagati* (am I doing everything I can to be hard to understand myself?), and you should give heartfelt thanks for

<sup>4</sup> Sanskrit for “as the current of the [river] Ganges moves.”

<sup>5</sup> Sanskrit for “as the tortoise moves.”

the goodwill apparent in any subtlety of interpretation. But as far as “good friends” are concerned, they are always too easy-going and think that they have a right to be easy-going, just because they are friends. So it is best to grant them some leeway from the very start, and leave some latitude for misunderstandings: – and then you can even laugh. Or, alternatively, get rid of them altogether, these good friends, – and then laugh some more!

28

The hardest thing to translate from one language into another is the tempo of its style, which is grounded in the character of the race, or – to be more physiological – in the average tempo of its “metabolism.” There are well-meaning interpretations that are practically falsifications; they involuntarily debase the original, simply because it has a tempo that cannot be translated – a tempo that is brave and cheerful and leaps over and out of every danger in things and in words. Germans are almost incapable of a *presto* in their language: and so it is easy to see that they are incapable of many of the most delightful and daring nuances of free, free-spirited thought. Since the *buffo* and the satyr are alien to the German in body and in conscience, Aristophanes and Petronius are as good as untranslatable. Everything ponderous, lumbering, solemnly awkward, every long-winded and boring type of style is developed by the Germans in over-abundant diversity. Forgive me for pointing out that even Goethe’s prose, with its mixture of the stiff and the delicate, is no exception; it is both a reflection of the “good old days” to which it belonged and an expression of the German taste back when there still was a “German taste”: it was a Rococo taste, in *moribus et artibus*.<sup>6</sup> Lessing is an exception, thanks to his actor’s nature that understood and excelled at so much. He was not the translator of Bayle for nothing; he gladly took refuge in the company of Diderot and Voltaire, and still more gladly among the Roman writers of comedy. Even in tempo, Lessing loved free-thinking<sup>7</sup> and the escape from Germany. But how could the German language – even in the prose of a Lessing – imitate Machiavelli’s tempo – Machiavelli who, in his *Principe*,<sup>8</sup> lets us breathe the fine, dry air of Florence? He cannot help presenting the most serious concerns in a boisterous *allegriissimo*, and is, perhaps, not without

<sup>6</sup> In customs and arts.

<sup>7</sup> In German: *Freigeisterei*.

<sup>8</sup> *Il Principe* (*The Prince*) (1532).

a malicious, artistic sense for the contrast he is risking: thoughts that are long, hard, tough, and dangerous, and a galloping tempo and the very best and most mischievous mood. Who, finally, would dare to translate Petronius into German, a man who, more than any great musician so far, was the master of the *presto* in inventions, ideas, and words. What do all the swamps of the sick and wicked world – even the “ancient world” – matter in the end for someone like him, with feet of wind, with the breath and the force and the liberating scorn of a wind that makes everything healthy by making everything *run*! And as for Aristophanes, that transfiguring, complementary spirit for whose sake we can *forgive* the whole Greek world for existing (as long as we have realized in full depth and profundity *what* needs to be forgiven and transfigured here): – nothing I know has given me a better vision of *Plato*’s secrecy and Sphinx nature than that happily preserved *petit fait*:<sup>9</sup> under the pillow of his deathbed they did not find a “Bible” or anything Egyptian, Pythagorean, or Platonic – but instead, Aristophanes. How would even a Plato have endured life – a Greek life that he said No to – without an Aristophanes! –

29

Independence is an issue that concerns very few people: – it is a prerogative of the strong. And even when somebody has every right to be independent, if he attempts such a thing without *having* to do so, he proves that he is probably not only strong, but brave to the point of madness. He enters a labyrinth, he multiplies by a thousand the dangers already inherent in the very act of living, not the least of which is the fact that no one with eyes will see how and where he gets lost and lonely and is torn limb from limb by some cave-Minotaur of conscience. And assuming a man like this is destroyed, it is an event so far from human comprehension that people do not feel it or feel for him: – and he cannot go back again! He cannot go back to their pity again! – –

30

Our highest insights must – and should! – sound like stupidities, or possibly crimes, when they come without permission to people whose ears have

<sup>9</sup> Little fact.

no affinity<sup>10</sup> for them and were not predestined for them. The distinction between the exoteric and the esoteric, once made by philosophers, was found among the Indians as well as among Greeks, Persians, and Muslims. Basically, it was found everywhere that people believed in an order of rank and *not* in equality and equal rights. The difference between these terms is not that the exoteric stands outside and sees, values, measures, and judges from this external position rather than from some internal one. What is more essential is that the exoteric sees things up from below – while the esoteric sees them *down from above!* There are heights of the soul from whose vantage point even tragedy stops having tragic effects; and who would dare to decide whether the collective sight of the world's many woes would *necessarily* compel and seduce us into a feeling of pity, a feeling that would only serve to double these woes? . . . What helps feed or nourish the higher type of man must be almost poisonous to a very different and lesser type. The virtues of a base man could indicate vices and weaknesses in a philosopher. If a higher type of man were to degenerate<sup>11</sup> and be destroyed, this very destruction could give him the qualities needed to make people honor him as a saint down in the lower realm where he has sunk. There are books that have inverse values for soul and for health, depending on whether they are used by the lower souls and lowlier life-forces, or by the higher and more powerful ones. In the first case, these books are dangerous and cause deterioration and dissolution; in the second case, they are the heralds' calls that summon the most courageous to *their* courage. Books for the general public always smell foul: the stench of petty people clings to them. It usually stinks in places where the people eat and drink, even where they worship. You should not go to church if you want to breath *clean* air. — —

31

When people are young, they admire and despise without any of that art of nuance which is life's greatest reward; so it is only fair that they will come to pay dearly for having assaulted people and things like this, with a Yes and a No. Everything is set up so that the worst possible taste, the

<sup>10</sup> In German: *nicht dafür geartet*. The term *geartet* is related to the German word *Art* (type), which appears frequently in this section as well as throughout the text.

<sup>11</sup> In German: *dass er entartete*.

taste for the unconditional, gets cruelly and foolishly abused until people learn to put some art into their feelings, and prefer the risk they run with artifice, just like real artists of life do. It seems as if the wrath and reverence that characterize youth will not rest easy until they have falsified people and things thoroughly enough to be able to vent themselves on these targets. Youth is itself intrinsically falsifying and deceitful. Later, after the young soul has been tortured by constant disappointments, it ends up turning suspiciously on itself, still raging and wild, even in the force of its suspicion and the pangs of its conscience. How furious it is with itself now, how impatiently it tears itself apart, what revenge it exacts for having blinded itself for so long, as if its blindness had been voluntary! In this transitional state, we punish ourselves by distrusting our feelings, we torture our enthusiasm with doubts, we experience even a good conscience as a danger, as if it were a veil wrapped around us, something marking the depletion of a more subtle, genuine honesty. And, above all, we become partisan, partisan on principle *against* “youth.” – A decade later, we realize that all this – was youthfulness too!

32

During the longest epoch of human history (which is called the prehistoric age) an action’s value or lack of value was derived from its consequences; the action itself was taken as little into account as its origin. Instead, the situation was something like that of present-day China, where the honor or dishonor of a child reflects back on the parents. In the same way, it was the retroactive force of success or failure that showed people whether to think of an action as good or bad. We can call this period the *pre-moral* period of humanity. At that point, the imperative “know thyself!” was still unknown. By contrast, over the course of the last ten millennia, people across a large part of the earth have gradually come far enough to see the origin, not the consequence, as decisive for the value of an action. By and large, this was a great event, a considerable refinement of outlook and criterion, an unconscious after-effect of the dominance of aristocratic values and the belief in “origin,” and the sign of a period that we can signify as *moral* in a narrow sense. This marks the first attempt at self-knowledge. Origin rather than consequence: what a reversal of perspective! And, certainly, this reversal was only accomplished after long struggles and fluctuations! Granted: this meant that a disastrous



new superstition, a distinctive narrowness of interpretation gained dominance. The origin of the action was interpreted in the most determinate sense possible, as origin out of an *intention*. People were united in the belief that the value of an action was exhausted by the value of its intention. Intention as the entire origin and prehistory of an action: under this prejudice people have issued moral praise, censure, judgment, and philosophy almost to this day. – But today, thanks to a renewed self-contemplation and deepening of humanity, shouldn't we be facing a renewed necessity to effect a reversal and fundamental displacement of values? Shouldn't we be standing on the threshold of a period that would be designated, negatively at first, as *extra-moral*? Today, when we immoralists, at least, suspect that the decisive value is conferred by what is specifically *unintentional* about an action, and that all its intentionality, everything about it that can be seen, known, or raised to "conscious awareness," only belongs to its surface and skin – which, like every skin, reveals something but *conceals* even more? In short, we believe that the intention is only a sign and symptom that first needs to be interpreted, and that, moreover, it is a sign that means too many things and consequently means almost nothing by itself. We believe that morality in the sense it has had up to now (the morality of intentions) was a prejudice, a precipitousness, perhaps a preliminary, a thing on about the same level as astrology and alchemy, but in any case something that must be overcome. The overcoming of morality – even the self-overcoming of morality, in a certain sense: let this be the name for that long and secret labor which is reserved for the most subtle, genuinely honest, and also the most malicious consciences of the day, who are living touchstones of the soul. –

33

There is nothing else to be done: the feelings of utter devotion, of sacrifice for your neighbor, and the entire morality of self-abnegation have to be mercilessly taken to court and made to account for themselves. And the same holds for the aesthetic of "disinterested contemplation," the seductive guise under which the castration of art is presently trying to create a good conscience for itself. These feelings of "for others," of "*not* for myself," contain far too much sugar and sorcery for us not to need to become doubly suspicious here and ask: "Aren't these perhaps – *seductions*?" To say that these feelings are *pleasing* (for the one who has

them, for the one who enjoys their fruits, and even for the mere onlooker) is not yet an argument in their *favor*, but rather constitutes a demand for caution. So let us be cautious!

34

It does not matter what philosophical standpoint you might take these days: any way you look at it, the *erroneousness* of the world we think we live in is the most certain and solid fact that our eyes can still grab hold of. We find reason after reason for it, reasons that might lure us into speculations about a deceptive principle in “the essence of things.” But anyone who makes thinking itself (and therefore “the spirit”) responsible for the falseness of the world (an honorable way out, taken by every conscious or unconscious *advocatus dei*<sup>12</sup>), anyone who considers this world, together with space, time, form, and motion, to be falsely *inferred* – such a person would at the very least have ample cause to grow suspicious of thinking altogether. Hasn’t it played the biggest joke on us to date? And what guarantee would there be that it wouldn’t keep doing what it has always done? In all seriousness, there is something touching and awe-inspiring about the innocence that, to this day, lets a thinker place himself in front of consciousness with the request that it please give him *honest* answers: for example, whether or not it is “real,” and why it so resolutely keeps the external world at arm’s length, and other questions like that. The belief in “immediate certainties” is a moral naiveté that does credit to us philosophers: but – we should stop being “merely moral,” for once! Aside from morality, the belief in immediate certainties is a stupidity that does us little credit! In bourgeois life, a suspicious disposition might be a sign of “bad character” and consequently considered unwise. But here with us, beyond the bourgeois sphere with its Yeses and Noes, – what is to stop us from being unwise and saying: “As the creature who has been the biggest dupe the earth has ever seen, the philosopher pretty much has a *right* to a ‘bad character.’ It is his *duty* to be suspicious these days, to squint as maliciously as possible out of every abyss of mistrust.” – Forgive me for playing jokes with this gloomy grimace and expression: because when it comes to betrayal and being betrayed, I myself learned a long time ago to think differently and evaluate differently; and my elbow is ready with at

<sup>12</sup> Advocate of God (as opposed to the devil’s advocate).

least a couple of nudges for the blind rage of philosophers as they struggle not to be betrayed. Why *not*? It is no more than a moral prejudice that the truth is worth more than appearance; in fact, it is the world's most poorly proven assumption. Let us admit this much: that life could not exist except on the basis of perspectival valuations and appearances; and if, with the virtuous enthusiasm and inanity of many philosophers, someone wanted to completely abolish the "world of appearances," – well, assuming *you* could do that, – at least there would not be any of your "truth" left either! Actually, why do we even assume that "true" and "false" are intrinsically opposed? Isn't it enough to assume that there are levels of appearance and, as it were, lighter and darker shades and tones of appearance – different *valeurs*,<sup>13</sup> to use the language of painters? Why shouldn't the world *that is relevant to us* – be a fiction? And if someone asks: "But doesn't fiction belong with an author?" – couldn't we shoot back: "*Why?* Doesn't this 'belonging' belong, perhaps, to fiction as well? Aren't we allowed to be a bit ironic with the subject, as we are with the predicate and object? Shouldn't philosophers rise above the belief in grammar? With all due respect to governesses, isn't it about time philosophy renounced governess-beliefs?" –

35

O Voltaire! O humanity! O nonsense! There is something to "truth," to the *search* for truth; and when a human being is too humane about it – when "*il ne cherche le vrai que pour faire le bien*"<sup>14</sup> – I bet he won't find anything!

36

Assuming that our world of desires and passions is the only thing "given" as real, that we cannot get down or up to any "reality" except the reality of our drives (since thinking is only a relation between these drives) – aren't we allowed to make the attempt and pose the question as to whether something like this "given" isn't *enough* to render the so-called mechanistic (and thus material) world comprehensible as well? I do not mean comprehensible as a deception, a "mere appearance," a "representation"

<sup>13</sup> Values.

<sup>14</sup> "He looks for truth only to do good."

(in the sense of Berkeley and Schopenhauer); I mean it might allow us to understand the mechanistic world as belonging to the same plane of reality as our affects themselves –, as a primitive form of the world of affect, where everything is contained in a powerful unity before branching off and organizing itself in the organic process (and, of course, being softened and weakened –). We would be able to understand the mechanistic world as a kind of life of the drives, where all the organic functions (self-regulation, assimilation, nutrition, excretion, and metabolism) are still synthetically bound together – as a *pre-form* of life? – In the end, we are not only allowed to make such an attempt: the conscience of *method* demands it. Multiple varieties of causation should not be postulated until the attempt to make do with a single one has been taken as far as it will go (– *ad absurdum*, if you will). This is a moral of method that cannot be escaped these days; – it follows “from the definition,” as a mathematician would say. The question is ultimately whether we recognize the will as, in effect, *efficacious*, whether we believe in the causality of the will. If we do (and *this* belief is really just our belief in causality itself –), then we *must* make the attempt to hypothetically posit the causality of the will as the only type of causality there is. “Will” can naturally have effects only on “will” – and not on “matter” (not on “nerves” for instance –). Enough: we must venture the hypothesis that everywhere “effects” are recognized, will is effecting will – and that every mechanistic event in which a force is active is really a force and effect of the will. – Assuming, finally, that we succeeded in explaining our entire life of drives as the organization and outgrowth of one basic form of will (namely, of the will to power, which is *my* claim); assuming we could trace all organic functions back to this will to power and find that it even solved the problem of procreation and nutrition (which is a single problem); then we will have earned the right to clearly designate *all* efficacious force as: *will to power*. The world seen from inside, the world determined and described with respect to its “intelligible character” – would be just this “will to power” and nothing else. –

37

“What? Doesn’t that mean, to use a popular idiom: God is refuted but the devil is not – ?” On the contrary! On the contrary, my friends! And who the devil is forcing you to use popular idioms! –

38

This is what has finally happened, in the bright light of more recent times, to the French Revolution, that gruesome and (on close consideration) pointless farce: noble and enthusiastic spectators across Europe have, from a distance, interpreted their own indignations and enthusiasms into it, and for so long and with such passion *that the text has finally disappeared under the interpretation*. In the same way, a noble posterity could again misunderstand the entire past, and in so doing, perhaps, begin to make it tolerable to look at. – Or rather: hasn't this happened already? weren't we ourselves this "noble posterity"? And right now, since we're realizing this to be the case – hasn't it stopped being so?

39

No one would consider a doctrine to be true just because it makes people happy or virtuous, with the possible exception of the darling "Idealists," who wax enthusiastic over the Good, the True, and the Beautiful, and let all sorts of colorful, clumsy, and good-natured *desiderata* swim through their pond in utter confusion. Happiness and virtue are not arguments. But we like to forget (even thoughtful spirits like to forget) that being made unhappy and evil are not counter-arguments either. Something could be true even if it is harmful and dangerous to the highest degree. It could even be part of the fundamental character of existence that people with complete knowledge get destroyed, – so that the strength of a spirit would be proportionate to how much of the "truth" he could withstand – or, to put it more clearly, to what extent he *needs* it to be thinned out, veiled over, sweetened up, dumbed down, and lied about. But there is no doubt that when it comes to discovering certain *aspects* of the truth, people who are evil and unhappy are more fortunate and have a greater probability of success (not to mention those who are both evil and happy – a species that the moralists don't discuss). Perhaps harshness and cunning provide more favorable conditions for the origin of the strong, independent spirit and philosopher than that gentle, fine, yielding good nature and art of taking things lightly that people value, and value rightly, in a scholar. Assuming first of all that we do not limit our notion of the "philosopher" to the philosophers who write books – or put *their own* philosophy into books! – One last feature for the picture of the free-spirited philosopher

is provided by Stendhal; and for the sake of the German taste, I will not overlook the chance to underscore this character – since it goes *against* the German taste. “*Pour être bon philosophe,*” says this last, great psychologist, “*il faut être sec, clair, sans illusion. Un banquier, qui a fait fortune, a une partie du caractère requis pour faire des découvertes en philosophie, c’est-à-dire pour voir clair dans ce qui est.*”<sup>15</sup>

40

Everything profound loves masks; the most profound things go so far as to hate images and likenesses. Wouldn’t just the *opposite* be a proper disguise for the shame of a god? A questionable question: it would be odd if some mystic hadn’t already risked something similar himself. There are events that are so delicate that it is best to cover them up with some coarseness and make them unrecognizable. There are acts of love and extravagant generosity in whose aftermath nothing is more advisable than to take a stick and give the eye-witnesses a good beating: this will obscure any memory traces. Many people are excellent at obscuring and abusing their own memory, so they can take revenge on at least this one accessory: – shame is highly resourceful. It is not the worst things that we are the most ashamed of. Malicious cunning is not the only thing behind a mask – there is so much goodness in cunning. I could imagine that a man with something precious and vulnerable to hide would roll through life, rough and round like an old, green, heavy-hooped wine cask; the subtlety of his shame will want it this way. A man with something profound in his shame encounters even his fate and delicate decisions along paths that few people have ever found, paths whose existence must be concealed from his closest and most trusted friends. His mortal danger is hidden from their eyes, and so is his regained sense of confidence in life. Somebody hidden in this way – who instinctively needs speech in order to be silent and concealed, and is tireless in evading communication – *wants* and encourages a mask of himself to wander around, in his place, through the hearts and heads of his friends. And even if this is not what he wants, he will eventually realize that a mask of him has been there all the same, – and that this is for the best.

<sup>15</sup> “To be a good philosopher you have to be dry, clear, and without illusions. A banker who has made a fortune has to a certain degree the right sort of character for making philosophical discoveries, i.e. for seeing clearly into what is.” From Stendhal’s *Correspondance inédite (Unedited Correspondence)* (1855).

Every profound spirit needs a mask: what's more, a mask is constantly growing around every profound spirit, thanks to the consistently false (which is to say *shallow*) interpretation of every word, every step, every sign of life he displays. –

41

We have to test ourselves to see whether we are destined for independence and command, and we have to do it at the right time. We should not sidestep our tests, even though they may well be the most dangerous game we can play, and, in the last analysis, can be witnessed by no judge other than ourselves. Not to be stuck to any person, not even somebody we love best – every person is a prison and a corner. Not to be stuck in any homeland, even the neediest and most oppressed – it is not as hard to tear your heart away from a victorious homeland. Not to be stuck in some pity: even for higher men, whose rare torture and helplessness we ourselves have accidentally glimpsed. Not to be stuck in some field of study: however much it tempts us with priceless discoveries, reserved, it seems, for us alone. Not to be stuck in our own detachment, in the ecstasy of those foreign vistas where birds keep flying higher so that they can keep seeing more below them: – the danger of those who fly. Not to be stuck to our own virtues and let our whole self be sacrificed for some one of our details, our “hospitality,” for instance: this is the danger of dangers for rich souls of a higher type, who spend themselves extravagantly, almost indifferently, pushing the virtue of liberality to the point of vice. We must know *to conserve ourselves*: the greatest test of independence.

42

A new breed of philosophers is approaching. I will risk christening them with a name not lacking in dangers. From what I can guess about them, from what they allow to be guessed (since it is typical of them to *want* to remain riddles in some respect), these philosophers of the future might have the right (and perhaps also the wrong) to be described as *those who attempt*.<sup>16</sup> Ultimately, this name is itself only an attempt, and, if you will, a temptation.

<sup>16</sup> In German: *Versucher*. Nietzsche frequently uses the terms *Versuch* (attempt or experiment) and *Versuchung* (temptation), and plays on their similarity.

43

Are they new friends of “truth,” these upcoming philosophers? Probably, since all philosophers so far have loved their truths. But they certainly will not be dogmatists. It would offend their pride, as well as their taste, if their truth were a truth for everyone (which has been the secret wish and hidden meaning of all dogmatic aspirations so far). “My judgment is *my* judgment: other people don’t have an obvious right to it too” – perhaps this is what such a philosopher of the future will say. We must do away with the bad taste of wanting to be in agreement with the majority. “Good” is no longer good when it comes from your neighbor’s mouth. And how could there ever be a “common good”? The term is self-contradictory: whatever can be common will never have much value. In the end, it has to be as it is and has always been: great things are left for the great, abysses for the profound, delicacy and trembling for the subtle, and, all in all, everything rare for those who are rare themselves. –

44

After all this, do I really need to add that they will be free, *very* free spirits, these philosophers of the future – and that they certainly will not *just* be free spirits, but rather something more, higher, greater, and fundamentally different, something that does not want to be misunderstood or mistaken for anything else? But, in saying this, I feel – towards them almost as much as towards ourselves (who are their heralds and precursors, we free spirits!) – an *obligation* to sweep away a stupid old prejudice and misunderstanding about all of us that has hung like a fog around the concept of the “free spirit” for far too long, leaving it completely opaque. In all the countries of Europe, and in America as well, there is now something that abuses this name: a very narrow, restricted, chained-up type of spirit whose inclinations are pretty much the opposite of our own intentions and instincts (not to mention the fact that this restricted type will be a fully shut window and bolted door with respect to these approaching *new* philosophers). In a word (but a bad one): they belong to the *levelers*, these misnamed “free spirits” – as eloquent and prolifically scribbling slaves of the democratic taste and its “modern ideas.” They are all people without solitude, without their own solitude, clumsy, solid folks whose courage and honest decency cannot be denied – it’s just that they are un-free and ridiculously superficial, particularly given their basic



tendency to think that *all* human misery and wrongdoing is caused by traditional social structures: which lands truth happily on its head! What they want to strive for with all their might is the universal, green pasture happiness of the herd, with security, safety, contentment, and an easier life for all. Their two most well-sung songs and doctrines are called: “equal rights” and “sympathy for all that suffers” – and they view suffering itself as something that needs to be *abolished*. We, who are quite the reverse, have kept an *eye* and a conscience open to the question of where and how the plant “man” has grown the strongest, and we think that this has always happened under conditions that are quite the reverse. We think that the danger of the human condition has first had to grow to terrible heights, its power to invent and dissimulate (its “spirit” –) has had to develop under prolonged pressure and compulsion into something refined and daring, its life-will has had to be intensified to an unconditional power-will. We think that harshness, violence, slavery, danger in the streets and in the heart, concealment, Stoicism, the art of experiment,<sup>17</sup> and devilry of every sort; that everything evil, terrible, tyrannical, predatory, and snakelike in humanity serves just as well as its opposite to enhance the species “humanity.” But to say this much is to not say enough, and, in any event, this is the point we have reached with our speaking and our silence, at the *other* end of all modern ideology and herd desires: perhaps as their antipodes? Is it any wonder that we “free spirits” are not exactly the most communicative spirits? That we do not want to fully reveal what a spirit might free himself *from* and what he will then perhaps be driven *towards*? And as to the dangerous formula “beyond good and evil,” it serves to protect us, at least from being mistaken for something else. We *are* something different from “*libres-penseurs*,” “*liberi pensatori*,” “*Freidenker*”<sup>18</sup> and whatever else all these sturdy advocates of “modern ideas” like to call themselves. At home in many countries of the spirit, at least as guests; repeatedly slipping away from the musty, comfortable corners where preference and prejudice, youth, origin, accidents of people and books, and even the fatigue of traveling seem to have driven us; full of malice at the lures of dependency that lie hidden in honors, or money, or duties, or enthusiasms of the senses; grateful even for difficulties and inconstant health, because they have always freed us from some rule and

<sup>17</sup> In German: *Versucherkunst* (see note 16 above).

<sup>18</sup> These are terms meaning “free thinker” in French, Italian, and German.

its “prejudice,” grateful to the god, devil, sheep, and maggot in us, curious to a fault, researchers to the point of cruelty, with unmindful fingers for the incomprehensible, with teeth and stomachs for the indigestible, ready for any trade that requires a quick wit and sharp senses, ready for any risk, thanks to an excess of “free will,” with front and back souls whose ultimate aim is clear to nobody, with fore- and backgrounds that no foot can fully traverse, hidden under the cloak of light, conquerors, even if we look like heirs and prodigals, collectors and gatherers from morning until evening, miserly with our riches and our cabinets filled to the brim, economical with what we learn and forget, inventive in schemata, sometimes proud of tables of categories, sometimes pedants, sometimes night owls at work, even in bright daylight; yes, even scarecrows when the need arises – and today the need has arisen: inasmuch as we are born, sworn, jealous friends of *solitude*, our own deepest, most midnightly, noon-likely solitude. This is the type of people we are, we free spirits! and perhaps *you* are something of this yourselves, you who are approaching? you *new* philosophers? –