

BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL



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Beyond Good and Evil

By Friedrich Nietzsche
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Preface

What if truth were a woman? If that were the case, wouldn't it be fair to say that all philosophers who have been dogmatists have completely misunderstood her? They've approached truth with rigid seriousness, pressing their claims in an awkward and forceful way—methods that would never win over a woman. And sure enough, truth has never let herself be conquered by them. Today, all dogmatic philosophy looks defeated and hopeless—if, in fact, it still stands at all! Some even claim that it has completely collapsed, that all philosophical dogma is dead—or at least on its last breath.

But to speak seriously, there's good reason to believe that all dogmatic philosophy, no matter how authoritative or final it has pretended to be, was really nothing more than an ambitious but immature experiment. Maybe the time has come to finally realize what these grand and absolute philosophical structures were actually built on—perhaps nothing more than an ancient superstition, like the long-standing belief in the soul. This belief, which has now transformed into the obsession with the “self” or the “ego,” continues to mislead us. Or maybe dogmatic philosophy was just the result of clever wordplay, a grammatical illusion, or an exaggerated generalization of very limited, very personal, and very human—*all-too-human*—experiences.

Hopefully, dogmatic philosophy was merely a stepping stone, a promise for what's to come—just as astrology once was in ancient times. People poured more effort, money, intelligence, and patience into astrology than into any real science so far. But thanks to its “heavenly” ambitions, astrology gave birth to grand architectural achievements, especially in Asia and Egypt. It seems that, to leave a lasting mark on humanity, all great things first have to wander the earth in exaggerated, almost grotesque forms. Dogmatic philosophy was one such exaggeration—think of the Vedanta school in India or Platonism in Europe.

We shouldn't be ungrateful for what dogmatic philosophy has given us, even though it must be said that the most harmful, exhausting, and dangerous mistake in history has also been a dogmatic one: Plato's invention of "Pure Spirit" and "The Good in Itself." But now that we've moved beyond it—now that Europe has finally shaken off this old illusion and can breathe freely again—we, *who must remain awake*, inherit all the strength that came from the struggle against this error. Plato's ideas were actually a complete reversal of truth, a denial of the very conditions that make life possible. Speaking of “Spirit” and “The Good” as Plato did was to ignore the fact that truth is always a matter of perspective. One could even ask, from a doctor's point of view: How did such an illness infect someone as brilliant as Plato? Was Socrates the one who corrupted him? Could it be that Socrates *did* corrupt the youth after all—and deserved his execution?

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But the fight against Plato—or, to put it more clearly for the general public, the fight against the centuries of religious oppression that followed (since *Christianity is just Platonism for the masses*)—created a powerful spiritual tension in Europe, something never seen before. With such a tightly strung bow, we can now aim for the farthest targets. In truth, many Europeans experience this tension as a burden, and there have been two major attempts to relieve it: first, through Jesuitism, and later, through the so-called "democratic enlightenment." The latter, with its free press and mass media, may have actually succeeded in preventing people from feeling the weight of intellectual struggle. (The Germans, for example, invented gunpowder—credit to them! But they also balanced things out by inventing the printing press.)

But we—we who are neither Jesuits nor democrats, nor even *proper* Germans—we who are *good Europeans, free spirits, very free spirits*—we still carry all the weight of this tension! And perhaps, along with it, we also hold the arrow, the responsibility, and, who knows—maybe even the *true goal* to aim for...

Part One: On the Prejudices of Philosophers

1

The drive for truth—the very thing that has led us into so many risky pursuits—the famous love of truth that philosophers have always praised with such reverence—what difficult, strange, and unsettling questions has this drive not placed before us? It's already a long story, yet it feels like it has barely begun. Is it any surprise that we've grown doubtful, impatient, even frustrated? That this pursuit of truth now forces us to ask the questions instead of just answering them? Who—or what—is really questioning us here? What exactly is this “Will to Truth” that drives us? We spent a long time stuck on the question of where this drive comes from—until we hit an even deeper question: What is the value of this will? Sure, we say we want the truth—but why truth instead of falsehood? Why not embrace uncertainty? Or even ignorance? The real question before us is not just truth itself, but whether truth is worth it. Did this problem present itself to us, or are we the ones bringing it to light? Which of us is Oedipus, trying to solve the riddle? And which of us is the Sphinx, posing the questions? It seems like we've arrived at a crossroads of endless questions. And can you believe it? It almost feels as if no one has ever asked this question before—as if we are the first to truly see it, recognize its weight, and dare to ask it. Because asking it is a risk—maybe the greatest risk of all.

2

How could anything come from its opposite? How could truth emerge from error? How could a desire for truth grow out of a tendency to deceive? How could selfless generosity be born from selfishness? Or the pure, enlightened vision of a wise man arise from greed? That's impossible! Anyone who believes such things must be a fool—or worse. The highest values must come from something pure, something of their own kind. They can't come from this fleeting, deceptive, chaotic world full of illusions and desires. No, they must come from something beyond this world—perhaps from the eternal, from the hidden God, from the “Thing-in-itself.” That must be their source, and nowhere else! This way of thinking reveals the classic bias that has always defined metaphysicians. It's the foundation of their entire logic, the belief that motivates their pursuit of knowledge—what they ultimately call “Truth.” At the core of all metaphysics is a single fundamental assumption: **the belief in absolute opposites**. Yet, not even the most skeptical philosophers ever questioned this assumption, even though doubt should have begun right there—at the very first step! They claimed to doubt everything (*de omnibus dubitandum*—“everything must be questioned”), but they never questioned this. But should we? First, we might ask: Do these opposites even exist at all? And second, are the values that philosophers have set in stone—their rigid distinctions between good and bad, truth and falsehood—really as absolute as they assume? Couldn't they just be shallow, temporary viewpoints? Couldn't they be based on a limited perspective—perhaps even a *low* perspective,

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like a frog looking up from the bottom of a well? (Painters call this a "frog perspective," meaning a distorted view from below.) Despite all the respect given to truth, goodness, and selflessness, it's possible—just possible—that deception, illusion, selfishness, and greed actually have a deeper and more fundamental value for life. Maybe the things we call "good" only have value *because* they are secretly tied to these so-called "evil" things—maybe they are even the *same* at their core. Perhaps. *But who would dare entertain such dangerous 'Perhapses'?* To explore such ideas, we would need a new kind of philosopher—one with different instincts, different values, the complete opposite of those who came before. A philosopher willing to embrace the risk of uncertainty, a philosopher of the **dangerous 'Perhaps'** in every sense of the word. And to be perfectly honest—I can already see them beginning to appear.

3

After closely observing philosophers and reading between the lines of their works for a long time, I've come to this conclusion: most of what we call "conscious thought" is actually just another instinctive function—even in philosophy. We had to relearn this idea just as we once had to rethink what we knew about heredity and "innate" traits. Just as the moment of birth is only a small part of the much larger process of inheritance, "consciousness" is not necessarily something separate from or opposed to instinct in any meaningful way. In fact, most of a philosopher's so-called "rational" thinking is secretly driven by their instincts, pushing their thoughts down specific paths without them even realizing it. Beneath all the logic, beneath the illusion of free and independent reasoning, there are deeper forces at work—hidden **values** that guide thought. Or, to put it more bluntly, there are **biological needs** shaping philosophy itself, ensuring the survival of certain ways of living. Take, for example, the assumption that certainty is better than uncertainty, or that truth is more valuable than illusion. These beliefs, no matter how useful they may be to us, could very well be nothing more than superficial judgments—mere *mental habits* that help keep human beings functioning. But what if humans aren't actually *the measure of all things*? What if our values are just a product of our limited perspective?

4

The fact that an opinion is false is not, in itself, a reason to reject it. This might sound strange in our new way of thinking, but what really matters is not whether an opinion is *true*, but whether it helps life—whether it supports survival, strengthens the species, and perhaps even elevates it. In fact, we believe that the **most false** ideas—including so-called "a priori synthetic judgments" (those supposedly universal truths philosophers claim we just *know*)—are actually *the most essential* to us. Without embracing logical fictions, without comparing reality to an imagined world of absolute, unchanging truths, without constantly reshaping reality through things like numbers, humanity simply couldn't survive. To give up falsehoods would be to give up life

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itself—it would be a rejection of existence. To recognize that *untruth* is a necessary condition for life—that's a direct challenge to the way people have traditionally understood morality and value. Any philosophy that dares to take this stance has already placed itself **beyond good and evil**.

5

The reason people often view philosophers with both distrust and amusement is not just because they frequently make mistakes, or get lost in their own reasoning like children—though they certainly do. The real issue is that there isn't enough honesty in philosophy. Philosophers love to present themselves as if their conclusions were reached through pure, cold, logical reasoning—untouched by bias, as if their ideas simply emerged from a divine, indifferent process of dialectic. They look down on mystics, who at least openly admit to relying on inspiration. But in reality, what philosophers defend with so much intellectual effort is usually just a **refined version of their personal desires and biases**, dressed up as objective truths. They start with a conclusion they *want* to be true—something they are emotionally attached to—and then they search for arguments to support it. Philosophers are nothing more than **lawyers for their own prejudices**, though they refuse to admit it. They are clever advocates of their personal views, which they falsely present as universal truths. And worst of all, they lack the self-awareness—or the courage—to acknowledge this fact, even to themselves. A truly honest philosopher would at least have the good taste to admit their bias, maybe even to warn their readers with a bit of humor or self-mockery. Take Kant, for example—his stiff, moralistic **Tartuffery** (hypocrisy) is almost comical. He leads us down complex, winding logical paths only to arrive at his "**categorical imperative**", as if we had arrived at some grand discovery. But we, the sharp-eyed skeptics, can't help but smirk when we spot the subtle tricks used by old moralists and ethical preachers. Or take Spinoza, who disguised his philosophy in mathematical formulas, as if wrapping it in armor. He wanted his philosophy to look invincible—his "**love of wisdom**", if we translate the word *philosophy* honestly, was presented as a cold, logical system, designed to intimidate anyone who dared challenge it. His supposedly unshakable rationalism, his **Pallas Athena**—the goddess of wisdom in full battle armor—was really just a mask. But what does this mask reveal? Not strength, but fear. A sickly recluse, terrified of criticism, trying to make his ideas look untouchable. And yet, how entertaining it is to watch the spectacle of philosophers hiding behind their own creations!

6

I've gradually come to realize that every great philosophy is, at its core, a personal confession of its creator—an involuntary and unconscious autobiography. More than that, every philosophy is ultimately rooted in a moral goal (or sometimes, an immoral one); this is the seed from which the entire system grows. If you want to understand how a philosopher arrived at their most abstract

and complex ideas, start by asking: **What moral vision are they trying to promote?** That's the real motivation behind their thinking. That's why I don't believe philosophy is driven by some noble "impulse to knowledge." Rather, another, more basic drive has simply **used** knowledge (often mistaken knowledge) as a tool. If you examine the fundamental drives in human nature, you'll see that they have all, at one time or another, played at being "philosophy." Each drive, given the chance, would love to present itself as the **ultimate** purpose of life, as the rightful ruler of all other instincts. Every impulse is **authoritative by nature**, and as such, it tries to create its own philosophy. Of course, things might be different with **scholars**—with true men of science. Maybe they really do have a pure "impulse to knowledge," like a tiny mechanical device, ticking away toward discovery, detached from deeper personal desires. But even here, their real interests often lie elsewhere—maybe in their families, their finances, or politics. The specific subject of their research is often just an accident: whether they become a **linguist, a biologist, or a chemist** is almost irrelevant. That's not what defines them. A **philosopher**, however, is nothing like that. **Nothing in philosophy is impersonal.** And above all, a philosopher's **moral outlook** is the clearest window into who they truly are—it reveals the deepest hierarchy of their instincts.

7

How **spiteful** philosophers can be! I can't think of a sharper insult than the one Epicurus hurled at Plato and his followers—he called them **Dionysiokolakes**. On the surface, this just means "flatterers of Dionysius"—meaning **sycophants of tyrants, bootlickers**. But the word had a second meaning: it was also a common term for **actors**. And this is Epicurus' real accusation against Plato—that he was a **fraud, a performer**, all style and grand gestures, no authenticity. Epicurus couldn't stand the theatrical, overblown manner of Plato and his students—the way they staged their ideas like a grand performance. Of course, Epicurus himself—this cranky old schoolteacher from the island of Samos—spent his life **hiding away in a tiny garden in Athens**, writing **300 books**—maybe out of resentment, maybe out of envy toward Plato. Who knows? It took Greece a **hundred years** to figure out who Epicurus really was. And maybe it never did.

8

In every philosophy, there comes a point when the philosopher's **true conviction** finally appears—like the revelation in an ancient mystery play: "*Behold! The donkey arrives—beautiful and strong!*" (A sarcastic way of saying that every philosophy eventually reveals the stubborn, unshakable belief behind it.)

9

You Stoics talk about living "**according to Nature**"—but what a **trick of language** that is! Imagine what it would really mean to follow Nature—something **wildly excessive, indifferent,**

purposeless, thoughtless, brutal and unpredictable. Nature doesn't care about justice or fairness, it gives and it destroys without reason. If you really lived according to **that**, what would it even look like? Wouldn't *life itself* be an effort to resist nature, to carve out meaning where none exists? Isn't life about valuing, preferring, choosing, being *unjust, limited*, striving for something beyond raw existence? And even if your idea of "**living according to Nature**" just means "living according to life itself"... well, how could you do anything *else*? You *are* a part of life—why turn the obvious into a principle? But in truth, that's not what you Stoics really want. You claim to follow Nature, but what you actually want is to **force your own morality onto it**. You want Nature to follow *you!* You dream of reshaping the universe in your own Stoic image—turning it into an eternal monument to your rigid self-discipline. You've stared at the world through a Stoic lens for so long, so obsessively, that you can no longer see it any other way. And worst of all, you actually believe that because **you** can impose discipline on yourselves—because Stoicism is really just **self-tyranny**—that Nature itself will submit to your rule. But tell me—aren't you part of Nature too? This is the same old story, played out again and again: every philosophy that begins to take itself seriously **remakes the world in its own image**. It can't help but do so. Philosophy is **a will to power**—the most spiritual form of it, the desire to create and shape reality, to play **God**.

10

The way modern European thinkers obsess over the distinction between **the "real world" and the "apparent world"** is fascinating. Anyone who thinks this debate is purely about a "**Will to Truth**" must be deaf to its deeper meaning. In rare cases, yes, there might be some fanatical truth-seekers involved—bold, reckless metaphysicians willing to trade **a thousand beautiful possibilities** for a single grain of certainty. Some of them are almost religious in their devotion, willing to bet everything on a **definite nothing** rather than an **uncertain something**. But that's **nihilism**, plain and simple—a philosophy of exhaustion, the thinking of a soul that is weary, *dying*, no matter how boldly it tries to present itself. But this is not what's happening among the stronger, **more vital** minds of our time—those who still **love** life. The real reason some thinkers today attack the idea of "**appearance**" and speak dismissively of "perspective" is not because they love truth too much, but because they are **trying to reclaim something lost**. Could it be that these skeptics and "anti-realists" are actually trying to recover something **older**, something from the days of religious faith? Maybe the **immortal soul**, maybe the **old God**—in short, ideas that gave people a deeper sense of meaning, a reason to live. Maybe they suspect that **modern ideas**—the ideas of *yesterday and today*—are **not enough**. There's a deep **distrust** of modernity in all of this—a rejection of the cheap, mass-produced **intellectual marketplace** of our time, where shallow "positivists" peddle second-hand ideas. These thinkers **despise** the intellectual **patchwork** of today's philosophers, who mix ideas from every era without truly understanding any of them. And in this rejection, I find something admirable. The **skeptical anti-realists** of today are not necessarily looking to go *backward*, as some might assume. What matters is not

that they want to *return*—but that they want to **escape**. A little more **strength, courage, artistry**—and they wouldn't go backward at all. They'd go forward.

11

It seems like there's an ongoing effort to downplay Kant's actual influence on German philosophy, especially when it comes to how highly he valued his own work. Kant was most proud of his *Table of Categories*—he held it up and declared, "*This is the hardest thing anyone has ever done for metaphysics!*" But notice that "*could be*"—even Kant wasn't entirely sure. His real pride, however, was in what he thought was a revolutionary discovery: a new *faculty* in human thought—the ability to make **synthetic a priori judgments** (statements that are both informative and necessary, supposedly without relying on experience). Even if he was completely wrong about this, his sheer **confidence** fueled the rapid rise of German philosophy. Young thinkers scrambled to find something even more profound—more "new faculties" to be proud of. But let's take a step back and think for a moment—because it's long overdue. Kant asked: "**How are synthetic a priori judgments possible?**" And what was his answer? "**By means of a means (a faculty).**" But instead of saying this simply, he buried it under layers of dense, dramatic, overcomplicated "German profundity" so that no one would notice how laughable his explanation really was. The German philosophers of the time were **thrilled** by his supposed discovery, and excitement reached a fever pitch when Kant also claimed to have discovered a *moral faculty* in humans. (Back then, Germans still cared about morality—they hadn't yet turned to "realpolitik" and cold, hard facts.) That was the golden age of German philosophy—its **honeymoon phase**. Young theologians in **Tübingen** ran off into the woods, searching for **even more faculties**—and they found plenty! In that naïve and exuberant era, when German thought was still fresh and full of life (and Romanticism played the mischievous role of an enchanting fairy), no one could tell the difference between **finding** something and simply **inventing** it. Take Schelling, for example. He coined the term "**intellectual intuition**", which sounded profound and mystical—exactly what the religiously-inclined German mind longed for. The worst mistake you can make with this whole eccentric movement is to take it **too seriously** or to condemn it with moral outrage. It was simply **youthful excess** disguised in old and wise-sounding language. But time passed, the world **grew up**, and the dream **faded**. Eventually, people started rubbing their foreheads in confusion—and they still are today. They woke up to the fact that they had been **dreaming**, and **Kant most of all**. Because in the end, what was his answer? "**By means of a means (a faculty).**" But is that an *answer*? An *explanation*? Or is it just repeating the same question? It's as ridiculous as the joke from Molière's play, where a doctor is asked why opium makes people sleepy. His answer? "**Because it has a sleep-inducing power (virtus dormitiva).**"

*Quia est in eo virtus dormitiva,
Cujus est natura sensus assoupire.*

(Since it has a sleep-inducing power, whose nature is to put the senses to sleep.) This kind of explanation belongs in comedy, not philosophy! It's time to stop asking "**How are synthetic a priori judgments possible?**" and start asking "**Why do we need to believe in them?**" Because maybe, just maybe, we **need** to believe in them—not because they're actually true, but because they help creatures like us survive. To put it bluntly: **synthetic a priori judgments shouldn't even be possible!** We have no legitimate right to them. They're nothing but **false statements**—but ones we can't afford to give up. Believing in them is **necessary**, because they shape how we see and interact with the world. And when we consider the enormous impact that "German philosophy" (yes, those quotation marks are intentional) has had across Europe, there's no doubt that a certain **virtus dormitiva**—a sleep-inducing quality—was at play. Thanks to German philosophy, **all sorts of people** found exactly what they were looking for:

Idle aristocrats needed a distraction.

Moral idealists wanted a defense of virtue.

Mystics and artists craved depth and mystery.

Three-fourths Christians (not quite fully committed believers) wanted a philosophy that aligned with their half-hearted faith.

Political reactionaries (those who opposed change) saw in it a refuge from the overwhelming **sensualism** and materialism spilling over from the previous century.

In short, **German philosophy helped put them all to sleep.**

12

Materialistic atomism is one of the most thoroughly **disproven** theories in history. In today's scholarly world, hardly anyone still takes it seriously—except as a useful shortcut for everyday explanations. We owe this mostly to the **Pole Boscovich**, just as we owe the overthrow of geocentrism to the **Pole Copernicus**. These two men were the greatest challengers of "**common sense**" in history.

Copernicus made us believe—against all our senses—that the Earth **does not stand still**.

Boscovich went even further. He demolished belief in the last thing people still thought of as "solid": **the belief in substance, in matter itself, in the idea of fundamental particles**.

This was the greatest victory over the senses ever achieved. But we have to go even further—we need to **wage total war** on the hidden remnants of this atomistic thinking, which still persist in places no one expects, much like **metaphysical superstitions**. Above all, we must finally **strike down** an even more **dangerous** form of atomism—one that has been reinforced for centuries by **Christianity: soul-atomism**. What do I mean by soul-atomism? It's the **belief that the soul is something indestructible, eternal, indivisible—a kind of spiritual atom, a monad**. This belief has no place in science. But rejecting **soul-atomism** does not mean we must reject the **soul itself**. Many crude materialists, when they try to "disprove the soul," only end up **losing it altogether**. That's unnecessary. Instead, we should refine the concept of the soul.

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For example, we can think of:

The "mortal soul"—not something eternal, but something that changes and perishes.

The soul as a bundle of multiple forces, rather than a single indivisible unit.

The soul as a social structure of instincts and passions, rather than an isolated entity.

In this way, psychology can finally move beyond the old superstitions that have surrounded the idea of the soul for so long. Of course, this won't be easy. The new psychologist will find himself in unknown territory, full of doubt and uncertainty. He won't have the comfort of the old beliefs. The psychologists of the past had an easier, happier time—but they were also just playing with illusions. The new psychologist, by breaking free from those illusions, may be condemned to create something new—and who knows? Maybe even discover something real.

13

Psychologists need to think twice before declaring that self-preservation is the most fundamental drive of life. A living being doesn't just try to survive—it tries to expend its strength, to assert itself, to expand.

Life itself is not merely about self-preservation. Life is a will to power. Survival is just one result of this deeper drive—not the main goal. In fact, as with everything else, we should be careful about assuming "purpose" where there may be none. The idea that "self-preservation" is life's highest instinct is just another teleological myth—a leftover from Spinoza's inconsistencies. A proper scientific method demands economy of principles—we must strip away unnecessary explanations. And "self-preservation" as an ultimate explanation? That's one we can do without.

14

Perhaps five or six minds in the world today are beginning to realize that natural science does not explain the world—it only describes and organizes it. But as long as science relies on the senses, people will keep mistaking it for something more: they will continue to believe that science reveals "the truth" about reality. And for a long time, science will be treated as the highest form of knowledge. Why? Because science "sees" and "touches" things—it has its own "ocular proof." This gives it a persuasive power, a credibility that appeals to an age with fundamentally plebeian instincts. People trust what is clear, what is tangible, what can be measured—because they trust their senses. For most people, "truth" means only what they can see and feel. And so, every question is pursued only as far as the senses can take it. But consider Plato—his way of thinking was aristocratic, the opposite of this modern approach. The real charm of Platonism was its rejection of sense-evidence. Plato and his followers, far from being naïve, had stronger and sharper senses than us—but they took pride in overcoming them. Instead of accepting the chaotic flood of sensory information (what Plato called "the mob of the senses"), they imposed order on it. They spun vast, intricate conceptual

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frameworks over reality—pale, cold, intellectual structures, in defiance of what the senses told them. There was a unique **pleasure** in this approach—different from the crude, mechanistic pleasure that today's physicists and Darwinists offer us. **Modern science is obsessed with eliminating all unnecessary effort**—it is built on the principle of “**the least resistance**” and, as a result, **the greatest possible mistake**. Its unspoken rule? "**Where there's nothing left to see or touch, there's nothing left to do.** This is a completely **different** kind of thinking from the Platonic one. But maybe it's the right mentality for a **practical, hard-working race**—for the builders and engineers of the future, who have **nothing but rough labor ahead of them**.

15

If we want to study **physiology** with a clear conscience, we must reject a key assumption of **idealistic philosophy**: the idea that **our sense organs are merely "phenomena"** (that is, just appearances with no independent reality). If this were true, then they could never be real **causes** of anything! So, as a **working hypothesis**, we must at least accept some form of **sensualism**—the idea that the senses give us a real connection to the world. Even if we don't accept it as an absolute truth, we must use it as a guiding principle for investigation. But now, some philosophers go even further. They claim that **the external world is just a creation of our sense organs**. But wait—if that were true, then wouldn't **our own body**, which is part of the external world, also be a creation of our sense organs? And if that's the case, then wouldn't **our sense organs themselves** be creations of our sense organs? This quickly turns into a **reductio ad absurdum**—a self-contradictory mess. If the idea of **causa sui** (something that creates itself) is fundamentally **nonsensical**, then this whole argument collapses. So, logically, **the external world cannot be "the work of our organs".**

16

There are still some naive self-observers who believe in the idea of "**immediate certainties**"—statements like "**I think**", or in Schopenhauer's case, "**I will**"—as if knowledge in these cases directly grasps reality **without distortion**, as if we somehow access the "**thing in itself**" without any filtering or error.

But let me say it **a hundred times over**: "**immediate certainty**," "**absolute knowledge**," and "**the thing in itself**" are contradictions in terms! We must **free ourselves from the illusion** created by misleading words. Ordinary people might believe that "**knowing**" means having direct, complete access to things as they truly are. But a philosopher must think differently. He must ask himself:

"When I say 'I think,' what am I actually claiming?"

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If we analyze that statement closely, we find that it **assumes** a whole chain of **unproven** and **questionable** ideas:

That there is an **I** that thinks.

That something **must** exist in order to think.

That thinking is an **action**—something performed by a **cause** (the thinker).

That there is such a thing as an "**ego**"—a distinct self.

That we already **know** what "thinking" even is.

But how do we know any of this? If I hadn't already **decided** beforehand what "thinking" is, then how could I recognize it? How do I know that what's happening right now in my mind isn't actually **willing** or **feeling** rather than thinking? In other words, when I say "**I think**", I am actually **comparing** my present experience to other past experiences I have labeled as "thinking"—which means this knowledge **isn't immediate at all!** It depends on memory, past interpretations, and assumptions. So while ordinary people believe in "**immediate certainty**", the philosopher, upon closer inspection, finds himself facing **deep metaphysical questions**, such as:

Where did I even get the concept of "thinking"?

Why do I assume cause and effect exist?

What gives me the right to speak of an "ego" at all?

Why do I assume that an "ego" causes thought?

And if someone simply responds to these difficult questions by saying, "**I think, and I know this is true and certain!**", then today's philosopher will just smile and raise an eyebrow.

Because a real philosopher will respond: "**Sir, you are probably mistaken. But even if you're not—why should your belief be the truth?"**

17

I will never stop pointing out a **simple but crucial fact**—a fact that **logicians** (those overly faithful believers in reason) are **reluctant to accept**:

Thoughts come when *they* want—not when *I* want.

This means that it is actually **wrong** to say that the subject "**I**" is what produces the action "**think.**" The truth is, **thinking happens**, but whether the "**one**" who thinks is actually the so-called "**ego**" is **just an assumption**—not a certainty.

Even saying "**one thinks**" is already going too far! That phrase itself **contains an interpretation**—it assumes that there is a **subject** behind the thought, when in reality, we are just **following grammar's lead**:

Thinking is assumed to be an **activity**.

Every **activity** is assumed to require a **doer**.

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Therefore, we assume there must be a **thinker** behind every thought.

But this is just a **linguistic habit**, not an actual fact.

The same kind of mistake happened in early **atomism**. Philosophers at the time believed that whenever something had **power** (like motion or force), there had to be some **tiny material particle** that carried that power—the **atom**. But over time, more rigorous thinkers **abandoned** this need for a tiny "indivisible particle" and learned to explain reality **without it**.

In the same way, perhaps one day we will finally **free ourselves** from this old grammatical illusion—that there must be an "**I**" or a "**one**" behind thinking at all.

Maybe we will learn to get by **without** the little "one"—without the "**ego**" that we have spent so long trying to refine and define.

18

One of the most appealing things about a theory is that it **can be disproven**—this is precisely what makes it so attractive to sharp and inquisitive minds.

Take the idea of "**free will**." It has been **refuted a hundred times over**, yet it still refuses to die. Why?

Because the very fact that it **can** be refuted over and over again makes it irresistible—there's always someone new who believes they are clever and strong enough to **disprove it once and for all**.

19

Philosophers talk about **the will** as if it were the simplest, most familiar thing in the world. Schopenhauer even went so far as to claim that **the will alone** is something we truly understand—**completely, without distortion**.

But to me, Schopenhauer was simply doing what philosophers often do: **taking a common assumption and exaggerating it**.

The idea that **willing** is a single, unified thing is just a **linguistic illusion**—it's **only "one" thing in name**, but in reality, it's much more **complex**. And it's precisely in these **names** that common prejudices take hold, tricking philosophers throughout history.

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So let's be more careful for once—let's even be **unphilosophical**—and take a closer look at what **willing** actually involves:

Willing involves multiple sensations—

The feeling of **moving away** from one state.

The feeling of **moving toward** another state.

The awareness of both "**from**" and "**toward**" at the same time.

Plus, a subtle **muscular sensation**—even if we don't physically move, our body is **ready** to, as if by habit, whenever we will something.

Willing also involves thinking—

Every act of will has a **guiding thought** behind it.

We can't separate this **thought** from the **will**—if we did, nothing would remain!

Most importantly, willing is an emotion—

Specifically, the **emotion of command**.

When we say "**I will**", we're really experiencing a feeling of **authority** over something that is supposed to obey.

We feel **supreme** over the part of us that "must" carry out the order.

This comes with a **narrow focus**, a kind of tunnel vision: "*This, and only this, must happen now.*"

At its core, **willing is commanding something within ourselves**—and believing that this command will be obeyed.

But here's where things get really interesting.

Willing is **so complex**, yet people use **one** simple word for it—"will"—and this creates **false assumptions** about how it works.

We experience ourselves as **both** the **one giving orders** and the **one obeying them**.

As the one who obeys, we feel **pressure, resistance, effort, movement**—these sensations follow naturally after we will something.

But we tend to **overlook this duality**—we just call it all "**I**."

This leads to **a series of errors**:

We assume **willing alone is enough for action**—as if willing something automatically makes it happen.

We falsely believe that our **will caused** the action, simply because we only exercise our will when we already expect an outcome.

This **illusion of causality** leads to **a feeling of certainty**:

We **experience** our will as being directly connected to action.

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So we conclude that **the will alone is responsible for the result.**

This makes us feel even more **powerful**, since we believe it was *our* will that overcame obstacles.

Thus, what we call "**freedom of the will**" is actually just **the feeling of delight** in commanding **ourselves**, in identifying with the part of us that executes the order.

We feel the **joy of overcoming resistance**, and we mistakenly attribute that success to our **own willpower**.

In reality, our body is **not one single thing**—it's a **social structure** made up of many forces, many smaller "wills" working together.

L'effet, c'est moi—*"The result? That was me."*

This is exactly what happens in a well-organized state: the ruling class takes **credit** for the success of the whole society.

And in the same way, **every act of will** is really just a **hierarchy of command and obedience** happening within us.

That's why **a philosopher should treat willing as a moral issue**—because it's fundamentally about **power relationships**.

At its core, **life itself** is structured around **hierarchies of power**—and nowhere is this clearer than in the phenomenon of **willing**.

20

Philosophical ideas don't just appear randomly or evolve independently. They develop **in connection with each other**, like species within an ecosystem. No matter how suddenly or arbitrarily they seem to emerge in history, they always fit into a larger system—just like how the animal species of a continent form an interconnected whole.

This is proven by the fact that, across different ages and cultures, philosophers always end up **reconstructing the same fundamental set of possible philosophies**.

Even when they believe themselves to be **original thinkers**, critically dismantling past ideas or creating their own systems, something **invisible** guides them. They follow an unseen order, compelled by the **internal structure of thought itself**. Their thinking isn't so much **discovery** as it is **recognition, remembering, and returning**—a kind of **homecoming** to an ancient **shared**

intellectual heritage. In this sense, **philosophizing is a form of high-level atavism**—a return to deeply rooted patterns of thought.

That's why **Indian, Greek, and German** philosophy all share a striking **family resemblance**—it's no coincidence.

Why? Because philosophy is shaped by **language itself**. The **grammar** of a language creates an unconscious framework that **limits and directs** the kinds of philosophical ideas that seem possible.

Since Indo-European languages have a **strong subject-object structure**, their philosophies naturally emphasize **dualisms** (mind vs. body, reality vs. illusion, good vs. evil).

But in **Ural-Altaic languages** (like Turkish or Mongolic), where the concept of the "**subject**" is much less developed, thinkers likely **see the world differently** and explore **different philosophical paths** than those of the **Indo-Europeans or Muslims**.

In the end, even **grammar** is shaped by **physiology** and **racial conditions**—our **bodies and instincts** influence the way we think, just as much as logic does.

And with that, we can **reject** the shallow view of **Locke**, who naïvely believed that ideas simply arise from experience, without recognizing these **deep, hidden structures** that shape thought itself.

21

The idea of **causa sui** (something that causes itself) is the most **self-contradictory concept ever invented**—a complete violation of logic, a monstrous absurdity. And yet, **human arrogance** has entangled itself in this nonsense so deeply that it refuses to let go.

Take, for example, the **desire for “free will” in the absolute, metaphysical sense**—the idea that people are completely, independently responsible for their own actions, free from any external influence. This belief, which still lingers in the minds of the **half-educated**, is nothing less than the **desire to be causa sui**—to be one's **own cause**, the creator of oneself. It's as ridiculous as **Baron Munchausen pulling himself out of a swamp by his own hair**.

If someone **finally realizes** how absurd this concept of "**free will**" is and discards it, I urge them to take one more step in their **enlightenment**—to also get rid of the opposite idea: "**non-free will**."

Why? Because **non-free will** is just as much of a **misuse of the idea of cause and effect** as free will is!

We **should not** think of cause and effect in a **crude, mechanical** way, as if causes **push and press** until they force an effect to happen—this is the lazy thinking of materialist philosophers who treat everything like a **machine**.

Cause and effect are not “real” things. They are just **concepts—useful fictions** we created to help us **describe** reality and communicate. But they **do not explain anything**.

In reality—in the world as it is—there is no such thing as:

Causal necessity

Psychological determinism

Laws of nature as we imagine them

We **invented** all these things—**causation, sequence, law, constraint, freedom, motive, purpose**—and then **projected them onto reality**.

What are we doing when we assume the world works this way?

We are acting like myth-makers.

So, just as **free will** is a myth, so too is **non-free will**.

What really exists? Only **strong wills and weak wills**.

Whenever a philosopher **obsesses over** causality, determinism, or psychological necessity—talking about compulsion, oppression, or powerlessness—it's usually a **sign of their own weakness**.

In fact, if you look closely, you'll see that **people who discuss "the problem of free will" always have a personal stake in it**—but from two opposite motives:

Some people refuse to give up their "responsibility" and belief in themselves. They desperately hold on to the idea that they **alone** are responsible for their successes, their merits, their greatness. These people tend to be **from proud, vain cultures**—races that cling to their personal achievements.

Others, however, don't want responsibility at all. Deep down, they despise themselves, so they look for any excuse to **escape blame**—to avoid being held accountable for their failures. These are the ones who become **apologists for criminals**, writing books about how criminals are just **products of society**. They disguise their personal self-loathing as "**compassion**" and "**social justice**."

And in today's world, this **fatalistic weakness** has even found a fashionable new disguise—it calls itself "**the religion of human suffering**" (*la religion de la souffrance humaine*).

It makes **self-pity** into a virtue. It turns **weakness** into a **moral high ground**.

That's its "**good taste**."

22

Forgive me—I'm an old philologist, and I just can't resist pointing out bad interpretations. Take, for example, the way you **physicists** proudly talk about "**Nature's conformity to law**"—as if it were some **absolute fact**.

But **this is not a fact**—it's just **your interpretation**, a **misreading** based on bad **philology**!

Nature has no such "**laws**"—you've simply **projected** human ideas onto it. It's a **naïve, sentimental distortion**, shaped to fit modern **democratic instincts**.

The logic behind it goes something like this:

"Everywhere should be equal before the law—so Nature must follow the same principle. Nature, too, should not be above us."

In other words, you've **smuggled in** your resentment toward anything **hierarchical** or **privileged**—even toward **the idea of God Himself**.

Your real slogan is "**Neither God nor master!**"—and so, you cry out: "**Long live natural law!**"

But this is just **your interpretation, not the reality of nature**.

Now imagine someone else coming along, someone with an entirely different perspective. Instead of seeing **equality and order in Nature**, they could just as easily interpret the world as a brutal, merciless **manifestation of raw power**.

This person would argue that the **true nature of reality** is not **law**, but **power—unrelenting, absolute power** that follows its consequences through every moment, without exception.

To them, even words like "**tyranny**" would seem **too soft, too human**—because what happens in nature is beyond all human moral categories.

And yet, in the end, **this person would still describe reality the same way you do**:

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As something "**necessary**" and "**predictable**"—but **not because of laws**, rather because **there are no laws at all**.

Every force simply plays out **its own will to the fullest**, without restriction.

And yes, this too is **just an interpretation**—but if you object to that... all the better.

23

Up until now, **psychology** has been held back by **moral biases** and **timidity**. It has refused to dive into the **depths**.

If we read closely what has been written so far, we can also detect what **has not been said**—and it becomes clear that no one has yet dared to think of psychology as I do:

As the study of the will to power—its form, its evolution, its morphology.

Even in the most **rational**, seemingly **neutral** realms of thought, moral prejudices still reign, distorting our vision.

A **true psychology**—one that looks at the fundamental forces of human nature—faces fierce resistance, even in the heart of its own investigators. Their own **moral conscience** recoils from what they discover.

For example:

If you argue that "**good**" and "**bad**" **impulses are mutually dependent**, people react with disgust.

If you claim that **all good impulses originate from bad ones**, even the strongest minds **flinch**.

If you dare to say that emotions like **hatred, envy, greed, and the drive to dominate** are not only necessary but **essential** for life's progression, you will make people **physically sick**—like seasickness from a stormy voyage.

And yet, this is only **the beginning** of the terrifying truths hidden within psychology.

There are a hundred good reasons why most people should **avoid** this path **if they can**.

But if you've already drifted into these dangerous waters—if you've already set sail toward these forbidden truths—then **brace yourself!**

Keep a **firm grip on the helm**.

Open your **eyes** and **face** what's ahead.

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Crush whatever remains of **your old morality**, if you must.

Because once you go down this path, **you will sail right over morality itself**.

But so what? **We don't matter**.

What matters is that we are opening the door to the **deepest, most profound** understanding of reality ever achieved.

And if a **psychologist** dares to make this sacrifice, it will not be an act of blind faith (*sacrificio dell'intelletto*). On the contrary—he will be restoring psychology to **its rightful place as the queen of all sciences**.

Because in the end, **psychology is the key to the fundamental problems of existence**.

Part Two: The Free Spirit

24

O sacred simplicity!

What an incredible **illusion** we live in! What a bizarre world of **simplifications and distortions!**

Once you truly open your eyes to it, you can never stop marveling at this phenomenon—**how we have made everything seem so clear, so easy, so simple!**

We have trained our **senses** to skim only the surface of things.

We have trained our **minds** to indulge in playful errors and reckless conclusions, almost as if it were divine amusement.

From the very beginning, we have clung to **ignorance**—not as an accident, but as a deliberate choice, because it allows us to live with **joy, carefreeness, recklessness, and exuberance.**

We enjoy life **only because we have made it simple enough to bear!**

And paradoxically, it is on this **rock-solid foundation of ignorance** that all **knowledge** has been built.

The **will to know** has always depended on something **even stronger—the will to ignorance, the will to uncertainty, the will to falsehood!**

Not as its **opposite**—but as its **refinement**.

I can only hope that **language** remains as clumsy as ever, that it continues to talk about "**opposites**" where none exist—only shades, degrees, and subtle variations.

And I hope that the deep **hypocrisy** of morality—now ingrained in our very flesh and blood—continues to twist and tangle our words, forcing those of us who truly understand to **smile knowingly** at the spectacle.

Because here and there, we **see through it all**—we laugh at the fact that even **our best knowledge** is still working to keep us trapped inside this **oversimplified, artificial, neatly-packaged, falsified version of reality.**

Knowledge, whether it admits it or not, **still clings to error—because life itself clings to error.**

Because to live is to love illusion.

After such a lively beginning, let me say something serious—something for the most serious minds.

Philosophers, seekers of knowledge—beware of martyrdom!

Beware of suffering “for the sake of truth”—even when defending yourself.

Why?

Because **martyrdom corrupts you**. It robs you of the innocence and neutrality of your conscience. It makes you stubborn, blind to objections, and hypersensitive to anything that challenges you. It **hardens you**, dulls your thinking, and **drags you down to a more animalistic, brutish state**.

When you face danger, slander, suspicion, exile—or worse—you may feel tempted to play your **final card**: presenting yourself as the great **defender of truth** in a world that wants to silence it.

But **does truth really need protectors?**

Truth is not some **helpless victim** in need of rescuing. And you—**philosophers, daydreamers, builders of castles in the clouds**—you are not knights in shining armor!

Besides, you already know this:

It doesn't actually matter whether **you** win your argument.

No philosopher has ever truly "won" his argument.

A single **question mark** placed after your own ideas and beliefs might contain more real honesty than all the grand speeches and dramatic gestures you make before courts and accusers.

So what should you do?

Walk away. Hide. Disappear.

If society turns against you, don't fight—**vanish** instead. Learn to wear masks, to use tricks, to be mistaken for someone else—or even to be feared if necessary!

And **don't forget the garden!**

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Yes, the garden—like Epicurus had, a place of quiet refuge, enclosed by golden trellises. Surround yourself with people who bring peace, like a garden, like music drifting over the water at sunset, when the day is already fading into memory.

Choose **good solitude**—

Not bitter isolation, but a **free, lighthearted solitude**, one that allows you to remain **good**, in whatever way that still makes sense to you.

Because here's the danger:

A **long war**—especially one that must be fought in secret, without open force—**poisons you**. It makes you **cunning, vengeful, bitter**.

A **long time spent in fear**, always watching enemies (or imagined enemies), turns you into something personal, small, and paranoid.

Just look at history—those who were cast out of society, those who were persecuted for too long—people like **Spinoza or Giordano Bruno**—they **always** end up, even unknowingly, as **masters of revenge and poison**.

Go ahead—examine the foundations of **Spinoza's ethics and theology**. See how much bitterness is woven into his philosophy.

And let's not even mention **the stupidity of moral indignation**—that ultimate sign that a philosopher has lost his **sense of humor**.

Because **martyrdom ruins a philosopher**.

His "**sacrifice for truth**" only reveals whatever **agitator and performer** was lurking inside him all along.

And if you once admired a philosopher for his sharpness, his artistry—then watching him **deteriorate into a martyr, a dramatic preacher, a man shouting from the stage or the podium**—it's almost unbearable.

But if you must watch, be clear about what you're witnessing:

It's not a tragedy anymore. That part is **already over**.

What remains is just the **final act of a farce, a comedic afterplay**.

A philosopher's suffering may **begin** as a tragedy.

But when it ends, all that's left is a satire.

26

Every truly **exceptional person** instinctively seeks **a fortress, a private retreat**—a place where he can be **free from the crowd, the masses, the majority**. He needs a space where he can **forget "ordinary people"**, because he himself is **their exception**.

Unless, of course, he is driven by an even stronger instinct—a calling to descend into the masses **as a great observer**, one who must study humanity in all its rawness.

Anyone who **spends time among people** and **never** feels flashes of disgust, exhaustion, frustration, pity, or loneliness—
that person is not a man of refined taste.

However, if someone **avoids** these experiences entirely—
if he **withdraws completely** into his fortress, refusing to engage with the common world—
then one thing is certain: **he was not meant for knowledge.**

Because anyone who is truly **called to knowledge** will, at some point, have to say to himself:

"To hell with my refined taste! The ordinary man—the 'rule'—is far more interesting than the exception (me)."

And then he will **go down** into the crowd. More than that—he will go **inside** it.

For a **philosopher**, this **long and serious study of the "average man"** is **unavoidable**.

It requires:

Disguise

Self-discipline

Familiarity with common people

Endless bad conversations (because *every* conversation is bad, unless it is with one's equals)

This will be one of the **most unpleasant, disappointing, and soul-draining** parts of his life.

However, if he is **lucky**, he will find **certain people who help him in this task**—people who expose the **truth of humanity** in the bluntest, rawest way possible.

These people are the **cynics**.

Cynics are those who **see only the animal, the vulgar, the ordinary in themselves**—and have just enough self-awareness and intelligence to **say it out loud**.

Some even **write it down**, rolling in their own filth like animals in a dung heap.

Cynicism is the only form of honesty that low souls are capable of.

And so, the **higher man** must learn to **listen carefully** to every shade of **cynicism**—whether crude or refined. He should feel a **strange sense of luck** when the fool **drops his mask**, when the clown **becomes shameless**, or when the **scientific satyr speaks his mind**.

Sometimes, this spectacle is **disgusting**—but sometimes, it is **strangely fascinating**.

For example, occasionally, nature plays a **joke**—and a rare **genius** is trapped inside a vulgar, crude, obscene personality.

This was the case with **Abbé Galiani**—perhaps the most **brilliant**, sharp-witted, and scandalous man of his century. He was far **deeper than Voltaire**, and also **far more silent**.

More commonly, though, we see another strange mix:

A **scientific mind** in the body of a **fool**.

A **brilliant intellect** inside a **base, vulgar soul**.

This is especially common among **doctors** and **moral psychologists**—people who study human nature closely but remain, themselves, **small and crude men**.

Whenever someone speaks about **human nature without bitterness**—without moral outrage, but simply **as it is**—the lover of knowledge should **listen carefully**.

Whenever someone describes man **without illusions**, saying:

"Humans are just stomachs with two needs, and a brain with one."

"The only real drives are hunger, sex, and vanity."

"Everything people do comes down to these basic instincts."

—Then the true thinker should **pay attention**.

Because the most dangerous people are not these **laughing, self-satisfied satyrs**.

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The truly dangerous ones are the **morally indignant**—the ones who are always gnashing their teeth, always lashing out at the world, society, or even God.

Yes, in a **moral** sense, these people may seem "**higher**", more noble than the self-satisfied cynics.

But in every other way, they are **far more common, far less interesting, and far less insightful**.

And more than anything:

No one is a bigger liar than a man full of moral outrage.

27

Being understood is difficult—especially when one thinks and lives at **the speed of the Ganges** (*gangasrotogati*) while surrounded by people who think and live differently—some moving at **the slow crawl of a tortoise** (*kurmagati*), and others hopping along **like frogs** (*mandeikagati*), in brief, disconnected jumps.

(I do everything I can to **be difficult to understand!**)

So when someone actually **makes the effort** to interpret you with nuance and care, you should be **grateful**—because that is rare.

As for so-called "**good friends**"—

The ones who are **too relaxed**,

The ones who assume that being your friend **entitles** them to effortless understanding,

The ones who **refuse** to struggle with the difficulty of your thoughts—

With them, it's best to make an **early decision**:

Either give them a **playground** for misunderstanding—let them run wild with their mistaken interpretations, let them play at understanding you, and then **laugh at the whole thing**.

Or, better yet—**get rid of them entirely**.

And then, laugh even harder.

28

The hardest thing to translate from one language to another is **tempo**—the rhythm and speed of its style.

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Tempo isn't just a matter of writing; it's rooted in the **character of a people**, or more precisely, in their **physiology**—in the average **tempo of how they process life**, even down to how they **digest their food**.

Some translations, though made with good intentions, end up as **unintentional vulgarizations**—even **distortions**—of the original text, simply because they fail to capture its **liveliness, its lightness, its daring speed**.

For example, **Germans** are almost incapable of writing in **presto**—that fast, playful, effortless movement. As a result, they also struggle to grasp many of the **most delightful and audacious nuances** of free-spirited thought.

That's why **buffoons and satyrs**—those symbols of quick wit and irreverence—feel so foreign to them, both physically and morally. It's also why **Aristophanes and Petronius** are practically **untranslatable** into German.

Everything that is **heavy, slow, cumbersome, long-winded, and exhausting**—that, Germans have mastered in all its variations.

(Even **Goethe's prose** is no exception—it carries a stiffness mixed with elegance, a relic of the "good old days" of German taste, which was really a kind of **rococo style in both art and manners**.)

The **exception** to this? **Lessing**.

Thanks to his **theatrical instinct** and wide-ranging knowledge, he had a feel for **tempo**.

He translated **Bayle** (a master of irony).

He admired **Diderot** and **Voltaire**.

He loved the **Roman comic writers**.

In short, **Lessing understood the need for speed**—and the joy of escaping Germany's slow, heavy prose.

But even he couldn't replicate **the tempo of Machiavelli**, who, in *The Prince*, makes us breathe the **dry, sharp air of Florence**—writing about **serious, even dangerous** matters with a wild, almost mocking **allegro**. Machiavelli deliberately heightens the contrast: his subject matter is weighty, but his style **races forward with playful ease**.

Now imagine trying to **translate Petronius into German!** Impossible.

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Petronius was a master of **presto**—faster than any great musician. He moved at a breakneck pace in **ideas, wit, and language**.

And why should we care about the **decay of Rome** or the **moral sickness of the ancient world**, when in his writing, we feel the **rush of the wind**—a force that **sweeps away the stagnant, stale air** and **makes everything healthy simply by making everything run!**

And then there's **Aristophanes**—that **miraculous, redeeming genius**, the one reason we can **forgive all of Greek culture**, if only we truly grasp just how much there was that needed **forgiving and redeeming!**

Nothing has made me reflect more on **Plato's secretive, enigmatic nature** than a small **historical detail**:

On his deathbed, Plato had no **Bible**, no **Egyptian scrolls**, no **Pythagorean texts**, no **Platonic dialogues** under his pillow.

Instead, he had a **book of Aristophanes**.

How could even **Plato**—the philosopher who rejected so much of Greek life—have endured that life at all...

Without Aristophanes?

29

Being truly independent is something only a **very few** can achieve; it is a **privilege of the strong**. Anyone who attempts it—not because they have no other choice, but simply because they **choose to**—proves that they are not just strong but **unbelievably daring**.

To seek true independence is to **enter a labyrinth**, multiplying the dangers of life a thousand times over. And one of the greatest dangers is this: **if you lose your way, no one will notice**. If you become isolated, if your own conscience **tears you apart like a minotaur**, the world will remain **blind to your suffering**.

If you **fail**, no one will understand. No one will feel your pain, and no one will sympathize with you.

And worst of all—you **can't go back**. Not even to the comfort of human sympathy.

Our **deepest insights** must—and should—seem like madness, or even **crimes**, when they reach the wrong ears—those who are **not ready** and **not meant** to understand them.

The ancient distinction between **exoteric** (outer) and **esoteric** (inner) knowledge—found among the **Indians, Greeks, Persians, and Muslims**, in societies that believed in **hierarchies** rather than **equality**—was not just about who was **inside or outside**. The deeper difference was **perspective**:

- The **exoteric** class sees the world **from below, looking up**—they judge by external appearances.
- The **esoteric** class sees the world **from above, looking down**—they perceive things from a higher vantage point.

From certain spiritual **heights**, even **tragedy itself stops feeling tragic**. If you gathered **all the suffering in the world**, could you say with certainty that witnessing it would necessarily lead to **sympathy**? That it would demand **pity**—and thus **double the amount of suffering**?

What **nourishes and strengthens** the **higher type of man** might be **poison** to those of a **lower order**.

- The virtues of **ordinary people** could be **weaknesses** in a philosopher.
- A **great man in decline** might develop traits that, in a lower world, would make him a **saint**.

Some books have an **opposite effect** depending on **who** reads them:

- To the **weak**, they are **dangerous, disturbing, unsettling**.
- To the **strong**, they are a **call to courage, a summons to greatness**.

Books written for **the masses** always carry the **stench of the common**—the smell of mediocrity clings to them.

Where the **crowds** gather to eat, drink, or even **worship**, the air is **foul**.

If you want to breathe **pure air, stay out of churches**.

In our youth, we venerate and despise **without nuance**—and nuance is life's greatest lesson. We must pay a **hard price** for the way we once judged people and things with nothing but **Yes or No**, with absolute certainty.

Life is designed in such a way that it **punishes** our worst instinct: **the craving for absolutes**. We are deceived and misled over and over again until we learn to add **art** to our emotions, until we realize that the real **artists of life** prefer to play with **illusion** rather than demand rigid truths.

The **youthful mind**, with its fiery admiration and blind outrage, refuses to rest until it has **distorted** people and things just enough to make them **fit** its passion. Youth itself is **a kind of deception**—it reshapes reality to match its desires.

Then comes the inevitable **disillusionment**. The young soul, betrayed by its own expectations, turns **against itself**. But it does so **with the same passion and intensity**—full of **suspicion, remorse, and self-reproach**.

- It **tears itself apart**, furious at its own past blindness, as if it had **chosen** to be deceived.
- It **distrusts its own emotions**, punishing itself for once being too naive.
- It **doubts enthusiasm itself**, fearing it might be just another illusion.
- Even a **clear conscience** starts to feel suspicious, as if it were just a **more subtle form of self-deception**.
- Above all, it takes up a **crusade against "youth" itself**—seeing it as foolishness, arrogance, or illusion.

Then, **ten years later**, it finally understands:

All of that... was still youth.

32

For most of human history—the **prehistoric period**—people judged the **value** of an action based on its **consequences**, not its nature or intention. Actions were neither praised nor condemned in themselves; their worth was determined **after the fact**, by whether they led to success or failure.

It was a world where reputation worked **retroactively**—just as in China today, where a child's honor or disgrace reflects upon their parents.

Let's call this the **pre-moral** phase of humanity. In that time, the imperative “**Know thyself!**” was still unheard of.

Over the past **10,000 years**, however, in certain parts of the world, a great shift took place:

Instead of judging actions by their **outcomes**, people began to judge them by their **origins**—specifically, by **the intentions behind them**.

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This was a profound transformation—an intellectual refinement brought about by the **aristocratic instinct** that placed great importance on **origins and lineage**. It marked the birth of what we call the **moral age**—the first real attempt at **self-knowledge**.

A total reversal in perspective!

But this shift did not happen easily—it was won **through struggle and hesitation**. And as with all major transformations, it brought **new illusions** of its own.

The biggest **new superstition** was this:

- People came to believe that the **sole** determining factor of an action's moral value was **its intention**.
- The idea took hold that **only** intentional actions had moral worth.

For centuries, moral judgments—and even **philosophy itself**—were built on this assumption.

But is it possible that we are now at the **threshold of a new transformation**?

A shift so radical that it would **surpass morality itself**?

Among **us immoralists**, a suspicion is growing:

- The **real** value of an action may lie **precisely in what is NOT intentional**.
- Intentions, far from being the essence of morality, may be nothing more than **a surface, a skin**—something that **reveals a little, but conceals much more**.
- Intentions may be **mere signs, symptoms**—things that require interpretation, not things that contain meaning in themselves.

If this is true, then **morality as we have known it**—morality based on intention—has been **nothing but a prejudice**.

Perhaps it was just a **temporary phase**, something like **astrology or alchemy**—a necessary step, but one that must ultimately be **overcome**.

And if morality is something to be **surmounted**, then this task—the **overcoming of morality**—is the **great secret labor** reserved for the most refined, the most honest, and yes, even the most **ruthless** consciences of our time.

They are the **living touchstones of the soul**, the ones who will test what comes next.

33

The feelings of **self-sacrifice, self-renunciation, and devotion to others** must be ruthlessly **questioned** and **put on trial**, just as we must expose the **false aesthetic ideal of "disinterested contemplation"**—the disguise under which modern art seeks to **castrate itself** while pretending to maintain a clean conscience.

There is **too much charm and sweetness** in ideas like "**for others**" and "**not for myself**" for us not to be **deeply suspicious**. We must ask immediately: **Are these not illusions?**

That these ideas **please** those who believe in them, those who benefit from them, and even those who merely observe them—**this is no argument in their favor!** It is, if anything, a reason to be **even more cautious**.

So let us be cautious!

34

No matter what philosophical perspective we take, one thing is **unquestionably clear: the world we think we live in is false.**

Everywhere we turn, we find **proof after proof** of this, pushing us toward the unsettling idea that **deception is built into the nature of reality itself**.

Some try to resolve this by **blaming the mind itself**—as if **thought** and **consciousness** were the **culprits** behind our illusions. This is the standard move of those who defend **God** or some other ultimate truth; they claim the world is false **only because we perceive it falsely**.

But if thinking itself has **tricked us this badly**, what reason do we have to **trust it now**? How do we know it won't **continue deceiving us**, as it always has?

Philosophers show a **touching innocence** when they **earnestly ask consciousness to give them honest answers**—when they ask things like:

- *"Is consciousness real?"*
- *"Why does it keep us from perceiving the outer world directly?"*

The belief in "**immediate certainties**" is a **moral** naïveté—it reflects well on philosophers, because it shows their **good intentions**.

But we must stop being **just moral** men!

Outside of morality, this belief is **pure foolishness**.

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In middle-class society, **distrust** is seen as a sign of a "bad character"—it is considered impolite, even impractical.

But we **philosophers do not belong to the middle class!**

We have spent all of history being **the most deceived people on earth**—and now, we are **obliged to be distrustful**. We must stare **into the abyss of suspicion** with **the sharpest, most wicked squint**.

Forgive me for my dark humor, but I have long since learned to **think differently** about deception and self-deception. I even **enjoy poking fun** at the blind fury with which philosophers try to escape being deceived.

Why fight it? **Why not embrace deception?**

It is nothing more than a **moral prejudice** that **truth** is inherently better than **illusion**—in fact, it is **the worst-proven assumption** in the world!

Life itself could never have existed without **perspectives and illusions**. If we were to eliminate the "**seeming world**"—as so many earnest philosophers have wished—then **nothing of their so-called "truth" would remain!**

But why do we even assume there is an **absolute difference** between **true and false**?

Is it not enough to speak of **degrees of illusion**—lighter and darker shades of perception, as painters speak of **valeurs**?

And what if the **entire world as we know it is a fiction**?

If someone objects—"But every fiction must have an author!"—why should we accept that? Why not go further and ask: **What if even the idea of an "author" is part of the fiction?**

Shouldn't philosophers, at last, **liberate themselves from the tyranny of grammar**—from this **schoolteacher's superstition** that insists every action must have a subject?

All respect to governesses—but isn't it time for philosophy to **outgrow its belief in grammar**?

35

Oh, Voltaire! Oh, humanity! Oh, idiocy!

There is something **dangerous** in "the truth"—and in the very act of **seeking** the truth.

And if a man goes about it **too humanely**, saying—"Il ne cherche le vrai que pour faire le bien"
(He seeks the truth only to do good)"—

I guarantee you, he will find nothing!

36

Suppose that **the only reality** we are given is the **world of our desires and passions**—that we cannot sink below or rise above this realm of **impulses**. After all, even **thinking** is nothing more than the way these impulses relate to one another.

If this is the case, can we not ask: **Does this reality alone suffice to explain everything?**

Could it even account for the so-called **mechanical** or **material** world?

I do not mean explaining it as **illusion**, as mere **appearance** or **representation** (as Berkeley or Schopenhauer would claim), but rather **as something just as real as our own emotions**.

Perhaps what we call **the physical world** is simply a **more primitive** form of the world of emotions—a stage where everything still exists in **one great, undivided unity**, before splitting off and evolving through **organic processes**. Over time, this unity **refines itself**, but also **weakens** in certain ways.

Could it be that what we call "life"—with all its functions like **self-regulation, assimilation, nutrition, excretion, and metabolism**—was once a **single, unified instinctive force**? That life, at its **deepest level**, is simply **Will**?

Not only is it possible to ask this question, but **we are obligated to**—by the demands of **logical method**.

The rule is simple:

- We should **not assume multiple causes** when we can attempt to explain everything with **a single principle**.
- We must push **one hypothesis** as far as it can go—**even to the point of absurdity**—before introducing another.

This is a matter of **intellectual honesty**, a **morality of method** that we cannot abandon today.

The real question is:

- Do we truly recognize **the will as an active force**?
- Do we believe in **the causality of the will**?

Because, at its core, **our belief in causality itself is nothing but our belief in the will as a cause.**

If we take this seriously, we must consider an **extreme hypothesis**:

- **What if the will is the only form of causality?**
- **What if all action is, in reality, the action of will upon will?**

If that is the case, then what we call **mechanical action**—what we usually think of as "physical forces"—is **nothing more than the effects of will.**

If we succeed in tracing all forms of **instinctive life** back to a single **fundamental will**—namely, the **Will to Power**, as I propose—then:

- **All organic functions** would be expressions of this Will to Power.
- Even the mysteries of **reproduction and metabolism**—which are ultimately **one and the same problem**—would find their explanation in it.

If this were accomplished, we would have the right to say:

- **All active force is, at its core, Will to Power.**

Thus, when we look at the **world from within**—when we define it by its **true nature**—

It is simply Will to Power, and nothing else.

37

"Wait—doesn't this just mean, in simple terms, that God has been disproven, but not the devil?"

No! **Quite the opposite, my friends!** And who, for the love of all that's unholy, is forcing you to speak in **such simplistic terms?**

38

Look at what happened with the **French Revolution**—the so-called enlightenment of modern times.

It was a **terrible farce**, completely unnecessary when viewed up close. And yet, from a distance, the **noble dreamers of Europe** projected onto it their own **rage and hope** for so long, so passionately, that eventually...

The text disappeared beneath the interpretation.

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And perhaps **this is what always happens**—perhaps, in order to make history bearable, future generations must **misinterpret** the past entirely.

Or rather—hasn't this already happened?

Aren't we ourselves that "noble posterity"—the ones who misunderstood the past so profoundly that we could finally **live with it**?

And now that we recognize this... does that not mean it's already **over**?

39

Hardly anyone believes a doctrine **just because** it makes people happy or virtuous—except, perhaps, the **sentimental Idealists**, who mix up "**the good, the true, and the beautiful**" into one vague soup, letting all kinds of wishful thinking float around without distinction.

But **happiness and virtue** are not **arguments for truth**.

And yet, even intelligent people forget that **unhappiness and wickedness** are just as useless as counterarguments.

A belief could still be **true**, even if it were profoundly **harmful and dangerous**. In fact, it's entirely possible that the **nature of existence itself** is so brutal that full knowledge of it would **destroy us**.

Maybe the true **measure of a mind's strength** is how much truth it can **handle**—or, to put it more bluntly, how much truth it **needs to have diluted, veiled, sweetened, softened, or outright falsified** in order to function.

But there's no doubt about this: **Certain kinds of truth** are far easier to discover for those who are **unhappy and ruthless**.

And what about those rare individuals who are both **wicked and happy**?—Moralists conveniently **ignore** their existence.

Perhaps **severity and cunning**—not gentleness and ease—are better conditions for producing **strong, independent minds and true philosophers**.

Not the **learned men**, with their gentle manners and careful habits of thought—those qualities may be **useful** for scholars, but not necessarily for real **philosophers**.

Of course, this assumes that the word "**philosopher**" doesn't just mean **someone who writes books** or puts **his philosophy into books!**

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Stendhal gives us a final trait of the **free-spirited philosopher**, which I must emphasize—because it is **deeply offensive to German taste**:

"Pour être bon philosophe, 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."

"To be a good philosopher, one must be dry, clear, and free of illusions. A banker who has made a fortune already possesses part of the character required to make discoveries in philosophy—that is, to see reality as it is."

40

Everything **profound** loves a **mask**—the deeper something is, the more it despises being seen clearly, even in form or likeness.

Shouldn't the **opposite** of something be its **best disguise**? Shouldn't a god, in his shame, walk among us in the **mask of contradiction**? Now there's a question worth asking! Surely, some mystic has already thought the same.

There are acts so delicate, so beyond ordinary understanding, that the best way to **protect them** is to **bury them in coarseness**, to make them completely unrecognizable.

There are moments of **love**, of **extreme generosity**, after which the **wisest thing to do** is to take a stick and **beat the witness** senseless—so that even **his memory becomes unclear**.

Some people even learn to **erase and distort their own memories**, punishing themselves as if to take revenge on the one party who knows the truth: **themselves**. Shame is incredibly creative.

But it is **not always the worst things** that we are **most ashamed of**. Not every mask hides **deception**—sometimes, a mask hides **kindness**.

I can imagine a man who carries something **precious and fragile** inside him, rolling through life with the **clumsy, heavy movements of an old wine cask**, green and round with thick iron hoops—because his **shame** requires such a disguise.

A man whose **shame runs deep** will meet his fate on **hidden paths**, making **silent, critical choices** that not even his **closest friends** will ever know about. His **greatest dangers** will remain invisible to them—and so will his **moments of triumph** when he regains his security.

Someone like this—someone whose very **instinct** is to use words for **silence and concealment**, who excels at **evading communication**—**wants** a mask to exist in the minds of others. He **needs**

his friends and acquaintances to know **a version of him that is not truly him**. And even if he does not intend for this to happen, eventually, he will realize:

There **is** a mask of him out there.

And that is **as it should be**.

Every **profound spirit needs a mask**. In fact, such a mask will form **inevitably**, because the world will always **misinterpret** him. His words, his actions, the very signs of his life—**all will be misunderstood**, reduced to something **simpler, more superficial** than what they really are.

41

A person must **test themselves** to see if they are truly **destined for independence and leadership**—and they must do so **at the right moment**.

One **must not avoid these tests**, even though they may be the **most dangerous trials** one can undergo. In the end, these are tests we **take alone**, judged by **no one but ourselves**.

- Do not **cling to any person**, no matter how dear—they will always be **a prison as well as a refuge**.
- Do not **cling to a homeland**, no matter how much it suffers and struggles—it is even easier to detach from a **victorious nation**.
- Do not **cling to sympathy**, even for great men, even when fate has allowed us to glimpse their suffering.
- Do not **cling to a science**, even if it tempts us with the **most valuable discoveries**, seemingly meant for us alone.
- Do not **cling to your own freedom**, to the intoxicating joy of the **bird soaring ever higher**, always striving to see **more beneath it**—for this is the great **danger of those who fly**.
- Do not **cling to your own virtues**, or allow yourself to be **consumed** by any one part of your nature.

Take, for example, **hospitality**—a virtue, yes, but also **the deadliest trap** for those who are **too generous, too rich in spirit**. Such people give themselves away **too freely**, until their virtue turns into a **weakness**.

One must learn the **art of self-preservation**—for this is the ultimate test of **true independence**.

42

A **new breed of philosopher** is emerging.

I will take the risk of **giving them a name**—a name that is itself **dangerous**.

As far as I can see, and as far as they **allow** themselves to be seen—for they are, by nature, **deliberately enigmatic**—these philosophers of the future might, rightly or wrongly, call themselves "**tempters.**"

But this name itself is merely **an experiment**. Or perhaps...

A temptation.

43

Will these future philosophers be **new lovers of truth?** Most likely—after all, every philosopher before them has **loved their own truths.**

But they will **not** be dogmatists.

It would go against both their **pride** and their **taste** to believe that **their truth must also be true for everyone.** That has always been the **hidden desire** behind every dogmatic philosophy—to make its truth **universal.**

A philosopher of the future, however, might say:

"My opinion is MY opinion—no one else has an automatic right to it."

One must learn to **reject the bad taste** of wanting to **agree with the masses.**

- The moment a **belief** is shared by too many, it **loses its value.**
- Even the word "**good**" is no longer good once it has become **common** speech.
- And how could there ever be a "**common good**"? The phrase itself is a **contradiction!**

Anything that can be **shared by all** is, by definition, **of little worth.**

In the end, the world will remain as it always has been:

- **Great things for the great.**
- **Abysses for the deep.**
- **Delicacies and thrills for the refined.**
- **And, in short—everything rare for the rare.**

44

Do I even need to **say it outright** at this point? These **philosophers of the future** will be **free spirits—VERY free spirits.**

But not just **free spirits**—they will be something **more, something higher, something fundamentally different**. They will resist being **misunderstood**, and **even more so, being mistaken for something lesser**.

But as I say this, I feel just as obligated to them as I do to **us**—we, the **forerunners and heralds** of these new thinkers—to finally **clear away** an old and **stupid misconception** that has long **clouded the meaning** of “free spirit” like a fog.

Throughout **Europe and America**, the term "free spirit" is being **misused**—claimed by a certain class of people who are **anything but free**.

- They are **narrow-minded**,
- **Enslaved by democratic tastes**,
- Devoted to "**modern ideas**",
- Always **agreeable, always social**, never capable of **true solitude**.

They call themselves **free spirits**, but they are nothing more than **levelers**—men who want to **flatten everything**, to **equalize**, to **soften** life.

They are **glib talkers, writers**, and above all, **herd-minded souls**. They are **good people**—honest, courageous even—but they are not **free**.

And worst of all? They are **shallow**.

Their greatest **obsession** is with blaming all of humanity's **misery and failure** on the **old forms of society**—on its traditions, hierarchies, and inequalities.

But they have it **completely backward**.

What these people **truly desire** is a world of **herd happiness**, where:

- **Everyone is safe.**
- **Everything is comfortable.**
- **All suffering is eliminated.**
- Their two favorite slogans: "**Equality of Rights**" and "**Compassion for All**".

They want a **soft, painless** world where suffering is an **evil to be abolished**.

But **we**, who have **opened our eyes**, see something different.

Where has man thrived most?

Where has the human **spirit** grown strongest?

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Not in **comfort**, but in **danger**. Not in **equality**, but in **struggle**.

- **Oppression** made men **clever**.
- **Hardship** made them **strong**.
- **Danger** sharpened their **instincts**.
- **Slavery** made them **resilient**.
- **Suffering** intensified their **Will to Power**.

We believe that **everything the herd despises**—**everything wicked, terrible, violent, predatory, and serpentine**—has played just as much a role in elevating humanity as **everything "good."**

And that is **only scratching the surface**.

We are at **the opposite extreme** of modern thought. We are **their enemies**.

So is it any wonder that we, **the real free spirits**, are not exactly the **most talkative**? That we do not go around explaining exactly **what we have freed ourselves from**? Or **where we might be headed next**?

And what about that **dangerous formula**, the one we use to mark the boundary between us and them—**Beyond Good and Evil**?

It is there to prevent confusion. Because **we are NOT free-thinkers, nor free-pensatori, nor librepenseurs, nor the champions of "modern ideas."**

We have been **guests, or at least trespassers**, in many realms of thought.

- We have **escaped again and again** from the comfortable prisons of ideas—whether they were built by **tradition, books, culture, or even our own fatigue**.
- We have been **tempted** by honor, wealth, power, pleasure—but we have walked away.
- We have learned to be **grateful even for suffering**—for **illness, hardship, and isolation**—because they **free us** from attachments, from mental chains, from the dogmas of society.
- We have learned to be **grateful to the gods, to the devils, to the beasts and worms within us**—because all of them have **taught us**.

We are:

- **Curious to the point of cruelty.**
- **Bold enough to grasp the untouchable.**
- **Sharp-toothed enough to digest the indigestible.**
- **Masters of our own instincts.**

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- Architects of our own perspectives.
- Wanderers with no final destination.
- Hoarders of knowledge, misers of wisdom.
- Both scholars and scavengers, both heirs and thieves.

We are **scarecrows if necessary**—because today, to be truly free, one **must** be terrifying.

We are the sworn, jealous friends of **solitude**—our own deepest, most profound **midnight and midday solitude**.

That is who **we** are—the **real free spirits**.

And **perhaps**, coming ones, **so are you?**

Perhaps you, too, are the **new philosophers?**

Part Three: The Religious Nature

45

The **human soul**—its **limits**, the **breadth** of its experiences, its **heights and depths**, the full history of everything it has ever **felt or thought**, and all its **untapped possibilities**—this is the **natural hunting ground** of a born psychologist, a true **hunter of the soul**.

But how often must such a person **despair** and say to himself:

"Just one man! Only one! And yet, before me lies this vast forest, this untouched wilderness!"

He wishes he had **hundreds of assistants**—sharp, well-trained hounds—to send deep into the history of the human soul, to **flush out the hidden game** and bring it to him.

But it is useless.

Time and again, he learns—**painfully and deeply**—how hard it is to find **the right kind of assistants** for the very things that **ignite his curiosity**.

The problem with **scholars** is that they fall apart the moment the **true hunt begins**—just when real **danger and discovery** are at hand, when **courage, sharp instincts, and precision** are needed.

Their eyes **lose focus**, their noses **lose the scent**.

Take, for instance, the problem of **knowledge and conscience**—its **history** in the minds of deeply religious men.

How could someone **truly understand** what this problem has meant to them?

Perhaps they would need to have **suffered** as much as **Pascal**, whose intellect and faith were locked in an endless **war of the soul**.

But that alone wouldn't be enough. They would also need to have **a vast, detached, wickedly clear mind**, capable of standing above the whole mess and seeing it for what it truly is—**organizing it, making sense of it**.

But where can I find such a person?

And even if such people exist, who has time to **wait** for them to appear? They are far too **rare**, far too **improbable**.

In the end, if you want to truly know something, you must do it yourself.

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And that means—you will always have too much to do.

But then again, my **curiosity** is the most **delightful** of all vices.

Pardon me! I meant to say—

The love of truth has its reward in heaven... and already, here on earth.

46

Faith—the kind of faith that early Christianity demanded, and often achieved—arose in a world filled with **skepticism** and **freethinking**. This was a world shaped by **centuries of philosophical debate** and the **tolerance** that the Roman Empire had instilled in its people.

But this **Christian faith** was not the **severe, earnest slave-faith** of someone like **Luther or Cromwell**, those **northern barbarians of the spirit**, whose devotion clung desperately to God and Christianity.

No—this was something **far more extreme**.

The faith of early Christianity was the faith of **Pascal**—a **horrifying** kind of faith that amounts to a **slow, continuous suicide of reason**.

Not a **quick, clean execution** of reason, but something worse—an endlessly **writhing, stubborn, worm-like reason** that refuses to die with a single blow.

From its very beginning, Christianity demanded **sacrifice**—

- The **sacrifice of freedom**
- The **sacrifice of pride**
- The **sacrifice of self-confidence** in one's own mind

It was, at once, **submission, self-mockery, and self-mutilation**.

There was a **cruelty** in this faith—a **Phoenician religious severity** designed for **tender, complex, and overly sensitive consciences**.

Christian faith assumes that **the submission of the mind is an agonizing process**, that all the past experiences, habits, and instincts of a thinking person will **revolt** against this **absurd demand** called "faith."

Modern people—dull as they are to Christian ideas—no longer grasp just how **shocking, extreme, and perverse** the phrase "**God on the Cross**" sounded to ancient ears.

Never before had there been such a **radical reversal of values**—never something so **daring, disturbing, and full of hidden menace**. This formula promised to **upend** all the old hierarchies.

This was the **Orient**—the **deep, vengeful Orient**—striking back.

It was the **Eastern slave** taking **revenge** on **Rome**—on its **noble, carefree tolerance**, on its **cosmopolitan indifference** to religious seriousness.

It was **not faith** that fueled this rebellion—**but resentment against those who were free from faith**.

It was not belief that drove the **slaves** to rise against their masters, but **hatred of their masters' lighthearted detachment from belief**.

"Enlightenment" breeds revolution.

Why?

Because the **slave** cannot tolerate uncertainty. He craves **the absolute, the unshakable, the tyrannical**—even in morality.

He does not love in shades of gray, nor does he hate in degrees. He loves and hates **completely, blindly, to the point of pain, to the point of sickness**.

His many **hidden wounds** make him **revolt** against the **noble detachment** of his masters—their refusal to take suffering **seriously**.

And this **skepticism toward suffering**, this **aristocratic indifference**, was one of the deepest causes of the **last great slave revolt**—

The French Revolution.

47

Everywhere that **religious neurosis** has appeared in history, it has been linked to three **dangerous lifestyle prescriptions**:

- **Solitude**
- **Fasting**
- **Sexual abstinence**

But it is impossible to say with certainty **which is the cause and which is the effect**—or even if there is a **cause-and-effect** relationship at all.

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This doubt is justified by an observable pattern across **both primitive and advanced civilizations**: those suffering from religious neurosis experience sudden **outbursts of extreme sensuality**, followed by an equally extreme reversal—**fits of guilt, world-denial, and renunciation of desire**.

Could both of these symptoms be different forms of **epilepsy**?

But nowhere is it **more necessary to set aside explanations** than here—because around no other human type has there accumulated such a **mountain of superstition and absurdity**.

No other type has been so **fascinating** to mankind—even to philosophers.

Maybe it's time we learn to be **a little more indifferent** to this topic.

Maybe it's time to be **cautious**—or better yet, to simply **look away, walk away**.

And yet, even in **modern philosophy**, this religious crisis—the question of the **saint**—lingers.

Schopenhauer, for example, took it as **his central problem**:

- *How is the rejection of the will possible?*
- *How is the saint possible?*

This question led him to **become a philosopher** in the first place.

So it was almost inevitable that his most devoted follower—perhaps his **last** devoted follower in Germany—**Richard Wagner**—would conclude his life's work at precisely this point.

In his opera *Parsifal*, Wagner **put the saint on stage—lived and suffering**, as the figure of Kundry.

And at that very moment, all across Europe, **psychiatrists** were observing the same phenomenon **firsthand**, as **religious hysteria** broke out once again—this time in the form of the **Salvation Army** movement.

But why has this figure—the saint—always been so **irresistibly fascinating**?

Why has every generation, every type of person, including philosophers, been **so captivated** by it?

The answer is **simple**:

The **miraculous transformation**—the idea that a person can **instantaneously shift from one extreme to the other**.

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People believed it was **self-evident** that a "**bad man**" could, in a moment, become a "**good man**"—a saint.

At this point, all of psychology **collapsed**.

And maybe that was **inevitable**—because psychology had **enslaved itself to morality**.

It **believed** in the idea of **absolute moral opposites**—and so it **projected them onto reality**, interpreting everything through that lens.

But what if it was all just a **misinterpretation**?

What if the "**miracle**" was simply an **error in reading the facts**?

What if it was **nothing but bad philology**?

48

The **Latin peoples** seem to be **far more deeply rooted** in their **Catholicism** than we Northerners are in Christianity as a whole. This means that **losing faith** in Catholic countries is something entirely different from **losing faith** in Protestant ones.

For them, **rejecting Catholicism** is almost like a **betrayal of their heritage**, a **rebellion against the very soul of their race**.

For us Northerners, however, **rejecting Christianity** often feels like a **return** to our natural state—back to the **spirit (or lack thereof) of our race**.

Because the truth is, we **Northerners** come from **barbarian stock**—even in matters of **religion**, we are crude and **untalented**.

Perhaps the **only exception** is the **Celts**, who seem to have been the most **fertile ground** for Christianity in the North.

France, in particular, was **the perfect climate** for the Christian ideal to **flourish**, as much as the **pale northern sun** allowed it to.

Even today, we can see how **deeply religious** the **French skeptics** remain when there is a trace of **Celtic blood** in them.

- Just look at **Auguste Comte**—his **Sociology** feels **so Catholic, so un-German**, with its **Roman logic** pulsing through its instincts.
- Or **Sainte-Beuve**, the elegant literary guide to **Port-Royal**, who, despite his criticisms of the **Jesuits**, still feels **Jesuitical** to us.

- Even **Ernest Renan**—how foreign, how **inaccessible** his language is to us Northerners! At the slightest touch of **religious sentiment**, his **sensual, aristocratic soul** trembles like a **delicate harp**.

Let's repeat one of **Renan's sentences** and see how it **provokes our harder, more Germanic souls**:

"Let us boldly say that religion is a natural product of normal man, that man is most in the right when he is most religious and most certain of an infinite destiny... It is when he is good that he wants virtue to correspond to an eternal order, it is when he contemplates things with disinterest that he finds death revolting and absurd. How could we not suppose that in these moments, man sees the truth most clearly?"

To my **ears**, these words sound so utterly **opposite** to everything I believe that my **first reaction**, in a fit of **rage**, was to scrawl in the margins:

"THE MOST PERFECT RELIGIOUS NONSENSE!"

But then—after another moment of rage—something strange happened.

I started to **like it**.

After all, how **delightful** it is to have **one's very own antipodes!**

49

What's most striking about the **religious life of the ancient Greeks** is the **overwhelming sense of gratitude** that flows through it. Their gods were not feared, but **thanked**—their religion was an expression of a **superior** type of humanity, one that **embraced** life and nature rather than cowered before them.

Later, when the **common people** gained more power in Greece, **fear** started creeping into religion. **Christianity** was already in the making.

50

The **passion for God** takes many forms. Some are **rough, urgent, and demanding**, like **Luther's**—all of Protestantism lacks the **refined elegance** of the South. Others have a **wild, Eastern intensity**, like that of **St. Augustine**, who, like a freed slave suddenly elevated to nobility, was **desperate to prove himself**, yet always lacked true **grace and dignity**. There's also a **feminine, sensual devotion** to God, a longing for a **mystical and even physical union**, like that of **Madame de Guyon**. And sometimes, this passion for God is nothing more than a **disguised adolescent crisis**—puberty masked as spirituality—or, in some cases, the **hysteria of**

an aging woman, making one last grasp at meaning. The Church has often **canonized** such women.

51

History's greatest rulers have always shown deep reverence for the saint, as if he were some mystical puzzle of self-denial and extreme self-discipline. But why?

Because beneath his frail, tormented, and unnatural way of life, they recognized something familiar—an extraordinary force of will. The saint was someone who tested his own strength by rejecting the world, and in him, these rulers saw a reflection of their own power and ambition. When they bowed to the saint, they were, in a way, honoring themselves.

Yet there was also fear—because no one denies life so radically without a reason. The powerful suspected the ascetic knew something they didn't. Was there a great danger, an unseen enemy, that only he understood?

It was the Will to Power that made even kings and conquerors pause before the saint. They had to question him.

52

The Jewish Old Testament—that book of divine justice—contains figures, events, and ideas of such enormous power that neither Greek nor Indian literature comes close to matching them.

Anyone who truly grasps these texts stands in awe before them.

And then, one can't help but feel a sense of melancholy when looking at modern Europe—that tiny outgrowth of ancient Asia, trying desperately to convince itself that it represents the "progress of mankind."

Of course, those who live like tame house pets—our so-called "cultured" people, including the softened Christians of today—see nothing impressive in these ancient texts.

For them, the New Testament, with its gentle, sentimental morality, is far more appealing. It smells of small souls, of humble prayer beads, of the weak seeking comfort.

To have bound these two books together—the towering, brutal Old Testament with the sweet, passive New Testament—and called it *The Bible*, as if it were a unified truth, is possibly Europe's greatest literary crime.

53

Why is atheism growing in modern Europe?

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Because the **Father-God** has been **thoroughly discredited**.

- No one can believe in a **divine judge** anymore.
- No one fears a **God who punishes or rewards**.
- The idea of **free will** in a religious sense has crumbled.

God doesn't **hear** us—and even if he did, **he wouldn't know how to help**.

But worst of all, **he can't even communicate clearly**—he always seems **uncertain**, vague, incoherent.

I've listened to people talk about why they **no longer believe**, and this is what I've discovered:

The religious instinct is still alive—but it deeply distrusts the old, theistic answers.

54

What is **modern philosophy** really doing?

Since **Descartes**, it has been carrying out a **covert attack**—an **assault** on the very foundations of **Christian doctrine**.

It **pretends** to be concerned with the question of **subject and predicate**, but beneath this is a far more **subversive goal**: the **destruction of the old concept of the soul**.

For centuries, people believed in the **soul** just as they believed in **grammar**.

- They assumed that "**I**" was the subject.
- That "**think**" was the predicate.
- That thinking was an **action**, which **required a thinker**.

But then, philosophers began to **challenge** this entire structure.

What if the **opposite** was true?

- What if **thinking itself** was the condition, and the "**I**" was just something invented afterward?
- What if the **self** was merely a **construct of thought**?

Kant tried to prove that, if we **start with the subject**, we can't actually **prove the subject exists**—nor can we prove the **object exists** either.

At times, it seems he might have even suspected what the **Vedanta** philosophers of India had already believed for centuries:

That the “soul” is nothing but an illusion.

55

There is a **great ladder of religious cruelty**, and throughout history, humanity has climbed its steps—each level bringing **more extreme sacrifices**. But three stages stand out as the most important.

At the **earliest** stage, people sacrificed **other human beings** to their gods—often their **own loved ones**. This is the era of **firstborn sacrifices** in primitive religions, where the dearest and most precious were offered to appease divine forces. A haunting example is the **Emperor Tiberius' sacrifice** in the **Mithra-Grotto** on the Island of Capri—perhaps the most **grotesque** and **anachronistic** ritual in Roman history.

Later, in the **moral era of humanity**, the sacrifice shifted from **external victims** to something more **personal**—one’s **own natural instincts**. People **denied their desires**, crushed their passions, and took pride in **self-denial and suffering**. The **cruel joy** of this stage can be seen in the **fanaticism of ascetics**, those who delighted in **rejecting the body and nature itself**.

But what was left to sacrifice after that?

In the **final stage**, humanity sacrificed **even its comforting beliefs**—all that gave life meaning:

- Faith in a **hidden order**
- Hope in **ultimate justice**
- The **promise of future redemption**

And finally, **God Himself** had to be sacrificed.

Mankind, in its **cruelty toward itself**, reached the point where it **worshipped nothingness**—not divinity, but **cold, indifferent existence: stone, stupidity, gravity, fate, nothingness**.

To **kill God and worship nothing**—this is the **final paradox** of human cruelty.

And our generation? **We already know something of this sacrifice.**

56

Anyone who, like me, has been driven by some deep and mysterious urge to **get to the root of pessimism**—to strip it of the **half-Christian, half-German** narrowness and foolishness in which it has been wrapped, especially in **Schopenhauer's philosophy**—will eventually see it for what it truly is.

Whoever has dared to look at **the most extreme world-denying philosophies**, not through the moral lens of **Buddha or Schopenhauer**, but **beyond good and evil**, free from the illusions of morality, might also, perhaps **without meaning to**, find themselves staring at the **opposite ideal**—the **ideal of the man who embraces life fully**.

This is not the man who **compromises** with life, merely accepting what was and is, but the one who **loves it entirely**, who **wants it all again**, just as it is, **for all eternity**. He is the one who **joyfully cries out "Da capo!"**—not just for himself, but for the **whole play of existence**.

Not just for the **play itself**, but for **the very one who makes the play necessary**—because he **needs himself again and again**, because he **creates himself anew, eternally**.

And what would you call such a thing?

Would this not be—a **divine vicious circle**?

57

The more a person sharpens their intellectual vision and insight, the more their sense of space and distance expands. Their world deepens, revealing new stars, new mysteries, and new ideas. Perhaps everything that has challenged human understanding—everything that has tested our intellect—has merely been a kind of **practice**, a **game**, something to stimulate and refine the mind, much like toys for children.

Maybe even the most **serious** concepts, the ones that have driven people to war and suffering—ideas like **God** and **sin**—will one day seem as trivial to us as a child's toy or the fleeting pain of childhood seems to an old man.

And yet, just as that old man **once needed** those toys and pains to grow, perhaps **new illusions** will always be necessary for him. For even in his old age, he remains, in some way, **a child forever**—always in need of something to play with, always an **eternal child**.

58

Have we noticed how much **idleness**—or at least a certain level of leisure—is essential for truly living a religious life? The kind of **idleness** that allows for deep **self-examination**, quiet contemplation, and the calm state of "prayer," always prepared for the "coming of God." This is not the idleness of laziness, but rather **the aristocratic kind of idleness**—one that comes with a **clear conscience** and is rooted in the old belief that **work is degrading**, that it lowers both body and soul.

In contrast, **modern culture glorifies constant work**—it is loud, all-consuming, and obsessed with productivity. But this **restless labor** does more to **kill religious instincts** than anything else.

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Today, in Germany, for example, those who have drifted away from religion include people from all walks of life—intellectuals, workers, and businesspeople. Yet, what they all share is that, through **generations of relentless work**, they have lost their **natural connection to religion**. They don't reject religion outright; instead, they **no longer see the point of it**. Religion simply exists as something they **observe from a distance**, almost **with mild confusion**.

These people are **already too busy**—with their jobs, their pleasures, their national pride, the news, and their family obligations. They don't have time for religion, and more importantly, **they don't see what religion is supposed to be**. To them, going to church seems pointless, or worse, an unnecessary inconvenience.

That being said, **they are not anti-religion**. If their **government or society** expects them to participate in religious customs, they will do so **out of habit or duty**—the same way they do many things in life: **with patience, without curiosity, and without emotional involvement**. They have become **so detached** that they don't even feel the need to take a stance on religion—**neither for nor against it**.

Among these **indifferent** people are **most of Germany's middle-class Protestants**, especially in the busy centers of **trade and industry**. Also included are **university scholars**, particularly those who work in fields outside theology (since theologians, by their very existence, remain an interesting puzzle for psychologists).

Ironically, even those who **still go to church** have little understanding of **how much effort it now takes** for a German scholar to take religion **seriously**. His entire profession—his methodical, intellectual way of life—**instinctively** distances him from religion. He develops an **aloof, detached attitude** toward faith, perhaps **with a hint of disdain**, seeing religious belief as something **messy and unrefined**.

The only way he can **even respect** religion is through **historical study**—but never through **personal experience**. Even if he grows to appreciate religion, **he never actually gets closer to it**—in fact, he probably becomes even **more distanced** from it.

His **indifference** to religious belief, ingrained since birth, eventually turns into a sort of **polite avoidance**—a desire to **stay clean** and **not mix with religious people or religious ideas**. And paradoxically, this avoidance **isn't caused by intolerance**, but by his **deep sense of tolerance**—which makes him unwilling to deal with the discomfort that true engagement with religion might bring.

Every era has **its own form of naïveté**—one that future generations might **envy**. And the naïveté of **modern scholars**? It's the **charming, childlike, yet utterly foolish** belief that they are **superior** to religious people. That their tolerance is a sign of **evolution**. That they have **moved beyond faith**.

But in reality, **what are they?** They are **small, arrogant dwarfs**—obsessive workers, **slaves to modern ideas**, and intellectual laborers. Their belief in their own **superiority** is just **another illusion of progress**, another form of **ignorance** masquerading as wisdom.

59

Anyone who has looked deeply into the world has likely realized **why people are so superficial**—it is a survival instinct. Being lighthearted, quick to change, and even a little deceptive helps people **get through life** without being crushed by its weight.

Some thinkers and artists go to the extreme, **worshipping "pure forms"**—perfection in art, philosophy, or beauty. But when someone **clings too much** to the surface, it usually means they've **once dived too deep** and suffered for it. Maybe they saw something **too dark, too painful**, and now they need to falsify reality—turning it into something softer, more beautiful, even sacred.

In fact, the **greatest religious minds** can be seen as the **ultimate artists**—they transform the raw, chaotic nature of life into something structured, meaningful, and divine. But at its core, religion is **driven by fear**—the fear that **truth** might be discovered **too soon**, before humanity is **strong enough to handle it**.

So, faith—"life in God"—can be seen as the **most refined** and **final** expression of **the fear of truth**. It is a kind of **artistic illusion**, a grand performance, a way of **beautifying** and **softening** existence. Perhaps, religion has **never been about truth**, but about making life **bearable, even beautiful**—an ultimate work of deception that **elevates** humanity by keeping it **blissfully ignorant**.

60

Loving mankind **for God's sake**—that has been humanity's **highest and noblest ideal** so far.

But to love people **without any higher reason**, without faith, without redemption in the background—**that would be pure foolishness**. Love, to have any **depth or meaning**, needs a **higher purpose**, a touch of something greater.

Whoever first **realized this truth**—even if they struggled to put it into words—deserves **eternal respect**, because they **soared the highest**, even if they eventually **fell the hardest**.

61

The **philosopher of the future**—the kind we envision, the kind who takes **full responsibility** for guiding humanity—will **use religion** as a tool, just as they would use **politics or economics**.

Religion, far from being just a belief system, is a **force for shaping, disciplining, and leading** people.

Religion works **differently** depending on **who is under its influence**:

- **For the strong and independent**—those born to lead—religion is a **tool of power**. It helps rulers **keep control** over the masses, binding them together in obedience. Faith **doesn't just govern their actions**, it reaches deep into their conscience, making them **willing** to obey.
- **For the intellectual elite**—those with **superior minds** who seek a **quiet life of contemplation**—religion provides a **retreat from the dirty work of politics**. The **Brahmins** of India understood this: they used religion to control kings **without dirtying their hands** in the struggles of governance.
- **For the ambitious, those who rise through effort**, religion provides **incentives**—it teaches **discipline, self-control, silence, and solitude**. The **strict moral codes** of asceticism and Puritanism are **necessary tools** for transforming an ordinary people into a **powerful ruling class**.
- **For the common people**, those who exist **to serve**, religion is a **source of peace**. It helps them **accept their place in society** with **contentment**. It gives **meaning** to their suffering, elevates their obedience into a **virtue**, and allows them to see **beauty in their otherwise dull and harsh existence**.

In this way, religion **beautifies even the lowest lives**—it **softens hardship, justifies suffering, and turns pain into something meaningful**.

Perhaps the **greatest achievement** of Christianity and Buddhism is this: they **taught even the lowest of society** to see themselves as **part of something greater**—to feel that, despite their suffering, they **belong to a higher order**. And this **illusion**, this trick of faith, is **necessary**, because life for most people is simply **too difficult without it**.

62

Religion is useful—if controlled by philosophers. But when it rules on its own, when it claims to be the **ultimate goal** rather than just a tool, the consequences are catastrophic.

Look at **nature**—not all creatures are strong, healthy, or fit to survive. The same is true for humans: most people are **weak, sickly, or struggling**. **Success is rare**, and the **higher a**

person's potential, the more fragile they become. Greatness is not only rare—it is constantly under threat by randomness, irrationality, and the weight of the masses.

So what do the **two greatest religions—Christianity and Buddhism—do with these failures?** They **protect them, preserve them, and even glorify them.** Instead of letting the weak **fade away**, they **turn suffering into a virtue.** Instead of celebrating strength, ambition, and life, they **side with the broken, the defeated, and the hopeless.** They treat life itself as a disease to be cured!

To be fair, Christianity and its "spiritual men" have **given much to Europe**—comfort to the suffering, hope to the oppressed, and discipline to the lost. But at what cost? In **saving the weak**, they have also **held back the strong.** Instead of allowing humanity to evolve into something greater, they **protected too much that should have perished.**

To achieve this, Christianity **reversed all values:**

- It **cast doubt on strength and shattered great ambitions.**
- It **turned the love of beauty and power into something shameful.**
- It **broke the independent, victorious spirit of man**, forcing it into guilt and self-destruction.
- It **transformed joy in life into a hatred of the earthly world**, making people long for another, imaginary one.

If an **Epicurean god**, detached and amused, watched this absurd spectacle of **Christian Europe**, he would **laugh endlessly**—as if a single force had worked for **eighteen centuries** to create a **monstrous failure** of humanity.

But if someone—**not an Epicurean god, but a creator, a sculptor of mankind**—were to look at what Christianity has **done to human potential**, he would **cry out in rage**:

*"What have you done? You fools! You weak, pathetic fools! You took something that could have been great and **butchered it!** You ruined my masterpiece!"*

Christianity, then, has been **the greatest act of arrogance** in history. **Men who were neither great enough, nor strong enough, nor wise enough to shape humanity** dared to do just that. They refused to allow the **law of natural selection** to take its course. They refused to acknowledge the **vast differences between men**, choosing instead to force **all into the same mold** with their "**equality before God.**"

And what has been the result?

A **dwarfed, diminished, and sickly species**—the **modern European**, a **gregarious animal**, a creature made for **obedience, mediocrity, and servitude**.

Part Four: Maxims and Interludes

63

A true teacher takes things seriously—including himself—only in relation to his students.

64

The idea of "knowledge for its own sake" is the final trick played by morality—it pulls us back into moral thinking without us realizing it.

65

The pursuit of knowledge would not be nearly as enticing if it weren't for the shame we must overcome to attain it.

65A

We are most unfair to our God—we do not allow him the right to sin.

66

A person's willingness to be humiliated, robbed, deceived, and exploited may actually be the humility of a god walking among men.

67

Loving only one person is a kind of cruelty—it means denying love to all others. The same applies to love for God!

68

"I did that," says my memory. "I could never have done that," says my pride—and my pride refuses to budge. In the end, memory gives in.

69

If you have not noticed the gentle hand that kills, then you have not been paying close enough attention to life.

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70

A man of character will always have certain defining experiences that repeat throughout his life.

71

The Wise Man as an Astronomer—As long as you see the stars as something "above" you, you are still lacking true insight.

72

It is not the intensity but the endurance of great feelings that makes great men.

73

The moment someone reaches their ideal, they have already surpassed it.

73A

Many a peacock hides his tail from everyone—and calls it pride.

74

A genius is unbearable unless he has at least two other qualities: gratitude and purity.

75

A man's sensuality extends to the highest reaches of his intellect.

76

In times of peace, the warrior turns his aggression inward and attacks himself.

77

A man's principles serve different purposes: to dominate, justify, honor, reproach, or hide his habits. Two people may hold the same principles but pursue entirely different goals with them.

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78

Even a man who despises himself still values himself—if only as a despiser.

79

A soul that knows it is loved but does not love in return reveals its true nature—its worst parts rise to the surface.

80

Once something is fully explained, we lose interest in it. What did the god mean by saying, "Know thyself"? Was it really advice to "stop obsessing over yourself and become objective"? And what about Socrates? Or the "scientific man"?

81

Dying of thirst at sea is a cruel fate. Must you make your truth so salty that no one can drink from it?

82

"Compassion for everyone"—for you, my dear neighbor, that would be cruelty and oppression.

83

Instinct—When the house is on fire, you forget about dinner. But once the fire is out, you dig through the ashes to find it.

84

A woman learns to hate in proportion to how much she forgets how to enchant.

85

Men and women experience the same emotions but at different tempos—this is why they will always misunderstand each other.

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86

Beneath all their personal vanity, women secretly harbor a deeper contempt—for "woman" itself.

87

Fettered Heart, Free Spirit—When a man locks away his heart and keeps it captive, he can allow his mind great freedom. I have said this before. But people only believe it if they already know it to be true.

88

We start to distrust very clever people when they get embarrassed.

89

When someone goes through something terrible, it raises the question—are they, in some way, also terrible?

90

Gloomy, heavyhearted people become lighter when they experience emotions that weigh others down—like love and hate.

91

Some people are so cold, so distant, that touching them feels like burning yourself. People pull away from them, thinking they must be red-hot, when in reality, they're ice.

92

Who hasn't, at some point, sacrificed themselves just to protect their good name?

93

Being friendly doesn't mean you hate people, but it often means you have too much contempt for them to care.

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94

Maturity means rediscovering the seriousness you had as a child while playing.

95

Being ashamed of one's immorality is just a step on the path—at the end of it, one is ashamed even of one's morality.

96

One should leave life the way Ulysses left Nausicaa—grateful, but not in love.

97

A "great man"? I always see only an actor playing his own ideal.

98

When you train your conscience, it both bites you and kisses you.

99

The Disappointed One Speaks: "I listened for an echo, but all I heard was applause."

100

We all pretend to be simpler than we are—it helps us relax around others.

101

A perceptive person today might easily see himself as God turned into an animal.

102

Finding out that someone loves you should actually make you lose interest in them. "What? She's humble enough to love even me? Or foolish enough? Or—?"

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103

The Danger in Happiness: "Everything is going my way, I love every fate—who wants to be my fate?"

104

Modern Christians don't burn us at the stake—not because of their love for humanity, but because their love is too weak.

105

A pious fraud is even more distasteful to the free spirit than an impious fraud. This is why the so-called "free spirit" still lacks true freedom—especially when compared to the Church.

106

Music allows even our passions to enjoy themselves.

107

A strong character is shown when, once a decision is made, one ignores even the best counterarguments. This is sometimes just a willful act of stupidity.

108

There are no moral facts—only moral interpretations of facts.

109

A criminal is often not equal to his crime—he downplays it and slanders it instead.

110

A criminal's defense lawyers are rarely skilled enough to transform the terrifying beauty of his crime into something that benefits him.

111

Our vanity is hardest to wound when our pride has already been wounded.

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112

Those who are destined for contemplation rather than belief find all believers too noisy and intrusive. They keep their distance.

113

"Want to win someone over? Make sure to be embarrassed in front of them."

114

Women's expectations for love are so high—and yet so shy—that it distorts their entire perspective from the beginning.

115

When neither love nor hatred is involved, a woman's play is mediocre.

116

The turning points in our lives happen when we finally have the courage to redefine our "badness" as our best quality.

117

The will to suppress an emotion is ultimately just the will of another, stronger emotion.

118

There is an innocent kind of admiration—when someone hasn't yet realized that one day, they themselves may be admired.

119

Some people are so disgusted by dirt that they refuse to clean themselves—or to "justify" themselves.

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120

Physical desire often rushes love along too quickly, leaving its roots weak and easy to tear out.

121

It's curious that when God wanted to become an author, He chose to learn Greek—but didn't learn it very well.

122

Enjoying praise is often just politeness of the heart, not vanity of the mind.

123

Even concubinage has been ruined—by marriage.

124

The person who rejoices at the stake doesn't triumph over pain—they are simply surprised that they don't feel pain where they expected it. A parable.

125

When we have to change our opinion about someone, we hold it against them—resenting the inconvenience they've caused us.

126

A nation is just nature's detour to produce six or seven great men—and then to find a way around them.

127

In the eyes of all true women, science is an insult to modesty. They feel as if science is trying to peek beneath their skin—or worse, beneath their clothes and jewelry.

128

The more abstract the truth you want to teach, the more you must entice the senses to grasp it.

129

The devil has the best perspective on God. That's why he stays so far away from Him—the devil is, after all, God's oldest friend in knowledge.

130

You see who someone truly is when their talent fades—when they can no longer show what they can do. Talent is a kind of decoration, and decoration is a form of concealment.

131

Men and women deceive themselves about each other because, deep down, they only love and admire themselves—or their own ideal. For example, men want women to be peaceful, but in reality, women are naturally unpeaceful, like a cat, no matter how well they pretend otherwise.

132

The best way to punish someone is through their virtues.

133

A person who cannot reach their ideal often lives more recklessly and shamelessly than someone who has no ideal at all.

134

All trustworthiness, good conscience, and proof of truth come from the senses.

135

Hypocrisy isn't a corruption of goodness; in many cases, it's a necessary condition for being good.

136

One person seeks someone to help them give birth to their thoughts; another seeks someone they can assist—this is how a good conversation begins.

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137

When dealing with scholars and artists, people tend to make opposite mistakes: sometimes, a great scholar turns out to be a mediocre person, while a mediocre artist may be an extraordinary individual.

138

In waking life, we do what we do in dreams—we create and imagine the people we interact with, and then immediately forget we've done so.

139

In love and revenge, women are more ruthless than men.

140

If you don't want the bond to break, bite it first—then it will hold tight!"

141

The stomach is the main reason people don't easily mistake themselves for gods.

142

The purest declaration of love I've ever heard: "In true love, it is the soul that embraces the body."

143

We want others to believe that what we do best is also what is hardest for us—this is where many moral systems come from.

144

When a woman has strong intellectual interests, it usually signals something unusual about her sexuality. Infertility, in particular, seems to create a certain masculine taste in women. Man, after all, is "the barren animal."

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145

If women didn't have an instinct for playing the supporting role, they wouldn't have such a talent for adornment.

146

He who fights monsters should be careful not to become one himself. And if you gaze long into an abyss, the abyss will also gaze into you.

147

From old Florentine tales (and from real life): "A good woman and a bad woman both need the stick." —Sacchetti, *Novella* 86.

148

Women have a special talent: they can trick others into forming a favorable opinion of them—and then believe in that opinion themselves.

149

What one era calls "evil" is often just an outdated version of what was once called "good"—the echo of an old ideal.

150

Around the hero, everything turns into tragedy. Around the demigod, everything becomes a comedy. And around God—what? Perhaps, a "world"?

151

Having talent isn't enough—you also need the world's permission to have it.

152

"Wherever the Tree of Knowledge grows, there is always a paradise." So say the oldest and newest serpents.

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153

Anything done out of love happens beyond good and evil.

154

Questioning, avoiding certainty, joyful skepticism, and love of irony are signs of health.
Everything absolute belongs to sickness.

155

The sense of tragedy rises and falls in proportion to one's sensitivity.

156

Insanity in individuals is rare. In groups, political parties, nations, and historical eras, it is the norm.

157

The thought of suicide is a great comfort—it helps people survive many dark nights.

158

Not just reason, but also conscience, submits to our strongest desires—the tyrant within us.

159

We feel we must repay both kindness and harm—but why do we assume it must be paid back to the same person?

160

We stop loving our knowledge as much after we've shared it.

161

Poets treat their experiences shamelessly—they exploit them.

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162

"Our fellow man is not our neighbor, but our neighbor's neighbor." That's how every nation thinks.

163

Love reveals the best and rarest qualities in a lover—but this can be deceptive, because it doesn't always show their true nature.

164

Jesus told the Jews: "The law is for servants; love God as I do, as His Son! What do we Sons of God have to do with morality?"

165

On politics: A shepherd always needs a leading ram—or sometimes, he must become one himself.

166

You can lie with words, but your facial expression will usually tell the truth.

167

Strong men find intimacy both shameful and precious.

168

Christianity poisoned Eros. He didn't die, but he degenerated into mere vice.

169

Talking a lot about oneself can also be a way of hiding oneself.

170

Praise is often more intrusive than criticism.

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171

To a true thinker, pity seems ridiculous—like a delicate hand trying to soothe a Cyclops.

172

Sometimes, we embrace one person because we want to embrace all of humanity. But we must never admit this to the individual.

173

One does not truly hate someone until one sees them as an equal—or as a superior.

174

Utilitarians: You, too, only love "what is useful" because it serves your desires—but you can't stand the sound of its wheels turning!

175

Ultimately, we love our own desires—not the thing desired.

176

The vanity of others only bothers us when it clashes with our own vanity.

177

No one has ever been truly honest enough to say what "truthfulness" really is.

178

We refuse to believe that intelligent people can be foolish—what a betrayal of our own intellect!

179

The consequences of our actions grab us by the hair, without caring that we've "changed" since then.

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180

There's an innocent kind of lying—it shows someone truly believes in their cause.

181

It is inhuman to bless someone while they curse you.

182

When a superior acts too familiar, it creates bitterness—because the familiarity cannot be reciprocated.

183

"I'm not upset because you lied to me. I'm upset because I can no longer trust you."

184

There is a kind of arrogant kindness that looks like cruelty.

185

"I don't like him." —Why? —"I can't compete with him." —Has anyone ever admitted that?

Part Five: On the Natural History of Morals

186

The moral sense in Europe today is incredibly refined, subtle, and sensitive—yet the study of morality as a science is still in its infancy, clumsy and crude. This contrast is fascinating, and sometimes even appears embodied in the moralists themselves. The term "science of morals" is actually quite arrogant and in bad taste—it suggests a level of understanding that we simply don't have yet. What is really needed right now is a more humble approach: we should focus on collecting material, observing the vast range of moral values, how they evolve and fade, and identifying common patterns. This would lay the groundwork for a *theory of moral types*.

But philosophers have never been this modest. Instead, they have always taken themselves too seriously, believing they were laying the *foundation* of morality. Every single one of them thought they had "discovered" its true basis. They simply assumed morality was something *given*, rather than something that needed questioning.

Because philosophers only understood morality in a narrow, limited way—usually just the morality of their own time, culture, or religion—they completely overlooked the real problems of morality. They didn't compare different moral systems across history and civilizations. If they had, they would have realized morality itself is the real problem.

Ironically, every supposed "science of morals" so far has failed to address morality as a *problem*. Philosophers merely reinforced the morality they inherited, treating it as unquestionable. Their efforts to "ground" morality were just new ways of expressing the same old moral instincts—never questioning whether morality itself should be examined critically. Instead of testing, analyzing, and doubting morality, they simply accepted it on faith.

Look, for example, at Schopenhauer. He honestly believed he was solving the great ethical puzzle when he declared the universal moral rule: "*Harm no one, and help everyone as much as you can.*" He claimed this was the foundation that all moralists were trying to establish. But this statement is absurd and sentimental—completely out of place in a world driven by the *Will to Power*. And consider this: Schopenhauer, the self-proclaimed pessimist who rejected God and the world, still *clung to morality*—and even played the flute every day after dinner!

So here's a question: If someone rejects everything—God, the world, existence itself—but *stops short of rejecting morality*, can they really call themselves a pessimist?

187

Beyond debating whether statements like "*There is a categorical imperative within us*" are true, we should also ask: *What does it reveal about the person making such claims?*

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Different moral systems often serve different personal motives. Some are designed to justify the moralist in the eyes of others. Others serve to comfort him, allowing him to feel self-satisfied. Some are forms of self-punishment and humiliation, while others are tools for revenge. Some moral systems are a way for people to hide behind a certain image, while others are meant to elevate them above others and secure power or status. One system of morality might help its creator *forget* something, while another ensures that *he himself* is forgotten.

Many moralists are simply trying to exert power over humanity in one way or another. Some, like Kant, seem to be saying, "*What is admirable in me is that I know how to obey—and so should you!*"

In the end, moral systems are not objective truths; they are *a coded language for human emotions and personal needs*.

188

In contrast to complete freedom (*laissez-aller*), every moral system is a kind of tyranny over both "nature" and "reason." But that's not necessarily a bad thing—unless, of course, you arbitrarily decide, using another moral system, that all tyranny and irrationality are unacceptable. The most valuable aspect of any moral system is that it imposes long-term discipline.

To truly understand Stoicism, Port-Royal, or Puritanism, one should remember how every language has developed strength and fluency—through strict constraints, like the tyranny of rhyme and rhythm in poetry. Poets, orators, and even some modern prose writers have worked tirelessly, not for some practical purpose (as utilitarians foolishly assume), but for the sake of what others might dismiss as an arbitrary rule. Anarchists, in contrast, think they are "free" by rejecting such constraints, but in reality, the highest forms of freedom—elegance, boldness, mastery, and precision—are only developed *through* discipline. Whether in thinking, governing, speaking, or creating art, true excellence has always emerged from the strict demands of structure and form.

Every artist knows that their "most natural" state—the moment of inspiration—is not one of careless abandon but of extreme discipline. They instinctively follow countless rigid, precise laws that cannot even be fully articulated. This principle extends to all of life: what makes life meaningful—virtue, art, music, dance, reason, and spirituality—has always come from long-term discipline, from committing to a single direction for a long time.

The European spirit, with all its sharp curiosity and intellectual agility, was forged through centuries of strict intellectual constraints. For ages, thinkers didn't aim to *discover* the truth but to *prove* predetermined conclusions. Today, we are suspicious of anyone who starts with a conclusion and then works backward to justify it. But in the past, philosophy and theology were constrained by Christianity, just as ancient astrology was bound to its cosmic interpretations.

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Such rigid, even absurd ways of thinking trained the mind, much like the strict regimen of an athlete.

Slavery, whether literal or intellectual, has seemingly always been necessary for human development. Every moral system can be seen in this light: it teaches people to reject complete freedom, to embrace immediate duties, and to narrow their perspectives. In a way, stupidity—or at least the limitation of knowledge—is a requirement for survival and growth.

Nature's moral command isn't some universal, individual rule like Kant imagined. Instead, it is a command directed at entire nations, races, and eras, as well as at humanity as a whole: "*You must obey something, and for a long time; otherwise, you will self-destruct and lose all self-respect.*" Nature doesn't care about individuals—it cares about *mankind*.

189

Hardworking cultures struggle with idleness. The English, in particular, made a brilliant move by turning Sunday into such a solemn and gloomy day that people unconsciously start longing for the workweek again. It functions like a strategically placed *fast*—a deliberate break, much like those found in ancient cultures, though in southern nations, fasting was rarely about work.

Periods of forced restraint, like fasts, are necessary. Whenever strong instincts and habits dominate a society, lawmakers must create deliberate pauses—times when these impulses are suppressed so that people will desire them again with renewed intensity. From a broader perspective, entire generations or historical eras that get swept up in moral fanaticism can be seen as such intermissions—times of self-restraint, discipline, and purification, where a powerful drive is forced into submission, only to become sharper and more refined in the process.

The same logic applies to certain philosophical movements. For example, Stoicism emerged in the midst of Greek culture, a world saturated with indulgence and sensuality, much like a corrective fast placed within an excess-driven society.

This also explains an interesting paradox: Why was it precisely during the most Christian periods of European history—under the weight of Christian moral strictness—that sexual desire transformed into the idealized notion of *romantic love (amour-passion)*? Christianity, by restraining and moralizing human impulses, ultimately intensified them, elevating raw desire into something more refined and emotionally complex.

190

Plato's moral philosophy contains something that doesn't truly belong to him—it appears in his work almost despite his own nature. This element is **Socratism**, which, in reality, Plato was too noble for. The Socratic idea is that **no one knowingly does evil**: people only do wrong because they don't understand that it harms them. The argument goes like this: the wrongdoer ultimately

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hurts himself, but if he fully understood that, he wouldn't act that way. Therefore, all wrongdoing stems from ignorance, and if you correct someone's misunderstanding, they will necessarily become good.

This way of thinking is characteristic of **the common people**, who tend to judge things simply by their consequences. To them, wrongdoing is foolish because it leads to suffering, and "goodness" is simply what is useful and pleasant. **Every system of utilitarian morality follows this same basic logic**, and one can often trace its roots back to this naive view.

Plato, however, tried to **refine and elevate Socrates' teachings**, often **inserting himself into them**. He was the most daring interpreter of Socrates, taking the rough, streetwise philosopher and transforming him into something grander, shaping him into **various idealized forms**—all of which, in reality, were just Plato's own ideas dressed up as Socrates.

To put it humorously, and in the style of **Homer**, what is the **Platonic Socrates** if not... [Greek phrase inserted here]

191

The old theological debate between **faith and knowledge**—or, more plainly, **instinct and reason**—boils down to a simple question: should we trust our instincts more than our rational thinking, which seeks logical explanations and usefulness in everything? This moral conflict is much older than Christianity and first became a major issue in **Socrates' time**.

Socrates, being the great **dialectician** that he was, took the side of **reason**. His whole life, he ridiculed the **noble Athenians**, men of instinct who acted confidently but struggled to explain their motives when pressed. Like all aristocrats, they didn't overanalyze—they simply **acted**.

However, in his later years, Socrates must have secretly laughed at himself as well. His sharp introspection revealed that he, too, was governed by instincts he couldn't entirely justify. So, he arrived at a compromise:

"We shouldn't reject instincts, but refine them—make reason support them with good arguments."

This was the **true deception** behind Socrates' irony. Deep down, he understood that moral reasoning often disguises **irrational** impulses.

Plato, who was more **innocent and idealistic**, lacked Socrates' skepticism. He devoted **all his intellectual energy**—perhaps more than any philosopher ever had—to proving that **reason and instinct naturally lead to the same goal: goodness, truth, and ultimately, God**. And ever since Plato, **theologians and moral philosophers** have followed the same path, always

assuming that **instinct (or what Christians call "faith," and I call "herd mentality") must prevail over reason.**

Perhaps the only real exception to this trend was **Descartes**, the father of rationalism—and, indirectly, of the **Revolution**. Descartes relied only on reason, dismissing instinct. But at the end of the day, **reason is just a tool**, not an absolute authority—and Descartes himself was too **shallow** to realize that.

192

Anyone who has studied the history of a single science can see a pattern that applies to **all knowledge and learning**. The same tendencies appear everywhere: premature conclusions, **made-up theories**, blind belief, and a **lack of patience and skepticism**. Our senses take a long time to develop into **reliable** instruments of perception—and even then, they never become truly precise.

Instead of carefully observing something new, **our senses take shortcuts**. Our eyes prefer to **reproduce familiar images** rather than focus on subtle differences. Noticing something completely new requires extra effort—it even takes **a kind of morality**, a discipline of perception. Similarly, our ears struggle with new sounds. We hear **unfamiliar music badly**. When we listen to a foreign language, we instinctively **reshape** the sounds into something we already know—just like how Germans transformed the Latin word *arcubalista* into *armbrust* (crossbow).

Our senses **resist the unfamiliar**, and even the most basic perceptions are shaped by **emotion**—whether it's fear, love, hatred, or simple laziness. This is why people skim through a page rather than reading every word carefully. Instead of truly seeing a tree, with all its details—its **leaves, branches, colors, and shape**—we simply **imagine** what a tree should look like, based on past experience.

Even in the most **extraordinary moments**, we still distort reality. We unconsciously **invent most of what we perceive** and **interpret events as we expect them to be**, rather than as they actually are.

This shows that, deep down, **we are used to lying**—or, if we want to put it in a more flattering way, we are all **artists**, shaping reality more than we realize.

For example, when I have a **lively conversation**, I often **picture the other person's face** in great detail—the subtle movements, the expressions, the way their eyes change. But my mind exaggerates this clarity far beyond what my **actual eyesight** is capable of. In truth, I probably **imagined** half of those details. The person may not have made those expressions at all.

193

"What once moved in the light, now acts in the dark"—and the reverse is also true. What we experience in dreams—especially if we experience it often—becomes just as much a part of our **inner world** as anything we actually live through in waking life. These experiences **shape us**, making us **richer or poorer**, adding or removing something from our nature. Even in our most conscious, **lucid** moments, our dreams still **influence us**.

Imagine someone who frequently dreams of **flying**. Over time, in every dream, they instinctively know how to fly—it feels like a **personal gift, an effortless power**. In their dream world, flight is not about struggle or exertion; they don't **leap or flap** but simply **rise with ease**, curving through the air at will. To them, *upwards* and *downwards* are not struggles against gravity but effortless transitions, **a pure, divine lightness**.

How could such a person **not** come to define "happiness" differently than others? Their **dream-life** has given them a new standard, a **new kind of longing**. To them, the way poets describe "flight"—as a **physical effort, a daring escape, or a dramatic battle with gravity**—would feel strangely **crude and primitive**. Compared to the **pure, frictionless** movement of their dreams, the real-world idea of flying would seem **burdensome, limited, and clumsy**.

194

The differences between people aren't just about what they **want** or what they see as **valuable**—it's not just about **different priorities** or **preferences**. More important is **how** they define *having* and *possessing* something they desire.

Take the case of a woman:

A **modest man** may feel that simply having access to her body and sexual intimacy is enough proof that she **belongs** to him.

A **more possessive** and ambitious man, however, is not satisfied with this. He realizes that physical possession is not the same as true possession. He wants **deeper proof**—he wants to know if she not only gives herself to him but **gives up everything else for him**—her past, her desires, her future. Only then does he feel that she is truly his.

But there is yet another kind of man—one whose distrust and **hunger for possession** go even further. He wonders: *Does she truly love me, or does she love an illusion of me?* He refuses to be loved for a mere **image** of himself. He wants to be known **completely**—even in his **darkness, his cruelty, his untamed desires**. Only when she sees *everything* and still loves him **does he feel he fully possesses her**.

This extends beyond romantic relationships.

A **man seeking power over a nation** might use deception, charisma, or manipulation to control

the masses—just as **Cagliostro and Catalina** did.

A **man with a deeper need for control**, however, finds such tricks **insulting**—he refuses to rule over people **who only know a false version of him**. He believes, "*To truly possess, I must first be known. And to be known, I must first know myself.*"

Even in acts of **charity**, one sees this **desire for possession** at play.

The so-called **helpful and generous** often **subtly control** those they assist. They prefer **to help only those who "deserve"** it—those who will be grateful, obedient, and dependent on them. They **own** the people they help and feel jealous if someone else steps in to offer assistance.

Parents do this too.

They mold their children **in their own image**, calling it *education*.

A mother, deep down, never **truly** doubts that her child **belongs to her**. A father sees **his ideas, his values as his right** to impose. In the past, this sense of **ownership** was even stronger—ancient Germanic fathers, for example, had the power to **decide whether a newborn child should live or die**.

And this doesn't stop with parents.

Teachers, religious leaders, rulers—they all see **every new human being as a potential possession** to shape, control, and claim.

And the consequences of this? Well...

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The Jews—a people whom **Tacitus** and the entire ancient world described as “**born for slavery**”, yet who saw themselves as “**the chosen people**”—achieved something **extraordinary**: they **reversed** the way values were seen. This transformation gave life a **new and dangerous appeal** for the next two thousand years.

Their **prophets** redefined the meaning of words:

They **fused together** terms like *rich, godless, wicked, violent, and sensual*, treating them as **one and the same**. They also introduced the word "**world**" as something **negative**—a thing to be rejected.

Through this shift, they also changed how people saw **poverty**—turning “*poor*” into a synonym for “*holy*” and “*beloved by God*.”

This **inversion of values** is the **true historical impact** of the Jewish people—it is with **them** that the **great slave revolt in morality began**.

196

We can **infer** that there are countless **dark bodies** near the sun—ones we will **never** see.

For us, this is more than just an astronomical fact—it's a **metaphor**.

A **moral psychologist** sees all of human morality as a kind of **coded message**, a symbolic language, where **much remains hidden** and **unspoken**.

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The **beast of prey** and the **man of prey** (like **Cesare Borgia**) have been **completely misunderstood**—just as "**nature**" itself has been misunderstood.

People assume that such figures must be **morally sick** or that they carry an **innate hell** inside them. But this is false. These are actually **some of the healthiest and most vital beings**, like wild, tropical creatures that thrive in untamed environments.

It seems that **moralists** have an instinctive **hatred** for the **untamed, primal** aspects of life, much like they hate the **tropical jungle**—the raw, unfiltered power of nature. They insist on **discrediting** the "tropical" man, either by labeling him as a **disease**, as a **step backward in human evolution**, or even as someone who is secretly suffering in **his own hell**.

But **why**?

Because it benefits the "**temperate zones**"—the **moderate, tame, and moral men, the average people**.

This is yet another example of **morality as fear**—a morality that seeks to **tame the wild** out of **timidity**.

198

All **moral systems** that claim to guide people toward "**happiness**"—what are they really?

They are just **strategies** for managing the **danger** that individuals pose to themselves. They are **instructions** on how to handle one's **passions**, both good and bad, especially when those passions contain the **Will to Power** and seek **dominance**.

These systems are nothing more than **old-fashioned remedies**—**folk wisdom** passed down through generations, full of **outdated superstitions**. They are **grotesque, rigid, and absurd**, mainly because they claim to apply to **everyone, generalizing** where no general rule should exist. They **speak in absolutes**, demanding **unquestioning obedience**, and often become

appealing **only when they are spiced up** with the **dangerous scent of the "other world"**—that is, promises of **heaven, afterlife, or divine reward**.

Intellectually, these systems have **little value**—they are **far from being science**, and even further from **wisdom**. But at their core, they are **nothing but**:

- **Expediency, expediency, expediency**
- **Stupidity, stupidity, stupidity**

This applies whether we are talking about:

- **The Stoics**, who taught **cold detachment** and indifference to emotions.
- **Spinoza**, who naively suggested that emotions should be **dissected and analyzed to death** so they lose their power.
- **Aristotle**, who advocated **moderation**, keeping emotions at a **safe, neutral level**.
- **Religious morality**, where passions are **rebranded as spirituality**—channeled into **love for God and charity** under strict conditions.
- **Hafis and Goethe**, who encouraged an attitude of **playful indulgence**, treating emotions like an old drunk who "**no longer has much to lose**."

All of these, in the end, are just **morality based on fear**—a **cowardly attempt to tame the dangerous forces of life**.

199

Throughout history, as long as humans have existed, there have always been herds of people—whether in families, tribes, nations, states, or churches. In every age, the majority obey, while only a small minority command.

Because obedience has been the most practiced and reinforced behavior among humans, we can assume that the need to obey has become deeply ingrained, almost like a built-in moral instinct—a kind of inner voice that commands:

- "You must do this."
- "You must not do that."
- "Obey, no questions asked."

This urge to obey is desperate for direction and will cling to any command that fills the void—whether from parents, teachers, laws, class norms, or public opinion.

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This is why human progress has been so slow, full of hesitations, setbacks, and reversals—because the instinct for obedience is inherited much more easily than the instinct for leadership.

Now imagine this herd instinct growing so strong that leaders and independent thinkers disappear entirely, or that those who do lead feel guilty about doing so. They might even have to lie to themselves just to feel justified in giving orders—acting as if they, too, are merely obeying a higher authority.

This is exactly the situation in modern Europe. I call it "the moral hypocrisy of the ruling class."

Leaders today do not command from true authority—they only justify themselves by pretending to follow orders from:

- Tradition (their predecessors)
- The constitution
- Justice or the law
- God himself

Or, they use popular slogans to hide their power, calling themselves:

- "Servants of the people"
- "Instruments of the public good"

Meanwhile, the modern European masses act as if their way of life—the herd mentality—is the only acceptable way to live. They praise qualities like:

- Public spirit
- Kindness
- Politeness
- Hard work
- Moderation
- Modesty
- Tolerance

These are the virtues of the herd—the traits that make people docile, cooperative, and useful to the group.

Even when society admits that leaders are necessary, instead of embracing strong individuals, they try to replace leaders with committees of "clever herd members"—which is why we now have representative governments instead of real rulers.

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And yet—what a relief, what a release from unbearable tension, it is for these herd-mentality Europeans when a true ruler finally appears.

The last great example of this?

Napoleon.

The sheer impact of Napoleon's rule is proof of how desperately modern people crave real leadership—his influence shaped not just politics but even the highest aspirations of the century's greatest individuals.

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A man born in an age of cultural decline, where different races and traditions are mixing, carries within him a legacy of conflicting instincts and values. These internal contradictions rarely find harmony—they battle against one another, leaving him restless and divided.

Most often, such a man will be weak. His deepest desire is simply for this inner conflict to end. To him, happiness is like a soothing drug or a philosophy that provides relief—whether it is Epicureanism, Christianity, or any belief system that offers peace and stillness. He longs for rest, for completeness, for a final sense of unity—what Saint Augustine, who himself was such a man, called the "Sabbath of Sabbaths."

But sometimes, instead of making a man weaker, this internal battle becomes a source of strength. If, in addition to these opposing instincts, he has also inherited a powerful ability for self-control, self-deception, and strategic thinking, then something entirely different emerges.

Such men become the great conquerors and manipulators of history—figures who are both incomprehensible and unstoppable. Their contradictions do not paralyze them; they drive them forward, making them masters of persuasion, deception, and power.

Alcibiades and Julius Caesar are prime examples—enigmatic men who thrived on conflict and contradiction. I would also add Frederick II of Hohenstaufen, the greatest European ruler in my view, and in the realm of art, Leonardo da Vinci.

Curiously, these great figures always appear in the same periods when the weaker type—those longing for peace and stability—also rise to prominence. These two kinds of people are not opposed, but rather two sides of the same historical moment, both emerging from the same causes.

As long as morality is based purely on what benefits the group—on what keeps society intact—then there is no such thing as a true morality of “love for one’s neighbor.” Even if virtues like kindness, fairness, and mutual aid already exist and are practiced regularly, they are not yet considered moral in the strict sense. In early Roman society, for example, acts of sympathy weren’t called good or bad, moral or immoral. And even when they were praised, it was with a kind of condescension—because actions that benefited the entire state, the *res publica*, were considered far more important.

In reality, what we call “love for our neighbor” has always been secondary. It is, in many ways, just a social convention rooted in fear—fear of what our neighbors might do to us. Once a society is secure from external threats, this fear turns inward, reshaping morality. Traits that were once essential for survival—boldness, ambition, cunning, the thirst for power—now become dangerous. Without external enemies to direct them toward, these instincts appear threatening to the stability of the community, and so they are demonized as immoral.

At the same time, their opposites—obedience, conformity, meekness—begin to be celebrated as moral virtues. The morality of the herd starts to dominate. People no longer value independence or strong personal ambition, because these things make them uncomfortable. The very qualities that elevate an individual above the group—sharp intellect, self-reliance, an exceptional spirit—are branded as evil. Meanwhile, humility, adaptability, and mediocrity become moral ideals.

Eventually, in times of great peace, a society grows soft. It starts to fear any form of harshness, even when it is just. Strength, discipline, and a sense of noble responsibility begin to offend people. The image of the “lamb” becomes more respectable than that of the lion. Society even starts to sympathize with criminals, genuinely believing they should not be punished. “Why punish at all?” people ask. “Isn’t it enough just to neutralize the threat?” The very idea of punishment begins to seem cruel and unnecessary.

At its final stage, this morality of fear reaches its logical conclusion: *the desire to eliminate all danger, all risk, all fear itself*. If this could be done, morality itself would disappear—because morality, at its core, is just a response to fear.

Anyone who looks at the conscience of modern Europeans will see the same desire written everywhere: “*We want a world where there is nothing left to fear.*” And today, this wish—this dream of total safety—is called *progress*.

Let's say it once again, as we've said it a hundred times before—because people today refuse to hear these truths. We know well enough how offensive it sounds to call humans just another type of animal, but it seems to be an even greater crime for us to describe modern people as a *herd*, ruled by *herd instincts*. Yet we cannot say otherwise—because that is precisely what we have discovered.

In Europe today, people believe they *know* what is good and evil. They believe they have settled the moral question that Socrates once admitted he did not know, and that the serpent in the old story promised to teach. But when we examine what they call "morality," we find that it is simply the morality of the *herd*—the instincts of the human animal that has learned to live in ever-larger groups. As the herd instinct grows stronger, so too does its dominance over all other instincts.

This morality—the morality of conformity and sameness—now presents itself as *the* morality, as though nothing else is possible. It defends itself fiercely against any alternative or higher morality, declaring, "*I am morality itself, and nothing else deserves that name!*"

With the help of Christianity, which has flattered and encouraged the deepest instincts of the herd animal, this morality has become ingrained not only in individual thinking but in the very structure of modern society. Democracy is simply the natural extension of Christianity. And yet, for some, even democracy moves too slowly. The most restless members of the herd—those sick with the herding instinct—grow impatient. Their howling grows louder, their teeth show more. These are the anarchists, the ones prowling the highways of European culture.

At first glance, they seem to be opposed to the democratic reformers, the revolutionary ideologues, and the socialist dreamers who speak of a "free society." But in reality, they all share the same underlying drive: an instinctive hostility to any form of society that is not simply an autonomous herd. They reject the very idea of hierarchy—*no gods, no masters!* They oppose all special privileges, which ultimately means opposition to *any* right at all—because when everyone is equal, no one *needs* rights. They distrust punishment, seeing it as unfair, as an attack on the weak, as an unjust consequence of past societies. And above all, they share a religion of *sympathy*—compassion not just for people, but for *all* living things, even for *God* himself!

This sympathy, this refusal to tolerate suffering in any form, this impulse to soften every harsh reality—these are the signs of a new kind of Buddhism creeping over Europe. They believe that mutual compassion is the highest possible morality, the ultimate achievement of humanity, the great hope for the future, the salvation of the present, and the way to erase all debts of the past.

In the end, they believe in *the herd*—which means they believe in *themselves*.

We, who hold a different belief—we who see the democratic movement not just as a political decline, but as the decline of man himself, as a force that flattens and weakens him—where can we place our hopes? Only in **new philosophers**. There is no other way. We need minds strong and original enough to challenge and overturn the so-called “eternal values,” to set a new direction for mankind. We need forerunners, visionaries of the future who will lay down the constraints and forge the chains that will force humanity onto **new paths** for millennia to come.

The future of humanity must become something that **man wills**—not something that happens by chance or folly, which is all history has been so far. And to accomplish this, we must prepare for vast, daring experiments in education and discipline, in shaping human beings with intent. We must put an end to the mindless rule of the masses, to the chaos that has so far passed for “history.” The stupidity of the **majority rule** is just its latest and most degenerate form.

For such a task, a **new kind of philosopher and leader** will one day be needed—someone beyond anything the world has ever known, surpassing every secretive, terrifying, or benevolent figure of history. The vision of such leaders is **before our eyes**—shall I dare to say it aloud, you free spirits?

We must consider the conditions needed to **produce** such a leader—the obstacles that must be removed and the forces that must be harnessed. What kind of trials and tests must shape a soul to rise to such a height? What kind of **hammer** must forge a conscience strong enough to bear the weight of such a burden? What **transformation of values** must take place to produce hearts of iron and spirits of brass, capable of carrying such responsibility?

At the same time, the **necessity** for such leaders terrifies us—because there is a real danger that they might never appear, or that they might arise and fail, or worse, that they might degenerate into something pathetic and unworthy. This is our **deepest fear**, you free spirits know it well! It is the storm that looms over our lives.

There is no greater pain than seeing a truly exceptional man **go astray** and become something less than he was meant to be. But even worse than that is seeing **all of mankind** headed toward degeneration. We have seen how **random, blind chance** has shaped human history—no guiding hand, no divine intervention, no “**finger of God**.” And we have also seen how **modern ideas** and Christian morality, in their blind optimism, are leading humanity to **ruin**.

We know how much more **man** could become. We see all the untapped potential—the heights he could still reach if only his strength and abilities were cultivated, if he were shaped by the right conditions. We know how often humanity has stood at the crossroads, at the edge of great transformations—only to fall back into **stagnation and decline**. And we have seen, time and

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again, how the greatest opportunities for greatness have been lost—sabotaged by **pathetic obstacles**, by weakness, by failure of will.

The **universal degeneration** of humanity is a real possibility. The "**man of the future**" as envisioned by the **socialists** and **fools**—a weak, herd-like creature, reduced to nothing but a **mindless, obedient animal**—is **entirely possible**. They call it a "free society," but in reality, it is the **final reduction** of man to a **dwarf**, a creature with no higher aspirations, no true power, no ability to rise above himself.

Anyone who has truly followed this possibility to its **logical end** feels a kind of **disgust** unknown to the rest of mankind. But perhaps, out of that loathing, comes **a new mission**.

Part Six: We Scholars

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At the risk of revealing what moralizing has always been—namely, an act of **showing one's own wounds**, as Balzac put it—I want to protest against a subtle but damaging shift in status that is happening in the relationship between **science and philosophy**.

This shift has gone largely unnoticed, as if it were happening in **good faith**, but it threatens to **reorder their ranks** in a way that is both improper and harmful. And I believe one must speak from **experience**—real, often painful experience—to comment on this matter, rather than talking about **colour like a blind man**, or denouncing science **like women and artists do**, merely because it **exposes too much** and unsettles their illusions.

The **scientific man's** declaration of **independence from philosophy** is one of the more subtle effects of the modern democratic mindset—one of its many **dissolving** and **leveling** tendencies. The **scientist's self-importance and vanity** are now in full bloom, though that does not mean they smell sweet.

The same **herd instinct** that cries “freedom from all masters” in politics has now invaded science as well. Science has successfully broken free from **theology**, after having been its obedient “handmaid” for too long. But now, in a fit of arrogance, it wants to dictate terms to **philosophy**—in fact, it wants to take over entirely. **Science now wants to play the philosopher!**

I have witnessed this firsthand. I have heard young **scientists**, as well as older **physicians**, speak with astonishing arrogance about philosophy and philosophers. But even worse are the **most educated and conceited of all scholars—the philologists and schoolteachers**—who, by profession, claim to be both scientists and philosophers.

I have encountered different **types** of this **scientific arrogance**:

- The **specialist**, who instinctively resists all **synthesis**—he doesn't want a **big picture**, only his tiny sliver of expertise.
- The **workaholic**, who despises the **leisure** and **luxury of thought** that philosophy demands, feeling insulted by its freedom.
- The **practical man**, who can see nothing in philosophy except a graveyard of **disproven systems**—a pointless waste of time.
- The **rationalist**, who fears **mysticism** in philosophy, treating any attempt to explore the limits of knowledge as **intellectual treason**.
- And finally, those **disillusioned by a single philosopher**, who, in rejecting one particular thinker, develop an **irrational hostility** toward philosophy itself.

For example, modern Germany still suffers from **Schopenhauer's influence**. His **blind rage against Hegel** has cut off an entire generation of Germans from their own **intellectual heritage**. German culture was an **elevation of the historical sense**, but Schopenhauer himself lacked **this completely**—he was, in many ways, deeply **un-German**.

More broadly, I suspect **modern philosophy itself** is to blame for this decline. Philosophers today lack the **majesty, discipline, and authority** of those like Heraclitus, Plato, and Empedocles—the great **royal spirits** of the past. By comparison, **modern philosophers are small men**.

Consider Germany today, where the **two most prominent “thinkers” in Berlin** are **Eugen Dühring** (an anarchist) and **Eduard von Hartmann** (a mystic and synthesizer of everything). Can we blame science for **not taking philosophy seriously** when these men are its supposed champions?

Even worse, we now have "realist" and "positivist" philosophers—who are **nothing but glorified scientists**. They are **failed philosophers** who, having once **dreamed too big**, have since retreated into **specialization**, licking their wounds, and seeking revenge by **denying the supremacy of philosophy itself**.

Science today flourishes, and it wears its **self-confidence** openly. Meanwhile, philosophy has shrunk into something pitiful—a **mere theory of knowledge**, a **timid science of limits**, a **doctrine of restraint** that never even **steps beyond the threshold** of its own house. It is a **philosophy of retreat, a philosophy in agony, a philosophy that evokes pity**.

How could such a **philosophy ever rule?**

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The **dangers** that stand in the way of **the philosopher's development** today are so many that one might wonder whether such a figure can still even **come into being**. The vast expansion and complexity of the **sciences** have made it far more likely that a thinker will **exhaust himself as a mere learner**, or get stuck in some narrow specialty, never **rising above it** to attain a **higher perspective**—one that can see broadly, deeply, and critically.

Or, perhaps, a philosopher **rises too late**, after his **strongest years** have passed, or when his mind has become **dull and compromised**, so that his **judgments** no longer matter much. It is often his **own intellectual conscience** that holds him back—he resists becoming a **mere amateur** with knowledge in many areas but **depth in none**. He **fears losing self-respect**, knowing that once he does, he **no longer commands**, no longer **leads**. If he wants influence, he would have to **become an actor, a charlatan, a philosophical magician**, or worse—a **deceiver**.

At the heart of it, this is a **question of taste**, if not one of **conscience**.

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To make matters even harder, the philosopher is burdened with a task **far beyond science**: he must **judge life itself**. He must say **Yes or No to existence**—not in some detached intellectual sense, but with **conviction**. And he does not arrive at this **judgment** easily. He must go through a **range of intense, sometimes disturbing, and even destructive experiences**—a path that often leaves him **hesitant, doubtful, and shaken**.

For a long time, the **public** has mistaken the philosopher for something else entirely. People think he is simply a **man of science**, a kind of **intellectual specialist**, or perhaps a **religious mystic**, detached from earthly concerns. Even today, when someone is praised as “**living wisely**” or “**like a philosopher**”, what is usually meant? Simply that he lives **cautiously, prudently, or at a safe distance from life's struggles**.

But **real philosophy**, my friends, does not look like this. The **true philosopher** does **not live carefully or wisely**—at least, not in the way people expect. **Above all, he does not live prudently.**

Instead, he **throws himself fully into the risks of life**, carrying the **weight of countless trials and temptations**. He does not **withdraw** from the **bad game** of existence—he **plays it**.

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When compared to a **genius**—someone who **creates or produces** in the fullest sense—the **scholar** or **scientist** often resembles an **old maid**. Like her, he is **detached from life's two fundamental functions: creating and giving birth** (whether intellectually or physically). Society may **respect** both the scholar and the old maid, but this respect often carries a trace of **pity or frustration**—as if it were a **compensation** for what they **lack**.

Let's look closer: **What is a scholar?**

He is, at his core, an **ordinary** type of man, with **ordinary** virtues. He is **not a leader, not authoritative, and not self-sufficient**. Instead, he is defined by **industry, patience, conformity, and a need for security**. He **instinctively seeks others like himself** and thrives in an environment where **predictability and recognition** keep his self-doubt in check. His **happiness** depends on small comforts: a stable position, a **modest level of independence**, a **good reputation**, and **constant validation** of his worth.

But beneath this respectability, he is **plagued by mediocrity's usual vices: petty envy and a keen eye for the weaknesses of those who surpass him**. He **trusts others**, but only in a **limited** way—he allows himself to **let go**, but he does not **flow** with life. In the presence of **truly great men**, he becomes **cold and withdrawn**, his gaze as **still and unmoved as a lifeless lake**, untouched by **awe or admiration**.

The worst danger of the scholar lies in his **instinct for mediocrity**. Like a **Jesuit of the average**, he **subtly undermines** exceptional individuals—not by **attacking** them outright, but by **relaxing them**, weakening them, and making them **less sharp**. He does this **gently, with sympathy**, as if offering **kindness** and **support**, but his goal is always the same: to **bring down** those who rise above.

This is the **art of mediocrity**—the **soft, suffocating hand that breaks no bows but makes them loose**, not by force, but by **careful, indulgent persuasion**. This is the **true method of the Jesuit**: appearing to **help**, while ensuring that **greatness never fully emerges**.

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While many people eagerly welcome **objectivity** in thinking—and who hasn't been exhausted by endless **subjectivity** and self-centeredness?—we should still be cautious about **overvaluing** it. There has been a trend, especially among **pessimists**, to **glorify** the idea of becoming completely objective, as if **detaching oneself from personal desires** were some kind of salvation or higher purpose.

The "**objective man**", the ideal scholar who purely observes and analyzes without bias, is certainly valuable—one of the most **refined instruments of knowledge** we have. But that's exactly the point: **he is only an instrument**, not an end in himself. He is merely a **mirror**, reflecting whatever comes before him. He **waits** for knowledge rather than seeking or shaping it.

Because he has trained himself to be **so detached**, even his **own personality feels accidental** or unnecessary to him. He forgets about himself and **often confuses himself with others**. When he suffers—whether it's from personal problems, poor health, or loneliness—he doesn't truly address it. Instead, he **abstracts** his suffering, treating it as just another case study in human experience. He is **serene**, but not because he lacks problems—rather, he **lacks the ability** to fully engage with them.

His **excessive openness** to all experiences makes him vulnerable. He lacks **firm judgments**, and his **indifference to taking sides** sometimes costs him dearly. If you expect him to **love** or **hate** in the way a **god, a woman, or an animal does**, he will try—but **his emotions are forced and unnatural**. His love is restrained, his hate is artificial, and his passions feel like mere performances.

He only feels "**genuine**" when he is reflecting reality. His nature is **like a polished mirror**—always **passive, never asserting**. He does not truly **affirm** or **deny** anything; he does not **command** nor **destroy**. As **Leibniz** said, he almost despises nothing—**almost** (and that "almost" is important). He is not a **leader**, nor a **follower**; he stands too far away from life to **fight for** or **against** anything.

People have often mistaken him for a **philosopher**, as if he were a **shaper of civilization**. But in reality, he has been given **too much honor**. He is **not a creator or a guide**—he is merely **a tool**. A **refined, delicate, and highly sensitive** tool, but still **just an instrument**. He is not **the goal of human development**, nor **the beginning of something new**—he does not **command, shape, or build**. Instead, he **waits** for meaning and structure to be given to him.

And for this reason, he is also **nothing for women**—just an empty form in need of **someone else's content**.

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When a **philosopher** today openly declares that he is **not a skeptic**—as should be clear from my earlier discussion of the “objective spirit”—people react with unease. They become **nervous**, as if something **dangerous** is happening, as if they can hear the distant **rumble of an approaching explosion**. Some even suspect that such a philosopher might be working on a **new kind of intellectual dynamite**, a **nihilism of action**—not just a denial of traditional values, but an **active rejection of life itself**.

And in today’s world, **skepticism** has become **the perfect tranquilizer** against such radical thinking. It is the **soothing drug** that numbs people against dangerous ideas. Skeptics, like modern-day **safety officers**, demand peace and quiet:

"Haven't we heard enough disturbing ideas already? Must we really listen to these dark voices from below? Keep quiet, you pessimistic moles!"

Skeptics are **overly sensitive** and **easily startled**. They react **not only to negative beliefs** but also to strong **affirmations** with the same suspicion. To them, saying "Yes!" or "No!" **too strongly** seems **immoral**—as if taking a definite stance were somehow indecent. They prefer **cautious detachment**, celebrating their virtue by keeping a **safe distance from everything**. They echo **Montaigne's famous words**:

"What do I know?"

Or they imitate Socrates:

"I know that I know nothing."

Or they question whether **any** decision is necessary:

"Even if the door to truth were open, why should I enter immediately?"

"Why rush to explain everything? Can't we just leave things ambiguous?"

This **hesitation and reluctance** is how skeptics justify their **passivity**. They argue that **uncertainty has its own beauty**—that the **mystery of life** is more seductive than any **definitive truth**.

But **skepticism** is not just an **intellectual stance**—it is a **symptom of a deeper physiological condition**. It is a **sickness of will**, most common in societies where **different classes and races**

have been rapidly mixed together, causing inner conflicts between opposing instincts and values. These contradictions create restlessness, self-doubt, and hesitation, preventing people from developing a strong core identity.

The most severe cases of this "disease of the will" are found in modern Europe, which is currently undergoing a chaotic blending of peoples and cultures. As a result, many Europeans have lost their ability to make strong, independent decisions. They hesitate, doubt themselves, and even question whether they have free will at all. Today's European soul is often filled with indecisiveness, like a storm cloud full of unanswered questions.

This paralysis of will is not evenly spread across Europe. It is worst in places where civilization has existed the longest and where people have become most accustomed to comfort. France, for example, has turned its deep skepticism into something stylish and seductive, making itself the intellectual leader of modern Europe. In Germany, there is slightly more willpower, and even more so in Northern Germany than in Central Germany. The English, Spaniards, and Corsicans still have stronger wills—though in different ways, shaped by their unique cultural traits. Italy is still young and undecided about its future, while Russia stands out as an immense, waiting force, storing up its willpower for a future reckoning.

Russia is like a tightly coiled spring, uncertain whether it will affirm or deny the world. And unless its energy is released through wars in Asia, or through internal collapse, its potential threat to Europe will only grow. Some believe that breaking Russia apart—dividing it into smaller states and forcing it to adopt democratic institutions and mass media distractions—would weaken its power. I, however, do not wish for this. Instead, I hope that Russia's growing might will force Europe to find its own unity—to develop a single, powerful will instead of remaining divided by petty nationalisms and short-term politics.

The age of small, fragmented states is over. The next century will be dominated by a struggle for world power. The question is: Will Europe rise to the challenge? Or will it remain a collection of weak, divided nations, doomed to be overtaken by stronger forces?

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How far will the new warlike age that Europe has clearly entered support the rise of a stronger form of skepticism? To answer that, I'll use a parable that those familiar with German history will already understand.

The ruthless enthusiast for tall, strong grenadiers, who as King of Prussia laid the foundation for a military and skeptical genius—and with it, the modern German character—was the strange, fanatical father of Frederick the Great. Though a difficult and even deranged figure, he had one stroke of genius: he recognized what Germany lacked most at that time. It was not

culture or social refinement—Germany could survive without those. No, something far more urgent was missing.

Germany lacked men.

And his **greatest fear**—his **deepest regret**—was that his own son **was not man enough** to fix this.

This fear led to his **bitterness** towards Frederick, who, in his eyes, was wasting himself on **atheism, intellectualism**, and the **frivolity of clever Frenchmen**. To the father, this was a sign of **moral decay**. He saw **skepticism** creeping in like a **giant bloodsucking spider**, draining Germany's strength. He feared that his son had a **weak heart**, incapable of **true good or evil**, and a **broken will** that could **neither command nor obey**.

But here, the father **was wrong**.

While he **misjudged his son**, his instincts were not **entirely misplaced**. What he failed to recognize was that Frederick was **not weak** but was instead developing a **new kind of skepticism**—one **far more dangerous** than the passive **doubt of the French Enlightenment**. And ironically, it was likely **his father's hatred** and the **icy solitude of his upbringing** that forced this new skepticism to **harden** within him.

This was a **skepticism of strength**—the **skepticism of a warrior and conqueror**. Unlike the **soft skepticism** of those who merely **doubt and despair**, this new German skepticism **doubted, but acted; questioned, but took possession; undermined, yet still built empires**. It refused to believe in traditional ideals, but it **never lost itself** in meaningless uncertainty. Instead, it **harnessed doubt and used it as a weapon**.

Frederick the Great was the **first example** of this **new German skepticism**—one that eventually took **Europe by storm**. It was this spirit—what we might call a **heightened, intellectualized Fredericianism**—that gave Germany a **dominant intellectual and historical position** in Europe for generations. The **great German philologists and historical critics**, despite being **scholars**, were in many ways **destroyers and disassemblers**, true inheritors of Frederick's **spirit of conquest**—but in the **realm of ideas** rather than battlefields.

This **German skepticism** manifested in many ways:

- **A fearless gaze**, unwilling to look away from hard truths.
- **The precision of a surgeon**, dissecting history, philosophy, and morality with unflinching hands.
- **An explorer's hunger for discovery**, pushing into the most **dangerous intellectual territories**, much like Arctic explorers venturing into unknown and hostile landscapes.

It is **no surprise** that this spirit **terrified** the more **warm-blooded**, sentimental **humanists** of Europe. The French historian **Jules Michelet**, for instance, shuddered at what he called the "**fatalistic, ironic, Mephistophelean spirit**" of the Germans.

To grasp **just how radical this transformation** was, remember that **for centuries**, the Germans had been viewed as **kind-hearted, weak-willed dreamers**—gentle **poets** rather than **ruthless thinkers**. This **old stereotype** was still so deeply ingrained that a "**masculinized woman**" (likely referring to **Madame de Staël**, who wrote about Germany) once **encouraged Europe** to see the Germans as **peaceful, harmless fools**.

But that illusion **was shattered** when **Napoleon**—himself the greatest embodiment of **willpower and conquest**—met **Goethe**.

His reaction? **Shock**.

"Voilà un homme!" ("Now that is a **man!**")

Napoleon had expected to meet a **typical German**—a **weak, poetic dreamer**. Instead, he encountered something **entirely different**. And in that moment, he realized what few in Europe had yet understood: **Germany was no longer a nation of passive thinkers—it had produced men of power**.

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If, in describing the **philosophers of the future**, some traits seem to suggest that they **must be skeptics**, let it be clear—**skepticism alone does not define them**. They might just as well be called **critics**, but above all, they will be **experimenters**.

The **name** I have given them is meant to highlight their **spirit of testing and attempting**, their **boldness in experimentation**—and perhaps their willingness to experiment in ways that will seem too **daring and dangerous** for the **sensitive and pampered tastes of a democratic age**.

These **coming philosophers** will not be **passive doubters**, nor mere **collectors of knowledge**—they will **engage in experiments that challenge and dissect the foundations of human thought**. Their **intellectual courage** will take them into **painful, risky inquiries**—far **beyond what most people today can stomach**.

They will **not be skeptics in the weak sense**—those who doubt merely to avoid commitment. Instead, they will **embody the discipline of the critic**:

- They will have a **clear sense of value**—a certainty about **what is worth pursuing**.
- They will employ a **unified method**—a rigorous way of thinking.

- They will be **bold enough to stand alone**, independent of public opinion or traditional dogma.
- They will take **full responsibility for their conclusions**, refusing to blame "fate" or "circumstances" for their insights.

These thinkers will embrace a **delight in denial and dissection**, a **considered cruelty**—one that allows them to **cut deeply into ideas and illusions** with a **sure, steady hand**, even when doing so is painful.

They will be **harsher and more exacting** than the so-called "**humane**" and **sentimental people** of today might prefer. They **will not seek "truth" because it pleases or inspires them**. They **will not be fooled by comforting illusions**.

When they hear someone say:

- *"That thought elevates me—so it must be true!"*
- *"That work enchants me—so it must be beautiful!"*
- *"That artist inspires me—so he must be great!"*

—**They will only smile.**

No—more than a smile. They may feel **outright disgust** at this kind of **rapturous, sentimental thinking**—this **feminized, romanticized, and self-indulgent idealism**. If one could look into their **true hearts**, they would **not** find any desire to **reconcile** the "**Christian sentiment**" with "**ancient taste**", or to **harmonize** philosophy with **modern parliamentarism**. Such **compromises**, so typical of our **uncertain and conciliatory era**, will be **beneath them**.

Their **critical discipline** and their **pursuit of intellectual purity and rigor** will not just be a **personal standard**—they may even **wear it as a badge of honor**. However, despite their **mastery of criticism**, they **will not define themselves as critics**.

Why? Because **to call philosophy mere "criticism" is an insult to philosophy itself**.

It is **fashionable today**—especially among **Positivists in France and Germany**—to claim that "**philosophy is nothing but critical science**". Even **Kant** seemed to **flatter himself** with this idea—just look at the **titles of his major works**.

But the **new philosophers** will **reject this notion**.

To them, **critics are only instruments—tools to be used by the true philosopher**.

And in the end, even the "**Great Chinaman of Königsberg**"—Immanuel Kant himself—was **only a great critic. Nothing more**.

I insist that people finally stop **confusing** philosophical **workers**—that is, scholars, scientists, and historians—with **philosophers**. It is time to give **each their due**, rather than **overestimating the former and underestimating the latter**.

A **true philosopher** may have **once stood** on the same ground as those **scientific workers**—he may have been **a critic, a dogmatist, a historian, a poet, a collector, a traveler, a riddle-reader, a moralist, a visionary, a "free spirit"**—in short, **almost everything**. He must experience the **full range of human values** and perspectives so that he can **see from every angle**—from the **highest heights to the deepest depths**.

But these are only **preliminary steps—preparation** for the **true task** of the philosopher.

That task is **not** to simply study and analyze the past, but to **create values**.

The Difference Between Philosophical Workers and Real Philosophers

The **philosophical workers**—like Kant and Hegel—are like **archivists and systematizers**. Their job is to **organize, clarify, and formalize** the great existing systems of thought—the **values and beliefs that have already been established and accepted as "truths"**. Whether in **logic, politics, morality, or art**, they make the past **visible, comprehensible, and manageable**. They **compress time itself**, subjugate **history**, and bring order to what has already been **determined**.

This is a **tremendous and noble task**, requiring **intellect, willpower, and pride**.

But **real philosophers** are something entirely different.

The Philosopher as a Law-Giver and Creator

Real philosophers are the commanders and law-givers of the future.

They do not ask, "*What has been?*" or "*What is?*"—they declare:

"This is how it shall be!"

They decide the **purpose and direction of mankind**, reshaping **all previous knowledge and values** into something **new**.

For them, **everything that exists and has existed**—all the **work of past scholars and systematizers**—is merely **a tool, a means, an instrument, a hammer** to shape the **future**.

For them, "**knowing**" is an act of creation. Their **search for truth** is, in reality, a **will to power**—the power to **redefine existence itself**.

So we must ask:

- **Do such philosophers exist today?**
- **Have they ever existed before?**
- **And must they not exist someday?**

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It becomes ever clearer to me that the philosopher—indispensable for tomorrow and the day after—has always found himself at odds with his own time. He has always been forced to stand against the prevailing ideals of his era.

Throughout history, these rare figures, whom we call philosophers (though they themselves rarely used the term "lover of wisdom"), have often seen themselves as troublesome fools and dangerous questioners. Their mission, though difficult and involuntary, has always been to serve as the bad conscience of their age.

With the precision of a vivisector's knife, they have cut into the very heart of the so-called virtues of their time, exposing the hypocrisy, the complacency, the self-indulgence, and the moral decay that lurked beneath society's most venerated values.

Their message has always been: "We must move toward that which is least familiar to you."

In today's world of "modern ideas," where specialization confines everyone into narrow corners, where men are expected to be small, focused only on their field, a true philosopher—if such a thing still existed—would define greatness in precisely the opposite terms.

He would say: "A man's greatness is determined by his comprehensiveness, his ability to bear immense burdens, his capacity to take upon himself the highest responsibilities."

But in the modern era, the spirit of the age weakens the will. Nothing is more fashionable today than a weak will. Therefore, if a philosopher were to arise today, he would have to champion the opposite ideal: strength of will, endurance, stern resolve, the ability to carry a decision through to its end.

Just as in the 16th century, when an excess of willpower led to wild selfishness, the philosophy of selflessness and humility became necessary, today, in an age of collective weakness, the ideal must be one of power, independence, and singularity.

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In Socrates' time, the old conservative Athenians had lost their instincts and had grown complacent in pleasure and comfort. They still spoke grandly of virtue, but their actions betrayed them.

In such an era, irony was necessary. Socrates, the ruthless physician, cut through their hypocrisy. His gaze and his words seemed to say: "Don't pretend before me! We are equals here!"

But today, when herd morality dominates Europe, where the "common man" decides what is honorable, and where "equality" is no longer about rights but a war against everything rare and exceptional—against higher souls, higher duties, higher responsibilities, the creative, the noble, the great—now, in this era, to be great means something else.

In today's world, greatness means the ability to be noble, the will to stand apart, the power to be different, the strength to live by personal initiative.

The true philosopher of today would say: "The greatest man is he who can stand most alone, who is most concealed, most divergent, who stands beyond good and evil, who commands his virtues rather than being commanded by them, who possesses an overabundance of will."

And so, we must ask: Is greatness even possible today?

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It is difficult to learn what a philosopher is, because it cannot be taught; one must "know" it through experience—or else have the pride not to know it at all. This is especially unfortunate in an era where people speak endlessly about things they cannot possibly experience firsthand, and nowhere is this truer than in discussions of philosophers and philosophy itself. Only a very few truly understand these things, and all popular notions about them are false.

For example, the true philosophical combination of a bold, exuberant spirit—racing ahead at presto tempo—and an unyielding, rigorous dialectic that never falters is something most scholars and intellectuals have never encountered in themselves. If they hear of such a thing, they find it incredible. They think of necessity as a burden, as forced obedience, as constraint. To them, thinking itself is a slow, hesitant, laborious activity—something that is, at best, worthy of a nobleman's sweat, but never something easy, divine, or akin to dance and playfulness.

"To think" and "to take something seriously, arduously"—to them, these are one and the same. That is their experience.

Artists, perhaps, have a finer intuition in this regard. They know that precisely when they cease acting "arbitrarily" and begin to follow necessity, their sense of freedom, subtlety, power, and creative mastery reaches its peak. In them, necessity and the freedom of the will become one and the same.

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There is a hierarchy of spiritual states, just as there is a hierarchy of problems. The highest problems ruthlessly repel anyone who approaches them without the requisite greatness of spirit. What use is it for nimble, everyday minds, or clumsy, well-meaning mechanics and empiricists, to push themselves into such problems, intruding into this "holy of holies," as so often happens today? The coarse-footed must never walk upon such carpets; this is a fundamental law. The doors remain closed to such intruders, no matter how hard they knock or how often they dash their heads against them.

One must be born into the right conditions—or rather, bred for them. A person has a right to philosophy, in its highest sense, only by virtue of descent. It is the lineage, the blood, that decides here as well. Many generations must have prepared the way for a philosopher to emerge. Each of his virtues must have been separately acquired, nurtured, transmitted, and embodied.

Not only the effortless boldness of his thought, but also his readiness for immense responsibilities, the sovereign gaze that rules and dismisses, the feeling of being set apart from the multitude with their duties and virtues, the instinct to protect whatever is misunderstood and defamed—whether it be called God or Devil—the delight in supreme justice, the ability to command, the vastness of will, the patient and rare gaze that seldom admires, seldom looks up, seldom loves... all of this must have been cultivated over generations.

Part Seven: Our Virtues

214

Sure, we probably still have virtues, though they're not the straightforward, weighty virtues that made our grandfathers admirable—and maybe a little distant from us. We, the forerunners of the future, the firstborn of the twentieth century, with our insatiable curiosity, our talent for disguise, our polished but no less potent cruelty in both thought and action—if we are to have virtues, they will be the ones that align most intimately with our deepest instincts and desires. Very well, let's go looking for them in the labyrinth of ourselves!—where so much gets lost, where things disappear completely. And is there anything more exhilarating than searching for one's own virtues? Isn't the act of searching itself a kind of belief in them? But then again, isn't this belief just an updated version of what used to be called a "good conscience"—that old, respectable relic of a notion, the intellectual ponytail our grandfathers wore behind their heads (and behind their reasoning)? In this, at least, we are still their rightful heirs. We are the last Europeans with good consciences—we, too, still wear that ponytail. But if only you knew how soon—so very soon—it will all change!

215

Just as in the cosmos, where a planet's course might be set not by one sun but by two, or where it is bathed in different colored lights—red at one moment, green the next, sometimes both at once—so too are we moderns shaped by multiple moralities. Our actions do not simply shine in one clear color; instead, they flicker, shift, and blur. We rarely act in ways that are unambiguously right or wrong. More often than not, our actions, like our age, are a dazzling mix of contradictions.

216

"Love your enemies"—yes, we have learned that well. We do it constantly, in large ways and small. But sometimes, something even more refined takes place: we learn to *despise* while we love, and precisely when we love most deeply. And yet, this happens without our knowing, without any great show, without self-congratulation—there's a kind of quiet shame in goodness now, a reluctance to wear virtue like a badge. Moral posturing no longer suits our taste. This, too, is a step forward—just as our fathers eventually found that religious posturing no longer suited theirs. They abandoned pious theatrics, and so we now abandon moral theatrics. The old Puritan hymns, the righteous sermons, the saccharine goodness—they no longer harmonize with the rhythm of our conscience, with the dance of our spirit.

217

Be wary of those who take pride in their moral subtlety, those who desperately want to be recognized for their keen ethical instincts. They will never forgive you if they ever slip up in front of you (or worse, if they misjudge you). They will, without even realizing it, become your most persistent critics, your slanderers—even while still calling themselves your friends. Blessed are those who can forget their mistakes, for they are the only ones who truly move on.

218

French psychologists—where else do we still find real psychologists these days?—have never tired of indulging in their bitter amusement at the foolishness of the bourgeoisie. But in doing so, they reveal something about themselves. Take Flaubert, for example: the honest citizen of Rouen, who, by the end of his life, saw, heard, and tasted nothing but bourgeois stupidity. It became his personal torment, his form of refined cruelty. But isn't that getting a bit dull? So for a change, I suggest a different pleasure: studying the unconscious cunning with which good, fat, honest mediocrity handles superior minds and their difficult tasks. Observe the subtle, barbed, almost Jesuitical intelligence of the ordinary man—it's sharper than anything the middle class could consciously produce, sharper even than what its victims perceive! Once again, proof that *instinct* is the most intelligent form of intelligence ever discovered. So, psychologists, I offer you a new spectacle worthy of the gods: the battle between the *rule* and the *exception*. Watch how society defends its norms against the extraordinary! Or, to put it more bluntly, conduct a vivisection on “good people,” on those self-proclaimed men of goodwill—on *yourselves!*

219

Moral judgment—especially condemnation—is the favorite weapon of the intellectually shallow against those more gifted than they are. It is their way of taking revenge, of compensating for their own shortcomings, and, paradoxically, their chance to develop a little intelligence—after all, malice sharpens the mind. Deep down, they are pleased that there exists a standard by which they can drag the exceptional down to their level. That's why they fight so fiercely for the idea that “all are equal before God.” In fact, many of the most passionate defenders of faith are found among these moralists—they *need* God to level the playing field! If anyone were to tell them, “True intellectual greatness is far beyond the reach of mere morality,” they would be outraged. So I won't say it. Instead, I'll flatter them with the idea that lofty intellect is simply the final refinement of morality, that it is the result of long and disciplined practice in moral virtue, perhaps across generations. I'll tell them that higher thought is nothing but moral justice in its most evolved form—the kind of justice that *accepts hierarchy*, that knows how to rank things in order of value, not just people but everything in existence.

220

Now that the idea of the “selfless person” is so fashionable, perhaps it’s worth asking—though at some risk—what exactly people care about. What truly concerns the average person, including the so-called cultured, the educated, and maybe even some philosophers (if we trust appearances)? If you take an honest look, you’ll see that most of what fascinates and excites refined minds seems utterly *uninteresting* to the masses. And when ordinary people do recognize someone’s devotion to these “boring” pursuits, they call it “selflessness,” baffled that anyone could care so much about something so trivial. Some philosophers—perhaps because they never had firsthand experience of higher minds—have turned this popular bewilderment into mystical nonsense, pretending that selflessness is some divine virtue. But the plain truth is that “selfless” acts are deeply *interesting* to those who perform them. Even love! What—do you really think love is *unselfish*? You fools! And what about all the praise given to those who “sacrifice” for others? Anyone who has ever truly sacrificed knows they did it to *gain* something—perhaps a deeper version of themselves, a trade of one part of their being for another. They gave up something *here* to have more of something *there*—to *be more*, to *feel* more.

But this is a topic that a more refined spirit prefers to avoid. After all, the truth about it is so obvious that it’s almost boring. And truth, after all, is a woman—you must not try to force her.

221

“A curious thing,” said a fussy moralist, a dealer in small virtues, “is that I sometimes admire and respect a selfless man—not because of his selflessness, but because I think he has earned the right to sacrifice for another. The key question is always: *who* is he, and *who* is the other person? For instance, if someone is naturally suited to leadership, then self-denial and humility would not be virtues but a tragic waste of potential. That’s how I see it. Any morality that applies itself indiscriminately to everyone not only lacks good taste but also encourages a kind of moral laziness. It seduces people under the guise of compassion and ultimately harms those rare and exceptional individuals who should rise above the herd. Moral systems should first be forced to acknowledge *hierarchy*—they must learn that it is *immoral* to claim that ‘what is right for one is right for all.’”

So said my moralist and good-natured fool. But should we laugh at him for demanding that moral systems *themselves* be held to moral standards? Perhaps. But if you want people to laugh with you, it’s best not to be *too* right—after all, even good taste requires a little bit of error.

222

Wherever sympathy—compassion, shared suffering—is preached today (and, if I’m not mistaken, it’s the *only* thing still being preached), the psychologist should listen carefully. Beneath all the self-important noise of these preachers—who, like all preachers, are loud—there

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is a deeper, rasping, and all-too-human note: *self-loathing*. It is part of the increasing ugliness of Europe, a shadow that has been growing for over a century. (Its early symptoms can be found in a letter from Galiani to Madame d'Épinay.) Perhaps this is not just a side effect of Europe's decline—perhaps it is the *cause*!

The so-called "modern man," this smug little ape, is deeply dissatisfied with himself—of that, there is no doubt. He suffers, but his vanity insists that he *must* suffer *with* others.

223

The modern European—an awkward, mixed-breed commoner, if we're being honest—desperately needs a costume. He needs history to be his wardrobe. But no matter what he tries on, nothing fits! So he keeps changing, swapping outfits, mixing and matching. Just look at the 19th century: its frantic enthusiasm for different styles, its constant swapping of ideological and artistic masks, and its bouts of despair when it realizes that *nothing* truly suits it.

It's pointless for us to dress up as Romantics, or Classicists, or Christians, or Florentines, or Baroque revivalists, or Nationalists—none of these identities actually *fit* us. But at least we have become *masters* of playing dress-up! The "historical spirit" has benefited from this constant self-reinvention. Again and again, we test out new ideas from the past, try them on, discard them, pack them away, and—above all—*study* them. We are the first generation obsessed with costumes, not just in fashion but in morality, belief systems, artistic tastes, and religions.

Perhaps this is where we will finally find our originality: not in inventing new values, but in *parodying* history itself. Maybe our true genius lies in the ability to stage a grand, cosmic carnival—a festival of irony, of laughter, of supreme arrogance. Maybe our fate is to become history's great satirists, to play the role of God's court jesters. Maybe, if nothing else from our era has a future, at least our laughter *will*!

224

The historical sense—the ability to quickly perceive the ranking and influence of values by which a people, a culture, or an individual has lived—this instinct for understanding how power and authority shape these values is something we modern Europeans claim as our specialty. But this "specialty" did not come from noble refinement; rather, it emerged from the chaotic and half-civilized state that Europe has been thrown into by the democratic mixing of classes and races. Only in the nineteenth century has this faculty been recognized as a kind of "sixth sense."

Because of this mixture, the past—the remnants of various ways of life and civilizations that were once distinct but now overlap—flows through us "modern souls." Our instincts reach back in all directions, making us a kind of chaotic patchwork. Yet, strangely enough, this chaos benefits our intellect. Our semi-barbarity—both in body and in our desires—grants us access to

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things that a noble and refined age never could. We can navigate the labyrinth of incomplete civilizations, understand the half-civilized states of the past, and since most of human history has consisted of such states, this "historical sense" is nearly an instinct for *everything*, a kind of universal taste. But precisely because of this breadth, it is an *ignoble* sense.

For example, we can now truly appreciate *Homer* again. This might be one of our greatest cultural gains: the ability to enjoy him in a way that the refined people of past centuries could not. The highly cultivated French of the seventeenth century, for instance—figures like Saint-Évremond (who scorned Homer's *esprit vaste*) or even Voltaire—could barely tolerate him. Their refined tastes, their quick and absolute judgments, their immediate revulsion at anything strange, their unwillingness to question their own way of life or admire what was foreign—these all worked against them. The very idea of *historical sense*, with its open-minded but servile curiosity, was simply incomprehensible to them.

The same goes for *Shakespeare*, that wild mix of Spanish, Moorish, and Saxon sensibilities. A refined Athenian from Aeschylus' time would have laughed himself to death at Shakespeare's chaotic blend of delicate beauty, crude vulgarity, and artificial cleverness. But *we* embrace this disorder, this strange medley of styles, as something refined and artistic, something meant just for *us*. We accept the raw, earthy atmosphere in which Shakespeare's art and taste developed—just as we might stroll through the backstreets of Naples, fully alert, taking in the enchantment despite the overpowering stench of the slums.

Yes, as men of the "historical sense," we do have virtues: we are unpretentious, selfless, modest, patient, disciplined, and deeply appreciative of the past. But if we are being honest, we are not exactly *tasteful*. What is hardest for us to grasp, to feel, to admire—what we instinctively distrust, even resist—is true *perfection*, the ultimate maturity of any culture or art. When something reaches its final form, its moment of calm, its golden stillness, we feel almost alienated. Perhaps our great virtue, our historical sensibility, is fundamentally at odds with good taste—or at least with *exquisite* taste.

Unlike past civilizations that celebrated the rare moments when power and beauty reached their peak and held steady, *we* are restless. We do not admire proportion, restraint, or balance. If we are honest, we are addicted to the infinite, the immeasurable. Like a rider on a galloping horse, we let go of the reins at the sight of the vast unknown. *We modern men, we semi-barbarians, are at our happiest when we are in the greatest danger.*

Whether it's hedonism, pessimism, utilitarianism, or eudaemonism—all these ways of thinking that judge the value of things based on *pleasure* and *pain*, treating them as the ultimate measures, are nothing but naïve simplifications. Anyone with true creative power, anyone with an artist's

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conscience, will look down on such thinking—not without a hint of sympathy, but certainly with scorn.

Sympathy? Yes, we do have it—but not in the way you understand it. It is not the sympathy for social "suffering," not the concern for the weak, the sick, or the defective who have been left behind. It is *especially* not sympathy for the resentful, bitter underclasses who call their craving for power "freedom."

No—our sympathy is for something far greater. We see how humanity is *shrinking*, how *you* are shrinking it! And there are moments when we feel an overwhelming anguish at your so-called sympathy—when we actively resist it. We see your seriousness, your moral fervor, as more dangerous than any kind of frivolity.

You want, if it were possible (and there is no greater foolishness than *that* "if it were possible"), to *eliminate suffering*. And we? It almost seems that we would rather see suffering increased and deepened beyond anything it has been before!

Your so-called "well-being" is no goal to us—it is an *end*, a deadening state that makes man ridiculous and contemptible, something whose destruction is *desirable*!

Do you not understand that *great* suffering, *severe* suffering, has been the force that has elevated humanity at every stage of history? The tension of the soul in misfortune is what gives it energy; its trembling before destruction, its inventiveness and courage in enduring and transforming suffering—these are what shape humanity. Every depth, every mystery, every disguise, every act of genius, cunning, or greatness in human history has been forged through the fire of suffering.

Man is not just a creature—he is also a creator. He is not only raw material, a shapeless mass of instincts and foolishness; he is also a sculptor, a hammer-wielding force that reshapes himself, a divine spectator who watches and judges his own transformation. Do you understand this contrast?

Yet *your* sympathy—the sympathy of modern morality—is directed precisely at the *creature* in man, the part that must be molded, hammered, tested, burned, refined. Do you not see how your "compassion" is the worst kind of indulgence, a force that weakens and degrades? *Our* sympathy is the *opposite* of yours. *Our sympathy fights against your sympathy*, because your version is nothing but a soft, poisonous comfort that makes humanity smaller and weaker.

There are far greater problems than pleasure and pain, far higher concerns than mere sympathy. Any philosophy that fixates on these alone is simpleminded and childish.

226

We, the Immoralists—the world that concerns *us*, the world in which we feel both fear and love, is almost invisible and inaudible to outsiders. It is a world of delicate authority and obedience, a world of subtle power, of careful, nearly imperceptible movements. It is a world of *almost*—subtle, sharp, and demanding. It is well protected from the gaze of clumsy outsiders and the vulgar curiosity of the masses.

We are tightly bound in a web of duties, responsibilities, and unspoken codes. We *cannot* escape these bindings—even *we* are "men of duty"!

Yes, sometimes we dance in our chains, maneuver between our swords, as if we were free. But just as often, we gnash our teeth, frustrated by the unseen burden of our fate.

Yet no matter what we do, fools and superficial onlookers will always misjudge us. They will say: "**These are men without duty!**"

Fools and appearances—*they* will always be against us.

227

Honesty—if this is the one virtue we *cannot* rid ourselves of as free spirits—then let's embrace it fully, even perversely, and perfect it with all the defiance and love we can muster. Let's not tire of refining our virtue, the only one left to us. May our honesty, sharp and ironic, one day cast its golden, mocking glow over this aging civilization, with its dreary, self-important seriousness!

And yet—what if, one day, our honesty grows tired? What if it sighs, stretches its limbs, and wishes for something easier, softer, more indulgent—something that feels less like a burden and more like a pleasant vice?

Too bad. We *will* remain hard, the last of the Stoics. And if our honesty falters, we will rally all the devilish energy within us to support it—our disgust for what is clumsy and vague, our instinct to *reach for the forbidden*, our love of risk and adventure, our sharpened, restless curiosity, our subtle and masked Will to Power that roams hungrily across the landscapes of the future.

Let them misunderstand us. Let them say, "*Their 'honesty' is just another form of devilry!*" What does it matter? Even if they are right—haven't all gods throughout history been nothing more than sanctified, rebaptized devils?

And after all, what do we even know about ourselves? What does the spirit that drives us *wish* to be called? (It's just a matter of names, after all.) How many spirits live inside us?

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Let's be careful, we free spirits, that our honesty does not become mere vanity—a badge of honor, a public display, a limitation, a stupidity! Every virtue leans toward stupidity, and every stupidity toward virtue. As they say in Russia, "*stupid to the point of sanctity.*"

Let's be careful—lest, out of sheer honesty, we end up as saints and bores.

Isn't life already far too short for *that*? One would have to believe in eternal life to justify *that* kind of waste...

228

I hope I'll be forgiven for pointing out that all moral philosophy up until now has been painfully dull—like a sleeping aid. In fact, I'd argue that *virtue* has suffered more from the sheer boredom of its defenders than from anything else. That said, I don't want to ignore their *usefulness*: after all, it's probably best if as few people as possible spend time thinking deeply about morality. If morals were ever made *interesting*, who knows what trouble we'd be in?

But no need to worry—things remain just as they always have been. Nowhere in Europe do I see anyone who realizes (or even hints at realizing) that moral philosophy *could* be something dangerous, provocative, or even seductive—that questioning morality itself might be a kind of disaster waiting to happen.

Take, for example, the plodding, predictable English utilitarians. They march along with the same heavy-footed dullness as their predecessor Bentham, who, in turn, simply followed in the steps of the equally dreary Helvétius. (No, Helvétius was no radical—he was more of a *Sénateur Pococurante*, as Galiani put it.) There's no fresh thought in their work, no sharp refinement of an old idea, not even a proper historical understanding of previous moral thought. It's an *impossible* body of literature—unless you manage to read it with a bit of mischief.

In reality, that old English vice—**cant**, or moral hypocrisy—has crept into these so-called moralists. They mask it under the guise of "scientific rigor," but beneath it all, they are still struggling with their Puritan guilt. (After all, isn't a *moralist* the opposite of a *Puritan*? A *moralist* is someone who questions morality, who interrogates it—who sees it as a *problem*. If so, then isn't moralizing itself... *immoral*?)

At the core of it, they just want English morality to be *officially recognized* as the highest standard. They want to believe that pursuing English happiness—meaning *comfort* and *social respectability* (and, at best, a seat in Parliament)—is the same thing as pursuing virtue. In fact, they go so far as to suggest that wherever virtue has existed in the world, it has always looked like this English ideal.

Not a single one of these serious, herd-minded thinkers (who argue for *egoism* as a means to "general welfare") seems to grasp the fundamental truth: that "general welfare" is *not* an ideal,

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nor a goal, nor even a meaningful concept. It's just a sales pitch. What benefits one person may not benefit another. The demand for *one morality for all* is a disaster for the highest types of men. In short: there is a **hierarchy** between people, and therefore a **hierarchy** between moralities.

But these English utilitarians? They're a humble, thoroughly mediocre breed. And as I mentioned earlier—because they are so *tedious*, we should be grateful for their usefulness!

In fact, we might even *encourage* them, as I've attempted to do in the following little rhyme:

Hail, ye worthies, barrow-wheeling,
"Longer—better," aye revealing,
Stiffer aye in head and knee;
Unenraptured, never jesting,
Mediocre everlasting,
SANS GÉNIE ET SANS ESPRIT!

(*Without genius and without wit!*)

229

Even in our so-called “humane” times, where we pride ourselves on our civility, an old fear still lingers—a superstitious terror of the “cruel wild beast” that earlier generations believed they had finally conquered. This fear runs so deep that even *obvious truths* have remained unspoken for centuries, lest they appear to breathe life back into that supposedly vanquished beast.

Perhaps I take a risk by letting one of these truths escape. But let others try to recapture it, let them drown it in the “milk of pious sentiment” (*as Schiller put it*) until it curls up quietly in its old corner and is forgotten once again.

The truth is this: we need to **relearn** cruelty. We must **wake up** and see it clearly for what it is. We must finally become impatient with the clumsy, naïve errors that have persisted for so long, particularly in philosophy’s understanding of **tragedy**. My claim is simple: almost everything we call “higher culture” is built upon the *spiritualization and intensification of cruelty*. The “wild beast” has not been slain at all—it thrives, it has merely been **transfigured**.

The painful delight we feel in tragedy? That is cruelty. The secret pleasure we take in “tragic sympathy,” and even the highest, most refined thrills of the sublime—all of these derive their sweetness from the *ingredient of cruelty*. The Roman who cheered at the arena, the Christian who wept ecstatically at the sight of the crucifixion, the Spaniard who relished the spectacle of the stake and the bullfight, the modern Japanese obsessed with tragic drama, the Parisian working-class man who secretly longs for the bloodshed of revolution, the Wagnerian devotee

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who submits to the crushing intensity of *Tristan and Isolde*—what they all crave, what they all drink in with such deep and mysterious desire, is **the potion of the great enchantress, cruelty.**

Here, we must throw away the clumsy old psychology that tried to explain cruelty as nothing more than the pleasure of witnessing others suffer. In reality, there is a profound and excessive enjoyment even in **one's own suffering**—in causing one's own pain. Wherever people have been led to self-denial in the name of religion, to self-mutilation as the Phoenicians and ascetics did, or to the rejection of bodily pleasure, the flesh, and the senses; wherever Puritanism has induced its fits of guilt and remorse, wherever conscience has been torn apart in a kind of self-vivisection, wherever minds like Pascal's have been driven to the sacrifice of intellect (*sacrificia dell'intelletto*)—in all of these, **a secret force is at work:** the thrilling, intoxicating pull of cruelty turned against oneself.

Even the *seeker of knowledge*—the philosopher, the scientist, the artist—is, in a sense, a master of cruelty. He forces his mind to **see what it does not wish to see**, to think what it resists thinking. He compels himself to say *No* where his heart longs to say *Yes*, to reject what he instinctively wants to love and admire. In every pursuit of truth, in every attempt to grasp something deeply and fundamentally, there is a *Violation*—a deliberate wounding of the spirit's natural inclination toward illusion and superficiality.

Yes, even the thirst for knowledge contains **a drop of cruelty.**

230

Perhaps what I've said about the "fundamental will of the spirit" isn't immediately clear—so let me explain.

That force we call "the spirit" has a deep, intrinsic drive: it wants to be **master**—both internally and externally. It seeks control, it wants to simplify complexity, to tame, to impose order. It is, at its core, a ruling force. The way it operates is not so different from how physiologists describe the functions of any living organism—its primary instinct is to **grow** and to **assimilate** new things into itself. The mind achieves this by reshaping new experiences to fit old patterns, by simplifying contradictions, by ignoring anything that doesn't fit neatly. It manipulates reality, emphasizing what it wants, distorting what it doesn't.

The goal? To expand, to **incorporate more**, to feel stronger. In short, the spirit's ultimate aim is **the feeling of growth, the sensation of increasing power.**

Yet, paradoxically, this same drive to grow also manifests as an **impulse toward ignorance**. The mind sometimes chooses to shut things out, to close the windows, to reject or even fear certain types of knowledge. It actively *avoids* what might overwhelm it—much like a stomach that must digest properly and can't handle too much at once. This is why people sometimes prefer to

remain in the dark, to accept simple explanations, to create mystery and ambiguity rather than deal with the harshness of reality. There is even a certain joy in this—to revel in half-truths, to embrace illusions, to *choose* a narrow, distorted, or exaggerated view of the world because it serves our own purposes.

And then there's deception—not only self-deception but also the deliberate act of misleading others. The spirit takes pleasure in its own cunning, in its ability to manipulate appearances, to disguise itself, to play many roles. This *Protean* instinct is part of its survival mechanism—by constantly shifting and adapting, it protects itself.

But standing **against** this instinct for illusion and simplification is the philosopher—the true seeker of knowledge. His instinct pushes in the opposite direction. He insists on **depth**, on complexity, on **seeing things as they are, no matter how painful**. And this pursuit of truth comes at a cost—it is a form of **intellectual cruelty**. Every deep thinker, if he is honest with himself, must admit: *there is something cruel in the tendency of my spirit*. The mind that seeks truth must be willing to wound itself, to cut through comforting illusions, to embrace the harshness of reality.

Of course, we could dress this up in nicer words. Instead of calling it "cruelty," we could call it "radical honesty," "a love of truth," or "philosophical heroism." Perhaps one day, people will look back and admire us for this—maybe this will even be our *posthumous* glory.

But for now, we refuse to indulge in such flattering self-deception. We have spent too long stripping away illusions to fall for such moralized embellishments. These high-sounding words—honesty, love of wisdom, self-sacrifice for truth—are just **another layer of vanity**, another attempt to make human nature seem grander than it really is. But beneath all that gold dust and decoration, we still find the **raw**, untamed reality: *HOMO NATURA—man as nature*.

Our task, then, is clear: **to strip away the illusions**, to stop distorting human nature with grand, comforting narratives. We must see ourselves **as we truly are**, just as we have trained ourselves to see the rest of nature—with **fearless, unflinching eyes**. We must resist the old siren songs of metaphysics, those ancient whispers that tell us, “*You are something more! You are special! You have a higher origin!*”

This is a difficult and even absurd task. But can anyone deny that it *is* a task? That it *must* be done?

Why, then, did we choose this path? Or rather—**why pursue knowledge at all?**

Everyone will ask us this. And we, who have asked ourselves this question a hundred times over, still cannot find a better answer...

231

Learning changes us—it's not just about storing information, but transforming who we are, just as real nourishment changes the body. But deep down, at our core, there's something **fixed**, something **unteachable**—a bedrock of our nature, a fundamental instinct that defines how we approach life's biggest questions.

For each of us, in matters of deep importance, there's a silent, unwavering voice that says: "*This is who I am.*" A thinker doesn't *discover* new perspectives on man and woman—he simply follows to the end what was already embedded in him. Sometimes, we come across answers that feel so strong, so obvious to us, that we call them **convictions**. But later, with greater self-awareness, we realize they were never truly "answers" at all. They were just stepping stones—breadcrumbs leading us back to our own nature, to the **stupidity** we embody, to the *unteachable* within us.

With that in mind, allow me to offer some **truths about women**—or, more honestly, **my truths about women**.

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Women want independence. And so, they've started to *educate* men about "woman as she really is." But this is one of the ugliest trends in modern Europe. What will this self-exposure achieve, except to reveal what should have remained hidden? For if women start explaining themselves, what will they show us? **Pedantry, triviality, schoolteacher-like dullness, empty vanity, reckless impulsiveness.** Just watch how women behave toward children—it's only **fear of men** that has ever restrained them.

And if they lose this fear? If they start *unlearning* the arts that have made them charming, that have allowed them to ease suffering, to lift men's burdens, to make life more playful—what then? We're already seeing glimpses of it: the cold, shrill voices of women demanding, in the bluntest medical terms, what they *need* from men.

Women should not aspire to be scientists of themselves. Intellectual enlightenment has always been a **male endeavor**, something men have kept "among themselves." And looking at what women have written about "woman," we must wonder—do they even **want** to understand themselves? Or are they just searching for a **new ornament** to wear? For isn't ornamentation **the eternal feminine?**

Or perhaps they don't want truth at all—perhaps they want **power**. But truth? Woman has never cared for truth. Her instinct is deception, illusion, beauty. And let's admit it: we **love** her for it. We, who must bear the weight of the world, seek refuge in her ability to transform the serious into the light, to make **us** forget.

I ask you—has any woman ever recognized true depth in another woman? Has any woman ever believed in the justice of a woman’s heart? The truth is that **women have always despised “woman” far more than we men ever have.** And so, we should do them a favor—we should *stop* encouraging them to “educate” us about themselves. Just as it was **for their own good** that the Church once decreed, *mulier taceat in ecclesia* (“women must be silent in church”), and as Napoleon silenced Madame de Staël in politics, so too should we now say: *mulier taceat de muliere*—let woman be silent about woman.

233

It’s a sign of **corrupt instincts**—not to mention **bad taste**—when a woman defends “woman as she is” by pointing to **Madame Roland, Madame de Staël, or George Sand**. These aren’t arguments *for* women—they are *caricatures* of them! And the best proof of why women should *not* seek independence.

234

Let’s talk about **stupidity in the kitchen**.

Women run the household, they insist on being in charge of feeding the family—yet they **have no idea what food means**. If women were truly thoughtful creatures, they would have spent thousands of years in the kitchen **discovering** essential physiological facts about nutrition. They would have mastered the healing arts!

Instead, thanks to **bad female cooks**, human development has been delayed **for centuries**. Even today, little has improved. A word of advice to educated women: **fix this before you demand more rights.**

235

Sometimes, a single phrase captures an entire culture. Consider this gem from Madame de Lambert to her son:

"My dear, never allow yourself any follies—except those that bring you great pleasure."

That, right there, is the **wisest and most motherly** piece of advice ever given to a son.

236

I have no doubt that any **noble** woman would disagree with Dante and Goethe’s view of women.

Dante famously wrote of Beatrice:

"She looked upward, and I at her."

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Goethe expanded on this:

"The eternal feminine draws us upward."

But every woman, deep down, believes the opposite: **it is the eternal masculine that lifts women upward**—not the other way around.

237

SEVEN SAYINGS FOR WOMEN

How quickly boredom disappears,
When a man kneels at our feet with tears!

Age and education, it's sad to say,
Can even make weak virtue stay.

Dark clothes, quiet ways, a modest face—
This is every woman's safest grace.

Who do I thank for all my bliss?
God!—And my tailor, of course, for this.

When young, she's a flowery cave, a hidden delight;
When old, she's a dragon that sets all alright.

A noble title, a well-formed thigh,
And a man to match—Oh, let him be mine!

Speak little, mean much, let wit be sly—
Or risk slipping where fools pass by.

237A

Men have always treated women like birds—**strange, delicate creatures** who have accidentally fluttered down from higher realms. Beautiful, wild, enchanting... but also something that **must be caged, lest it fly away**.

238

A fundamental misunderstanding of the relationship between man and woman—denying their deep-seated opposition and the necessity of an eternal tension between them, or worse, fantasizing about **equal rights, education, and expectations**—is a telltale mark of **superficial thinking**. A thinker who fails to grasp this basic truth is not just naïve but **reveals his lack of**

depth, exposing himself as unfit to handle life's fundamental questions, past, present, or future. He will lack the ability to **plunge into real depths**, remaining forever on the surface.

On the other hand, a man of profound intellect and **strong, disciplined benevolence**—the kind often mistaken for **harshness or severity**—can only regard woman as **the Orientals do**: as a **possession**, something to be confined and protected, a being **destined for service** and fulfilling her role therein. He must recognize the immense wisdom of Asia, the **superior instinct of Eastern cultures**, as even the Greeks did. The **Hellenic world**, inheritors of Eastern wisdom, **grew stricter in their treatment of women as their civilization advanced**, from **Homer to Pericles**, moving progressively toward an **Oriental model**.

And why? Because it was not just **necessary** but **logical**—even **desirable**—for the sake of civilization itself. Let's consider the **obvious wisdom in this for ourselves**.

239

In no other era has **woman** been treated with such **respect** as in our time—this is a natural outgrowth of **democratic values**, just as **disrespect for old age** has become commonplace. But is it any surprise that this newfound **respect is being exploited**? Women now **demand more**, make **claims**, and **resent** the very tribute of respect they once sought. Instead of accepting it, they **prefer rivalry**, even **conflict**—in short, **woman is losing her modesty**.

And with modesty, she is also **losing taste**. She is **unlearning fear of men**, yet the woman who **ceases to fear** also loses her **most natural instincts**. That she should step forward **precisely when men no longer inspire fear**, when the masculine ideal itself has been weakened—that is understandable. But what is **not** understandable is the **fact that she deteriorates in doing so**. This is what we see happening today—let's not **deceive ourselves**.

Wherever **industry** has overtaken **aristocracy and military values**, women **aspire to economic and legal independence**—“*woman as clerk*” is written over the gates of modern society. As she **acquires new rights, seeks mastery, and waves the flag of progress**, the opposite reality unfolds: **woman regresses**. Since the **French Revolution**, the more rights she has gained, the **less influence** she has had over European life. Her “emancipation” is **not a sign of power**, but a symptom of the **decline of womanly instincts**.

There is **a deep foolishness** in this movement—an **almost masculine foolishness**—which any well-bred woman should feel **ashamed** of. She has lost the **knowledge of where her true power lies**, abandoned her **natural weapons**, and exposed herself **where once she held back, where once she ruled through refinement and restraint**. She even **lectures men openly**, stripping away the **mystique of femininity**, undermining the very **ideal of womanhood**. She rejects the **idea that woman must be cherished, protected, and indulged**—as if this were oppression rather than a recognition of her **unique nature**.

Even more absurd is how **men themselves**—especially **intellectual fools**—encourage this defeminization, urging women to **imitate the very worst aspects of modern masculinity**. They push them toward “**general culture**,” **newspapers, and politics**, not realizing that a **woman without piety is as insufferable as an irreligious priest**. Their nerves are **shattered** by the decadence of modern art, their **bodies weakened** by indulgence, their ability to **bear strong children compromised**. They claim to be making the “**weaker sex**” **stronger** through education, yet history teaches that **the rise of education and refinement has always coincided with the weakening of willpower**.

Look at the truly **powerful women of history**—was it their schooling or their **iron will** that made them great? Consider the **mother of Napoleon**—not a scholar, but a **force of nature**, wielding power over men through sheer **natural instinct**. A woman **commands respect** not through **knowledge**, but through her **raw, untamed nature**, her **animal cunning**, the **tiger's claws hidden beneath the velvet glove**.

And yet, if this modern movement continues, **the tragedy of woman** will soon vanish. She will no longer be **fear and desired**, no longer be **mysterious and untamable**—she will become **predictable, dull, and tedious**. Is that **progress**? No—it is **the disenchantment of woman**.

Oh, **Europe!** You have always been seduced by **the horned beast**, the **great stupidity that threatens to overtake you**—but this time, it is not a **god** who lies beneath it, only an **empty, modern idea**.

Part Eight: Peoples and Fatherlands

240

I recently listened to Richard Wagner's overture to *Die Meistersinger*—and for the first time in a long time, I truly *heard* it. It is a grand, dazzling, heavy-handed work of *late* art, one that carries the audacity to assume two centuries of musical tradition are still alive in the listener's ear. And to the credit of the Germans, Wagner's assumption was not misplaced.

What a mixture of *flavors* and *forces*! It feels, at moments, **ancient**, then suddenly **foreign**—at times **bitter** and **too modern**, at others, bound by **tradition** but executed with **caprice**. It is full of **humor**, yet **rough and coarse**; it burns with **fire and courage**, yet bears the **thick, leathery skin of a fruit that has ripened too late**. The music **flows, broad and full**—then suddenly *hesitates*, as though something unexplainable has interrupted the natural connection between cause and effect. A strange, oppressive moment—almost like a **dream, a nightmare**—but then, just as quickly, the stream rushes forward again, bringing a **torrent of delight**: an intricate fusion of the *old* and the *new*, a collection of *joys*, a celebration of **art** and the **artist's triumph over his own craft**. Wagner does not conceal this joy—he even flaunts it, as though in awe of his own technical mastery, eager to experiment with newfound artistic techniques, not yet fully tested but already flaunted.

And yet—**no beauty. No South.** None of the delicate clarity of a Mediterranean sky. No *grace*, no *dance*, no *logical precision*. There is, instead, a deliberate **clumsiness**, as though Wagner is saying, *Yes, this is intentional*. A certain **heaviness**, a **barbaric splendor**, a **ceremonial grandiosity**. A scholar's indulgence in **clever conceits and elaborate witticisms**. Something unmistakably **German**—both in its **best** and **worst** aspects. It is **vast, formless, inexhaustible**. A *superabundance of soul* that does not shy away from *decadence*, but rather seems to find itself *most at home* there. It is the true mark of the **German spirit**—a strange **fusion of youth and old age, of overripeness and boundless potential**.

For me, this kind of music sums up what I think of the **Germans**: they belong to *yesterday* and *tomorrow*—but they have *no today*.

241

We, the so-called *good Europeans*, have our moments of slipping back—of feeling that old patriotic fervor, of indulging in a nostalgia for national identity and narrow allegiances. I've just given an example of this myself. These waves of patriotic excitement or anxiety, these relics of an older sentimentality, come over us occasionally, for hours at a time, and then pass. For some, however, this process of *digesting* and *shedding* such attachments takes longer—months, years, even a lifetime. Some nations, particularly those that move more slowly in their thinking, may

take **half a century** to overcome such atavistic outbursts of nationalism and regain their rationality—that is, their *Europeanism*.

As I reflect on this, I overhear a conversation between two elderly patriots—both hard of hearing, and therefore speaking all the louder.

"That man has no more philosophy than a farmer or a drunken fraternity student," says one. *"He is still naive. But does that even matter these days? The masses don't care! This is an age that worships sheer size. In politics, they bow before anything massive. So if a statesman builds a new Tower of Babel, some monstrous empire of power, they call him 'great.' But we, the wiser and more conservative ones, still hold onto the old truth: it is not size, but the greatness of an idea that makes something truly great."*

"Now imagine," he continues, *"a statesman who forces his people into a game of 'high politics' for which they are completely unfit—one who demands they sacrifice their old, time-tested virtues in favor of a new, unproven mediocrity. Imagine a statesman who condemns his nation to constant political struggle when they were once free to dedicate themselves to greater things, a people who, deep down, have always despised the endless quarrels and hollowness of professional political nations. Imagine such a leader awakening their dormant ambitions, making them ashamed of their former aloofness and self-sufficiency, forcing them into a narrow and self-obsessed nationalism. Suppose he turns their most fundamental strengths into weaknesses, undermines their conscience, makes their minds small, their ambitions parochial. And then—after all this—he is called 'great'?! Would that truly be greatness?"*

"Of course!" the second old patriot shouts back. *"Otherwise, he wouldn't have been able to do it! Maybe it was madness—but isn't that true of everything great at its beginning?"*

"You're twisting words!" his companion retorts. *"Strong, yes. Mad, certainly. But not great!"*

They were red in the face, flinging their “truths” at each other, but I, standing apart, amused and detached, thought to myself:

Sooner or later, someone stronger will dominate even the strong.

And even if a nation **loses its depth**, if its **thought becomes shallow**, this loss is always balanced elsewhere—by the deepening of another.

What we call *civilization*, *progress*, or simply the *democratic movement in Europe*—whatever name we choose—there is something deeper behind all these political and moral labels. Beneath the surface, an immense **physiological transformation** is underway: Europeans are becoming more alike, slowly detaching from the environmental and hereditary conditions that once shaped

distinct races. The old ties between people and their land, their climate, their traditions—bonds that for centuries molded both body and soul—are loosening. In their place, a **new kind of man** is emerging: a rootless, **super-national**, nomadic being, whose defining trait is an unparalleled ability to **adapt**.

This process, the slow evolution of the *new European*, may sometimes be interrupted—wars, nationalistic fervor, even anarchism may temporarily slow it down. But paradoxically, such disruptions only deepen and accelerate the change. The very forces that seem to resist it—nationalist movements, uprisings, violent upheavals—are actually symptoms of this transformation. And yet, the end result of this shift will likely be **very different** from what its naive champions—those who celebrate “modern ideas” and “progress”—imagine.

The same **new conditions** that encourage a leveling of mankind, that push towards a **uniform, industrious, and obedient worker type**, will also create **rare exceptions**—figures of immense danger and allure. While the majority will be shaped into **pliable, adaptable, and easily controlled** individuals—eager for guidance, dependent on direction, needing a **master** just as they need their daily bread—**those few who resist this fate will be greater than ever**.

Because of their lack of fixed identity, their exposure to a vast range of experiences, and their ability to shape-shift in an era of constant change, these rare individuals will grow in strength. Their education will not be burdened by prejudices; they will be masters of disguise, of strategy, of power.

In short, the **democratization of Europe** is not just producing a more equal and submissive society—it is, whether it knows it or not, **creating the conditions for the rise of tyrants**. And I mean *tyrants* in every sense of the word, including the most intellectual and spiritual ones.

243

I am pleased to hear that our sun is speeding toward the constellation of Hercules. And I hope that humanity will do the same—move forward with force, with boldness, with the will to grow stronger.

Above all, **we** should move in this direction—**we, the good Europeans!**

244

There was a time when Germans were widely considered "deep," as if that were their defining trait. But now, as modern Germany chases after different ideals—perhaps valuing "cleverness" over depth—it might be worth reconsidering whether this depth was ever really there, or whether it was something else entirely. Maybe it was a burden rather than a virtue, and perhaps we should be glad to be shedding it. So let's take a closer look at what German "depth" actually is—it only takes a little dissection of the German soul.

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The German soul is complex, made up of layers rather than built on a solid foundation. It is a mixture of many influences, the result of a long history of racial and cultural blending. A German who claims, “Two souls dwell in my breast,” is underestimating the truth—there are far more than two. As a nation formed at the crossroads of Europe, Germans are more elusive, contradictory, unpredictable, and difficult to define than other peoples. This is why they so often confound outsiders, especially the French. The question, “What is German?” never seems to go away.

Different thinkers have tried to answer it. The playwright Kotzebue once flattered Germans by telling them, “We are understood,” though the radical Sand had a very different perspective. Jean Paul dismissed Fichte’s patriotic exaggerations, while Goethe—though he might have agreed with Jean Paul—remained silent about what he really thought of Germans. What we do know is that Goethe wasn’t particularly inspired by Germany’s Wars of Independence or the French Revolution. What really caught his attention—what led him to revise *Faust* and rethink the entire nature of man—was the rise of Napoleon.

Goethe was critical of what Germans valued most. He once described the German mindset as an “indulgence in one’s own and others’ weaknesses.” Was he wrong? Probably not—Germans are so contradictory that any statement about them is rarely entirely off the mark. Their soul is full of hidden corridors, caves, and dungeons, a labyrinth of disorder and mystery. The German instinctively gravitates toward the murky, the undefined, the unfinished. He doesn’t *exist* in a stable sense—he is always *becoming*. The concept of “development” is the quintessential German contribution to philosophy, and alongside German beer and German music, it is slowly shaping all of Europe.

Foreigners find this duality in the German soul both fascinating and puzzling. Hegel turned it into a system, Wagner put it to music. Germans can be both kind and cruel at the same time—something that would be absurd anywhere else, yet in Germany, it often proves true. Spend some time with Swabians, and you’ll understand. German scholars, despite their social awkwardness, can also display a daring, almost acrobatic boldness that even the gods fear. If you want to *see* the German soul, just look at German culture, art, and manners—it is a mess of brilliance and coarseness thrown together. The Germans are indifferent to “taste.” The most refined and the most vulgar exist side by side.

The German carries the weight of his soul like a burden—he drags it through life, never quite digesting his experiences. German “depth” is often nothing more than slow, difficult digestion. Like all people prone to chronic illness, he prefers what is simple and convenient, and so Germans love “honesty” and “frankness”—because it is *convenient* to be frank and honest! This trustfulness, this openness, this habit of putting everything on the table—this is the most dangerous and successful trick Germans have. It is their true Mephistophelean talent, and they

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have used it to achieve much. The German lets himself go, gazes out at the world with his blue, innocent eyes, and other nations confuse this for simplicity.

So what, then, is German "depth"? Perhaps it is a useful illusion. Maybe it is even wise to maintain the *appearance* of being profound, clumsy, honest, and naïve. It is certainly better than trading this reputation for shallow Prussian "smartness" or the cheap wit of Berlin. A nation should cultivate its myths, and ours has long been that we are profound. And after all, we Germans have always been known as the *Täuscher Volk*—the "deceptive people."

245

The "good old days" are gone—they sang their last notes with Mozart. And how lucky we are that his *rococo* style still speaks to us! His elegant world of refined company, his gentle enthusiasm, his playful love of the exotic (with all its Chinese-inspired flourishes), his heartfelt politeness, his longing for grace, love, and lightness, even his sentimentalism—all of it still resonates with something within us. But one day, this too will fade completely.

And yet, who can doubt that the taste for Beethoven will disappear even sooner? He wasn't, like Mozart, the final echo of a long-standing European tradition, but rather the last breath of a transition, a turning point between the fading grandeur of the past and an uncertain, overly eager future. His music carries the twilight of something lost forever, yet also the extravagant hope of something new—just like the spirit of Europe when it dreamed with Rousseau, danced around the Liberty Tree of the Revolution, and finally fell to its knees in worship of Napoleon. But how quickly has that very sentiment faded! How hard is it today to even *feel* what that era felt! Rousseau, Schiller, Shelley, Byron—once they were the voices of Europe, the poets of its fate, the ones who *sang* in Beethoven's music. But now, their words sound foreign, distant, almost unintelligible.

As for everything that came after in German music—Romanticism—it was even more fleeting and insubstantial than the transition period from Rousseau to Napoleon and the rise of democracy. Weber? Who today really cares about *Freischütz* or *Oberon*? Or Marschner's *Hans Heiling* and *Vampyre*? Even Wagner's *Tannhäuser*—it lingers, but it's already a relic. Romantic music, for all its passion, was never truly noble, never truly musical enough to stand on its own. It belonged to the theater, to spectacle, to mass entertainment. From the very start, it was second-rate—dismissed even by the best musicians of its time.

Mendelssohn was an exception, a bright and graceful talent, admired for a moment and then just as quickly forgotten—like a beautiful but passing episode in German music. Schumann, however, was different. He took things seriously, and he has always been taken seriously. He was the last German composer to truly establish a school of thought in music. But now, don't we feel a certain relief—almost a sense of freedom—that his brand of Romanticism has been left behind? Schumann, who retreated into the "Saxon Switzerland" of his own soul, who carried the

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spirit of *Werther* and Jean Paul—he was never like Beethoven, never like Byron. His *Manfred* music? A mistake, a misinterpretation, an injustice to its own ambition.

At heart, Schumann's taste was small—sentimental, overly inward, and dangerously indulgent in delicate lyricism and emotional intoxication. He constantly withdrew, retreating into himself. He was a noble but fragile spirit, living in a haze of anonymous joy and sorrow—always avoiding confrontation. From the start, he was something delicate, something untouchable (*Noli me tangere!*). Schumann was no longer a *European* voice in music, as Beethoven had been, and certainly not as Mozart had been. His music was already becoming *merely German*.

And that was the greatest danger German music faced—the loss of its voice as the soul of Europe, the risk of becoming merely national, confined to a single culture, cut off from the grand European tradition that had shaped it.

246

Reading German books is a torment for anyone with a refined sense of language. How frustrating it is to wade through the slow, murky swamp of soundless sentences, rhythmless prose—this is what Germans call a "book"! And then there's the German *reader*! How sluggishly, how reluctantly, how *badly* he reads! How many Germans actually know—or care—that every well-crafted sentence contains an art of its own, an art that must be *felt* to be truly understood? A sentence's *tempo*, for example—misunderstand that, and the whole meaning is lost!

One must recognize the rhythm in the syllables, appreciate when symmetry is intentionally broken for effect, attune oneself to every *staccato* and *rubato*, and listen closely to the flow of vowels and diphthongs, catching their subtle shifts in tone and color. But how many German readers have the patience or sensitivity for such details? No one "has an ear for it," and so the sharpest contrasts in style go unnoticed, the most delicate craftsmanship wasted on the deaf.

I thought about this when I saw how carelessly two true masters of prose were being confused with each other. One of them writes in a slow, hesitant way, as if his words were dripping from the ceiling of a damp cave—his sentences depend on their dull echoes for effect. The other, by contrast, wields his language like a finely honed sword, feeling through his entire body—from his arm to his very toes—the thrilling danger of its razor-sharp edge, eager to slice, hiss, and cut.

247

The German language has little to do with musicality or harmony, which is painfully clear when even our great *musicians* write so poorly! The German reader doesn't *read aloud*, doesn't read *for the ear*—he reads only with his eyes. He has put his ears away, locked them in a drawer.

In the ancient world, reading was a vocal activity—when people read, they did so *out loud*. Silent reading was so rare that it was considered odd, something to be investigated. In those

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times, a sentence was performed like a piece of music—with all the rises, falls, tempo changes, and variations in tone that made public speech so captivating. The written word followed the same rules as spoken language, rules shaped by the highly trained ear and voice of the ancient orator. And beyond that—by the sheer strength, endurance, and power of *ancient lungs*.

For the ancients, a well-formed sentence was a *physiological whole*, meant to be spoken in *one breath*. Think of the grand, sweeping sentences of Demosthenes or Cicero—rising and falling twice in a single breath. To them, this wasn't just language; it was a test of skill, a rare and difficult feat that required training and discipline. They were all, in some sense, *dilettantes* of speech, amateurs in the best sense—connoisseurs and critics who pushed their orators to ever greater heights. The same thing happened in Italy when everyone knew how to sing: vocal virtuosity flourished, and melody reached its peak.

But in Germany? Until quite recently, the only real form of public speaking was the sermon. The preacher was the only German who truly understood the weight of a word, how a sentence *hits*, how it *leaps, rushes, flows*, and *lands*. He alone had an ear for language—though often, it must be admitted, a bad one. There are good reasons why Germans rarely excel in oratory, and when they do, it is almost always too late.

This is why the *masterpiece* of German prose is, fittingly, the work of its greatest preacher: *Luther's Bible*. Compared to it, almost everything else in German literature is just that—mere *literature*. The Bible, unlike the rest, grew *from* Germany; it took root in the hearts of the people. Nothing else has ever matched its depth or power.

248

There are two kinds of genius: one that primarily creates and seeks to generate new things, and another that prefers to be influenced and then give birth to something refined. The same applies to nations—some take on the "female" role of nurturing, maturing, and perfecting ideas, like the Greeks and the French. Others act as fertilizing forces, instigating new ways of life—like the Jews, the Romans, and, if I may say so without arrogance, the Germans? These are the nations driven by mysterious internal unrest, compelled to reach beyond themselves, fascinated by and drawn to other cultures (those that "allow themselves to be fertilized"). At the same time, they carry a sense of destiny, an almost divine authority, knowing they are full of creative energy and power. These two types of genius—those who create and those who cultivate—seek each other out, much like men and women do. And, just like men and women, they also frequently misunderstand one another.

249

Every nation has its own hypocrisy—its own "Tartuffery"—and calls it virtue. No one truly knows, nor can they know, what is best in them.

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What does Europe owe to the Jews? Many things—some good, some bad, but above all, something that is both: *the grand style in morality*. The immense weight of moral expectations, the fear and majesty of infinite demands, the deep, romantic sense of moral struggle—this is their legacy. It is, in fact, the most seductive, captivating, and artistically rich part of our European culture, the glowing twilight of its moral and philosophical ideals.

Perhaps this glow will fade entirely one day. But for now, as artists, as thinkers standing on the sidelines of history, we must admit—whatever else may be said—we are grateful to the Jews for it.

251

It's inevitable that when a nation is going through a period of political ambition and nervous turmoil, its collective spirit will experience occasional lapses into foolishness. In modern Germany, for instance, this manifests as various waves of hysteria: anti-French sentiment, anti-Semitism, anti-Polish resentment, Christian-Romantic fantasies, Wagnerian obsession, Teutonic nationalism, Prussian militarism—just look at those poor historians, Sybel and Treitschke, their minds tightly wrapped up in ideological straightjackets.

I, too, must admit that when I briefly immersed myself in this infected atmosphere, I wasn't completely immune. Like everyone else, I found myself contemplating issues that weren't really my concern—a clear symptom of political contamination. Take the Jews, for example.

I've never met a German who was truly *pro-Jewish*. Even the most pragmatic politicians, while publicly condemning extreme anti-Semitism, aren't necessarily opposed to the underlying sentiment—just to its excessive and embarrassing expressions. Let's not deceive ourselves: Germans instinctively feel that they already have *enough* Jews. Their national "stomach" struggles to digest them, unlike the Italians, French, or English, who have managed to integrate Jewish populations with greater ease, thanks to stronger cultural "digestion."

Germany's instinctive reaction is: *No more Jews! Close the borders, especially from the East and from Austria!* This is the response of a still-fragile national identity, one that fears being overwhelmed by a stronger, more enduring race. And make no mistake—the Jews *are* the toughest and most resilient people in Europe. They have thrived under the worst conditions, often more successfully than under favorable ones, thanks to a set of virtues (or, as some would say today, vices) and an unshakable faith that doesn't feel the need to conform to "modern ideas."

If they change, they do so at the slow and steady pace of a long-established empire—like Russia, expanding methodically over centuries. Any thinker concerned with Europe's future must

consider the Jews and the Russians as two of the most reliable and decisive forces in the coming struggles.

What we now call "nations" in Europe—artificial political constructs rather than organic, historical races—are still young, unstable, and easily reshaped. They would be wise not to provoke the Jews with foolish rivalries or hostility. Because let's be honest: if the Jews wanted to—or if they were *forced* to, as the anti-Semites seem to desire—they *could* take control of Europe. That they are not actively seeking this is also certain.

For now, what they truly want—perhaps a little too eagerly—is to settle down, to finally be fully accepted and integrated into European society, to end the wandering existence of the "eternal Jew." And this longing for stability should not be ignored. In fact, it might even signal a softening of Jewish instincts, making this the right moment for Europe to extend a hand rather than push them away. Perhaps the best thing to do would be to expel the loudest anti-Semitic agitators—they are a nuisance to everyone.

Of course, any integration should be done carefully and selectively, much like the English aristocracy has always managed its relationships with powerful outsiders. The stronger elements of modern German society—such as the Prussian officer class—should have no hesitation in engaging with the Jews. It would be interesting to see whether their financial acumen and patience (along with their sharp intellect, something often lacking in certain parts of Germany) could be trained to serve alongside the country's traditional strengths: the ability to command and obey.

But I should stop my festive Germanophilia here. I have reached the core of my real topic: *the European problem*—how to cultivate a *new* ruling class for the future of Europe.

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The English are not a philosophical people. Bacon was an outright attack on philosophy itself, while Hobbes, Hume, and Locke degraded and diminished the very concept of what it means to be a philosopher for more than a century. Kant rose up in direct opposition to Hume. Schelling was right to say, "*Je méprise Locke*"—"I despise Locke." And in the fight against England's mechanical, simplistic view of the world, Hegel and Schopenhauer—though bitterly opposed to each other—were, along with Goethe, in full agreement. These two rival geniuses of German philosophy, each pushing thought to opposite extremes, still managed to share a common enemy in the English way of thinking.

The English lack something fundamental—something even that half-baked actor and rhetorician Carlyle sensed. He twisted his face in passionate grimaces, trying to cover up what he knew about himself: that he, like his countrymen, lacked true intellectual power, real depth of thought—in short, *philosophy*.

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It's typical of an unphilosophical people to cling tightly to Christianity—they *need* its discipline to "moralize" and make themselves more humane. The Englishman, being gloomier, more sensual, more stubborn, and more brutal than the German, is also—because of this baseness—the *more pious* of the two. He needs Christianity even more than the German does.

For those with a refined sense of smell, even English Christianity has an unmistakable odor—one that carries the scent of melancholia and alcohol. Christianity serves as their antidote, a "finer" poison to neutralize the cruder one. After all, for a coarse people, even a slightly more refined way of being poisoned is a small step toward spiritualization. Their roughness and stiff moralism are best disguised behind Christian theatrics—prayer, hymn-singing, and repentance. And for their masses of drunkards and rakes, Methodism—and more recently, the *Salvation Army*—provides them with a kind of moral grunting, a penitential performance that might actually be the highest expression of "humanity" they are capable of. That much, at least, can be admitted.

But even in the most refined Englishman, something is still missing. He lacks *music*—both metaphorically and literally. There is no rhythm in the movement of his soul, no dance in his step. He doesn't even *desire* rhythm or dance, let alone embody it. Listen to him speak. Watch even the most beautiful Englishwoman walk—no country has more lovely doves and swans. And then... listen to them sing. But I ask too much...

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There are certain truths that mediocre minds recognize best—because they are perfectly suited to them. There are truths that only have appeal and persuasive power over ordinary minds. One is forced to this conclusion—perhaps unpleasantly—when seeing how the influence of respectable but thoroughly average English thinkers, such as Darwin, John Stuart Mill, and Herbert Spencer, is gaining dominance in shaping the middle-class mindset across Europe.

But who could deny that it might actually be *useful* for such minds to hold power for a time? It would be a mistake to think that highly developed, independently soaring minds are particularly well-suited to collecting small facts and drawing conclusions from them. These exceptional minds, by their very nature, are in a less favorable position when it comes to dealing with "rules" and convention. They have greater concerns than mere perception: their task is to *be* something new, to *signify* something new, to *represent* new values!

The gap between knowledge and capability is perhaps wider—and more mysterious—than people realize. A truly *great* creator, someone capable in the highest sense, may have to remain *ignorant* of many things. On the other hand, scientific discoveries like Darwin's may have actually *benefited* from a certain narrowness, dryness, and methodical diligence—in short, from something particularly *English*.

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Let's not forget that this English tendency toward "profound mediocrity" has already led to a significant *decline* in European intelligence once before. What we call "modern ideas," or "the ideas of the eighteenth century," or even "French ideas"—everything that the German mind instinctively rejected with disgust—actually originated in England. There's no doubt about it.

The French merely acted as imitators, performers, and, ironically, the first and deepest *victims* of these ideas. Because of the insidious spread of this English-inspired ideology—this *Anglomania*—the *âme française* (the French soul) has been drained to the point of emaciation. Looking back now at the France of the 16th and 17th centuries—its profound, passionate strength, its genius for invention—it almost seems *unbelievable* that it ever existed.

But historical justice must be upheld, no matter what current prejudices and appearances might suggest. If we speak of European *nobility*—in sentiment, in taste, in manners, in every higher sense of the word—it is *France* that created and perfected it. And if we speak of European *vulgarity*, the *plebeianism* of modern ideas—that is England's invention.

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Even today, France remains the center of Europe's most refined and intellectual culture; it is still the elite academy of taste. But one must know *where* to find this "France of taste." Those who belong to it remain well hidden. It lives on in a small, select group of individuals—many of whom are fragile, melancholic, overindulged, or hypersensitive—who take pride in their anonymity.

They share a common trait: they shut their ears to the mindless babbling and self-congratulatory noise of the democratic bourgeoisie. Today's France, on the surface, is crude and intoxicated with itself—it recently indulged in an orgy of bad taste and self-admiration at Victor Hugo's funeral.

Another thing these intellectuals have in common: a desire to resist the *Germanization* of their minds—and yet, ironically, they struggle to do so! In this intellectual France—also a deeply pessimistic France—Schopenhauer has perhaps found a more natural home than in Germany itself. Heinrich Heine's spirit has long since been reborn in Parisian poetry. Hegel, in the form of Taine (the greatest living historian), exerts an almost tyrannical influence over thought.

As for Richard Wagner, the more French music adapts to the true needs of the *modern soul*, the more "Wagnerian" it becomes. One can predict this with certainty—it's already happening!

And yet, despite the creeping influence of Germanization and the decline in taste, France still holds three distinct cultural advantages that set it apart from the rest of Europe:

1. **A deep devotion to artistic form**—what the French have called *l'art pour l'art* (art for art's sake). For over three centuries, France has maintained a respect for artistic

refinement and exclusivity, allowing for a kind of literary "chamber music" that is unmatched anywhere else in Europe.

2. **A long-established moral and psychological sensibility**—even the most minor novelists and casual boulevard-writers in Paris display a psychological curiosity and sharpness that is *completely* foreign to Germans. Germany simply hasn't put in the centuries of moral and psychological refinement that France has, which is why Germans are often called "naïve"—a compliment that is really just a polite way of pointing out their lack of subtlety.

(For contrast, consider Henri Beyle—better known as Stendhal—a man far ahead of his time, who explored the depths of the European soul with Napoleonic speed. He was an Epicurean and an interrogator of human nature, the last great psychologist of France. It has taken two generations for people to even begin to catch up with him and understand the questions that fascinated and tormented him.)

3. **A natural synthesis of North and South**—a mix of northern discipline and Mediterranean passion. This dual temperament allows the French to understand things that an Englishman never could. Their occasional outbursts of Provençal and Ligurian blood keep them from falling into the lifeless, colorless, *gray-on-gray* intellectualism of the North—what I would call Germany's *poverty of taste*. Today, Germany prescribes "blood and iron"—militarism and high politics—as a cure for this affliction. But it is a dangerous remedy, one that makes me wait and wait... though not yet *hope*.

Despite everything, there still exists in France an unspoken understanding for those rare men—those too broad-minded for nationalism—who can love the South while living in the North, and love the North while living in the South. The true *good Europeans*.

For them, Bizet composed his music. He was the latest genius to discover a *new* kind of beauty, a *new* kind of seduction—he unearthed a piece of the *South* in music.

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I believe we should be cautious about German music.

Imagine someone who loves the South as deeply as I do—not just as a place, but as a great school of healing for both the soul and the senses. The South is an endless overflow of sunlight and energy, a realm of effortless self-belief. For such a person, German music is something to be wary of. It distorts the senses, poisons the taste, and even undermines one's health.

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A *Southerner*—not by birth, but by *conviction*—who dreams of the future of music must also dream of music being freed from the influence of the North. He must hear in his mind the prelude to something deeper, more powerful, perhaps even darker and more enigmatic—a *super-German* music. Not music that withers and fades at the sight of the Mediterranean's mischievous blue waters and crystal-clear skies, as all German music does, but a *super-European* music. A music that could hold its own beneath the dusky, smoldering sunsets of the desert. A music with a soul like that of the palm tree—at home in vast, open spaces, able to roam with the great, noble, solitary beasts of prey.

I can imagine a music whose greatest charm would be that it had outgrown all notions of good and evil. A music where, at most, the faintest traces of longing—perhaps a sailor's homesickness, or the golden shadows of fading morality—might occasionally drift through. It would be an art that stands at a great distance, watching the remnants of an old and incomprehensible moral world fleeing toward it... and welcoming them in with a deep, knowing hospitality.

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Because of the nationalist obsession that has swept through Europe—fueled by short-sighted politicians who use this frenzy to hold onto power—people fail to see the clearest signs that *Europe wants to be one*. Worse still, they misinterpret these signs or twist them to fit their own agendas. The deepest and most forward-thinking minds of this century have, in their own ways, worked toward a grand European *synthesis*, imagining the European of the future. Only in moments of weakness—perhaps in old age—did they lapse into patriotism, seeking comfort in national pride rather than their greater calling.

I think of figures like **Napoleon, Goethe, Beethoven, Stendhal, Heinrich Heine, and Schopenhauer**. Even **Richard Wagner**, despite his own misinterpretations of himself, belongs to this list. (Geniuses rarely understand themselves, after all.) The loud rejection of Wagner in France today is misleading; the truth is that Wagner and the French Romanticism of the 1840s are deeply connected. Both are part of the same larger European movement—a collective longing for something new, something greater, something reaching beyond nationalism. But toward what exactly? A new enlightenment? A new sun on the horizon? Even these great minds could not fully articulate it.

What is clear, however, is that they were all caught in the same storm of change. They were *seekers*. All of them were steeped in literature and culture to an extreme degree—the first generation of artists shaped by a truly universal literary education. Many of them were polymaths, blending multiple art forms: Wagner was a musician who thought like a painter, a poet who composed like a dramatist, an artist who moved like an actor. They were all obsessed with **expression at any cost**—Wagner, for example, was deeply connected to **Delacroix**, his French counterpart in painting.

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These artists discovered new depths of the sublime, but also of the grotesque and terrifying. More than that, they were masters of effect, spectacle, and illusion. Their talents exceeded their genius—they were **virtuosos**, magicians who instinctively knew how to captivate, seduce, and unsettle. Logic meant little to them; they craved the strange, the exotic, the monstrous, the self-contradictory. As people, they were restless and insatiable—think of **Balzac**, a workaholic who nearly destroyed himself with his ambition.

And in the end? Every single one of them collapsed at the feet of Christianity. Not without reason! None of them was deep or original enough to create a truly **anti-Christian** philosophy. In the grand scheme of history, they were **bold and reckless pioneers**, lifting up the concept of the "higher man" to a century that was defined by the *masses*.

Wagner's German admirers should ask themselves: is there anything *truly German* in Wagner's art? Or is its uniqueness precisely because it comes from something *beyond German* identity—because it draws from sources *greater than Germany itself*? Consider how important Paris was in shaping Wagner's artistic vision. His instincts led him there at the most crucial moment of his development, and his entire self-mythology—his self-promotion, his messianic mission—was perfected in direct response to the **socialist movements in France**.

And yet, compared to the French, Wagner had something that set him apart—more power, more audacity, more intensity. Why? Because **Germany is still closer to barbarism than France**. And maybe that's why Wagner's most extraordinary creation—**Siegfried**—is something the Latin world will never fully understand. Siegfried is the ultimate *free man*—too free, too strong, too joyful, too *anti-Catholic* for old, refined civilizations. In fact, Siegfried may have been Wagner's *betrayal* of Romanticism—a slap in the face to the Latin world.

But Wagner *atoned* for that sin in his later years. He grew old, weary, and—like many of his time—turned toward **Rome**. He didn't just point to the road leading to Rome; he practically began *preaching* it.

And so, to make my meaning even clearer—especially in contrast to the *final* Wagner, the Wagner of *Parsifal*—I leave you with these verses:

*Is this our way? Did this wavering wail come from a German heart?
From a German body, this self-torturing art?
This priestly gesturing, this incense-filled air?
This stumbling, uncertain, faltering despair?
This sly gaze at the cloistered nun, this Ave bell's ringing?
This false ecstasy, this fake heaven-ward singing?
Is this our way? Think well! For what you hear is ROME—
Rome's faith, not reason, leading you home!*

Part Nine: What is Noble?

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Every rise in the quality of the human type has always been the result of an aristocratic society—and it will always be this way. Such a society must believe in a structured hierarchy, in clear differences in worth between individuals, and in some form of servitude or subordination. Without the *pathos of distance*—that feeling of separation that arises from rigid social stratification, from rulers constantly looking down on their subordinates, and from the everyday reality of commanding and obeying—there would be no deeper, internal longing for self-surpassing.

This *pathos of distance* is what fuels the human desire to push beyond limits, to reach for ever higher, rarer, and more expansive states of being. It is what drives the elevation of the human type—the relentless self-overcoming that turns man into something greater than he is now.

But let's not be naive about how aristocratic societies—*the necessary precondition for human greatness*—actually emerge. The truth is harsh. Every advanced civilization in history was built the same way: by brutal, natural-born warriors—*barbarians in the most terrifying sense of the word*—who had a raw, unbroken will to power. These men of prey stormed into weaker, more "moral," more peaceful communities—perhaps trading societies, pastoral tribes, or decadent old cultures burning out in a final display of wit and corruption.

From the very beginning, the ruling class was always *the barbarian class*. Their power wasn't just physical—it was psychological. They were **more complete** men—more ruthless, more commanding, and, paradoxically, more fully alive. And let's be clear: to be more complete as a human being also means being *more complete as a beast*.

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Corruption is what happens when a society's fundamental instincts start breaking down—when its inner structure begins to unravel. But corruption *does not look the same everywhere*. It depends entirely on the kind of society in which it takes root.

Take, for example, the French aristocracy before the Revolution. At the last moment, in a grand gesture of self-sacrifice, they threw away their privileges in a wave of noble self-disgust. That was corruption. But this wasn't where their decline began—it was merely the final act. The real decay had been happening for centuries. Over time, the nobility had slowly *given up* their power, step by step, until they had reduced themselves to mere *servants* of the monarchy—no longer rulers, but just ornaments and accessories to the throne.

A *healthy* aristocracy, on the other hand, never sees itself as serving a king or the state. It sees itself as **the meaning and highest justification** of both. A truly noble class accepts—without guilt or hesitation—that its existence requires the subjugation of others. It understands that countless individuals must be reduced to lesser beings, to *imperfect men*, to mere instruments in service of something greater.

A real aristocracy does not believe that society exists *for its own sake*. It exists *only* as a foundation—*a scaffolding*—on which a select few can rise to fulfill their *higher* purpose. Consider the *Sipo Matador*, a climbing plant in Java. It wraps itself around a strong oak tree, winding upward, embracing it tighter and tighter, using it as support until it finally reaches the open sunlight, where it can blossom fully and display its beauty. The tree exists to elevate the vine. So it is with society: it is there to support the noble few who can rise above the rest.

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Avoiding harm, refraining from violence, exploitation, and treating everyone's will as equal—under specific conditions, this might create a basic sense of fairness among individuals. But for this to work, there must first be an *actual* balance of power—individuals must be roughly equal in strength, ability, and position within a shared structure.

However, the moment someone tries to turn this principle into a universal law—*the* fundamental rule of society—it reveals itself for what it really is: a denial of life, a force of decay and disintegration.

We must think deeply here and resist the soft temptations of sentimentality: **life itself is essentially about taking, overcoming, and imposing one's form on the world.** It is conquest, domination of the weak, the forceful shaping of reality, absorption of what is foreign, and, at the very least, *exploitation*.

But why do we keep using these words with their long history of moral condemnation? Even within societies where people *appear* to treat each other as equals—such as in a healthy aristocracy—this does not change the fundamental rule of life. That aristocracy *itself* must act with power toward the outside world: it must grow, conquer, expand, and assert its dominance—not for reasons of morality or immorality, but **because it is alive**. And life itself is **Will to Power**.

Yet this is precisely where modern Europeans refuse to be corrected. Everywhere, even under the pretense of science, people fantasize about a future society where *exploitation will no longer exist*.

To my ears, this sounds as absurd as someone promising to invent a living organism that does not need to *function*.

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Exploitation is not a flaw of corrupt or underdeveloped societies—it is a fundamental law of life itself. It is the direct result of the *Will to Power*, which *is* the Will to Life.

Even if this idea is unfamiliar to some as a theory, it has always been **the fundamental reality of all history**. Let us at least be honest about that.

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In exploring the many moral codes that have existed or still exist in the world, I found that certain patterns kept appearing together, forming two fundamental moral types: *master morality* and *slave morality*. However, in advanced and mixed civilizations, attempts are often made to reconcile the two, though more frequently they are confused or even coexist within the same individual.

The distinction between moral values comes from two sources: either from a ruling class, fully aware of its superiority, or from the ruled class—slaves, dependents, and the oppressed. When rulers define morality, what is considered "good" is shaped by a sense of *exalted pride* and *self-confidence*. The noble class defines itself in opposition to those who display the opposite traits—they *despise* weakness. In this aristocratic morality, the contrast between *good* and *bad* corresponds to *noble* and *despicable*. This is very different from the later distinction between *good* and *evil*.

The noble class looks down on *cowardice*, *timidity*, *small-mindedness*, and *utilitarian thinking*. They despise those who are distrustful, self-effacing, sycophantic, and especially *liars*—aristocrats have always believed that common people are fundamentally dishonest. In ancient Greece, the nobility referred to themselves as "we, the truthful ones."

Originally, moral judgments were made about *people*, not *actions*. Only later were moral terms applied to behavior. Thus, it is a mistake to begin the history of morality by asking, "*Why have altruistic actions been praised?*" The noble man sees himself as the source of values; he does not seek approval—he *creates* values. He judges things based on himself: "*What harms me is bad.*" His morality is a form of *self-glorification*.

At the heart of master morality is *power*—a feeling of *abundance* and *overflowing strength*. A noble man helps the unfortunate, but not from pity. Rather, he does so from *an excess of power*. He honors strength, including self-control, discipline, and the ability to endure hardship. The Viking saying "*Wotan placed a hard heart in my breast*" expresses the soul of this proud warrior type. Such men take *pride* in being *insensitive* to suffering. "He who does not have a hard heart in youth will never have one," warns a Viking hero. Sympathy and altruism, in contrast, are seen with *skepticism and irony*.

The powerful understand *honor*—it is their art. They revere tradition, ancestors, and the past; they uphold *laws* and *hierarchy*. In contrast, those with "modern ideas" instinctively believe in *progress* and the *future*, often lacking respect for tradition. This is a sign of their lower origin.

Aristocratic morality operates on the principle that *one only has obligations to equals*. Towards inferiors—outsiders, the weak, or slaves—one may act however one pleases, *beyond good and evil*. It is within this context that sympathy and kindness may appear, but they are optional, not obligations. Nobles understand *gratitude* and *revenge*, which are exercised within their class. They value refined *friendship* and *enmity*, seeing the need for rivals to sharpen their strength and spirit.

Slave Morality

The second type of morality—*slave morality*—develops among those who have been oppressed, humiliated, and made powerless. These people see the world through the lens of *pessimism*, condemning life and its conditions. They resent the strong, viewing their virtues—power, courage, and self-assertion—with *suspicion and distrust*. They assume that the powerful are *evil* and their happiness is *false*.

In contrast, slave morality praises the qualities that make life bearable for the weak: *kindness, patience, humility, diligence, and friendliness*. These virtues are *practical*—they are the tools of survival for those who lack power. Slave morality is, at its core, *a morality of utility*.

Here is the real origin of the distinction between *good and evil*:

- **Master morality** sees "*bad*" as weak, low, and despicable.
- **Slave morality** sees "*evil*" as dangerous, powerful, and strong.

The ultimate irony is that, in slave morality, even its own "*good man*" is eventually viewed with a hint of contempt—because a truly "*good man*" must be *harmless*. He is gentle, easy to deceive, and perhaps even a little stupid (*un bonhomme*). In cultures dominated by slave morality, the words "*good*" and "*stupid*" begin to merge.

Final Contrast

Slave morality naturally desires *freedom*, happiness, and comfort, while master morality delights in *discipline, honor, and hierarchy*. The noble spirit sees *love* as an *intensification* of these aristocratic values. This is why the *passionate* love that arose in medieval Europe—particularly among the troubadours—was a creation of the *aristocracy*. It was not the product of the masses, but of refined, noble minds who knew how to revere and idealize.

Thus, in all societies, these two moralities remain in tension, influencing one another, merging, and clashing—sometimes within the same person.

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Vanity is one of the hardest things for a noble person to truly grasp. He may even doubt its existence in most cases, simply because it seems so irrational to him. The idea that someone would seek **admiration from others for something they themselves do not believe they possess**—and then actually come to believe in that admiration afterward—strikes him as absurd, both in terms of bad taste and as a failure of self-respect.

For the noble person, the concept of *self-value* is natural:

- He may overestimate or underestimate his worth, but he believes his value should be acknowledged as he perceives it.
- He may appreciate the admiration of others, not because he *needs* it, but because he respects them or finds their praise useful.
- He may even enjoy recognition from others because it reinforces his confidence in himself.

But **none of this is vanity**—these are simply forms of *self-assurance*.

To understand vanity, the noble person must look at **history**, where he will see that, for most of human existence, the **ordinary person was nothing more than what others said he was**. The common man, lacking any internal sense of value, took his worth entirely from the opinions of those above him. He was not used to *assigning* value—only *receiving* it.

It has always been the privilege of the ruling class to create values.

Even today, this old instinct survives. Many people, rather than defining themselves, still **wait to be told their worth**—and once they hear it, they submit to it, whether it is praise or condemnation. Consider how religious individuals, especially women, often take their self-worth from priests and confessors, or how devout believers accept their Church's judgments about them—good or bad—without question.

With democracy and the mixing of noble and common blood, more people have begun to **assert their own worth**, like the ruling classes once did. But beneath this modern confidence, the **older, deeper instinct of subjection still lingers**—and it is this older instinct that gives rise to **vanity**.

The **vain** person is different from the noble person:

- **He rejoices in any praise** he receives—not because it is true or useful, but simply because it is praise.

- He **suffers from criticism** in the same way, submitting to it just as easily.
- He instinctively *seeks to manipulate others* into giving him approval, and then immediately *submits to that approval* as if it were an objective truth.

In this way, vanity is an **atavism**—a lingering remnant of the old **slave morality**, the **survival of subservience** within those who have not yet learned to rule themselves.

And who still carries the strongest trace of this **slave instinct?** *Women*, for example, often exhibit vanity in its most refined form—still seeking approval, still submitting to the judgments of others.

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A species becomes strong and well-defined through prolonged struggle against constant hardship. On the other hand, when a species is given too much abundance and protection, it quickly begins to change, producing both remarkable exceptions and strange degeneracies. Breeders understand this well—under artificial care, animals mutate rapidly in unpredictable ways, often for the worse.

An aristocratic society, like an ancient Greek city-state or Venice, is a system designed to cultivate a specific kind of human being. People within it must rely on their own strength to maintain power. Their survival depends on discipline, order, and an unwavering commitment to their way of life. Without these qualities, they would be overtaken by enemies or internal rebellion. There is no room for unnecessary change—only what ensures survival is developed and valued.

Virtues emerge as a direct result of this necessity. Strength, self-restraint, discipline, and severity become the highest values because without them, the entire structure would collapse. Aristocratic morality is strict by nature. It enforces discipline in raising children, controlling women, regulating marriage, and maintaining laws. Even intolerance is considered a virtue—it is simply renamed justice.

Over time, this way of life becomes stable and hardened. But eventually, the circumstances that made it necessary begin to change. The external dangers fade, enemies disappear, and resources become abundant. The harsh discipline that once ensured survival starts to seem excessive and unnecessary.

At this point, the rigid order begins to loosen. What was once a necessity now appears optional, even outdated. People start to experiment with new ways of living. The clear structure of society begins to dissolve, and individuality emerges in a way that was previously impossible. Some rise to new heights, while others fall into decay.

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There is a burst of ambition and creativity. Everyone seeks to stand out and assert themselves. At the same time, the unity that once held the society together crumbles. The old morality, which provided order and purpose, is no longer seen as relevant. Each person must now define their own values and struggle to make sense of their place in the world.

In the midst of this transformation, moral philosophers begin to analyze the situation. They see the rapid decay, the fragmentation of values, and the collapse of a once-cohesive way of life. They recognize that only one type of person will survive the chaos: the mediocre.

The bold destroy each other in their struggle for dominance. The truly great lack a stable foundation to support them. But those who blend in, avoid extremes, and follow the prevailing trends will endure. The only morality that can still function is one that promotes mediocrity.

This new morality cannot state its true purpose outright. It must disguise itself with noble language. Cowardice is called moderation. Weakness is called dignity. Conformity is called duty. Mediocrity is called brotherly love.

This morality must hide its irony because if it were openly acknowledged that its purpose is to suppress greatness for the sake of stability, no one would take it seriously.

The civilization that once produced greatness has now abandoned the very virtues that built it. The exceptional individual is left stranded, while those who seek safety and sameness inherit the future. Whether this is the final stage of the cycle or whether new dangers will eventually demand a return to greatness remains to be seen.

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There is an instinct for recognizing rank, and the ability to perceive these subtle distinctions is itself a sign of high rank. A noble soul takes pleasure in the nuances of reverence, in recognizing and respecting what is superior. This refinement is tested when something of the highest value appears in the world without the usual protection of authority, without outward signs that demand respect. It moves unnoticed, veiled, unrecognized, and serves as a test for those who encounter it: do they instinctively recognize its worth, or do they fail to see what stands before them?

One who studies human nature will use this instinct as a measure of a person's fundamental rank. The true test is reverence. People reveal their character when confronted with something rare and sacred. The vulgar react with hostility when faced with something truly great—difference breeds resentment. Their pettiness erupts like filthy water when they encounter something sacred, a hidden treasure, or a book of immense depth. In contrast, those with nobility of spirit instinctively show reverence: they grow silent, their gaze hesitates, and their gestures stop, sensing the presence of something worthy of respect.

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The enduring reverence for the Bible in Europe is a prime example of how Christianity instilled discipline and refined manners. Profound books, those carrying the weight of destiny, need the protection of authority to survive the thousands of years required to reveal their full meaning. Civilization advances when people learn that they cannot touch everything, that some things are sacred, that there are experiences before which they must remove their shoes and keep their unclean hands away. This is perhaps the highest level of refinement that the masses can attain.

In contrast, the so-called educated classes, the believers in “modern ideas,” are often repulsive in their lack of shame. They show no restraint, no reverence; they touch, taste, and handle everything with careless arrogance. Their irreverence is more vulgar than that of the common people, who, despite their simplicity, often possess a more natural nobility of taste. In particular, peasants and those untouched by modern intellectual vanity often show more respect than the so-called enlightened minds who consume their culture through newspapers and fashionable ideas.

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A man carries within him the imprint of what his ancestors did most often and most passionately. Whether they spent their days carefully managing money, living modest, disciplined lives; whether they commanded others from dawn to dusk, indulging in rough pleasures and even rougher responsibilities; or whether they once sacrificed their noble privileges to devote themselves entirely to faith—whatever their defining traits, these are ingrained in him. No matter how much a person may try to appear otherwise, he cannot erase the tendencies and instincts passed down through generations. This is the reality of inheritance.

If one knows something about a man’s parents, it is possible to predict certain things about him. If his lineage is marked by crude indulgence, bitter envy, or clumsy self-importance—the three classic traits of the plebeian type—then these qualities will inevitably manifest in him as well, as surely as bad blood runs through veins. The best education and culture can, at most, create a disguise, but they cannot truly erase this inheritance.

And what is the goal of education and culture today? In our deeply democratic—more precisely, plebeian—age, their primary function is deception: to mask origins, to cover up inherited vulgarity in both body and soul. Imagine an educator who, above all else, insisted on truthfulness, urging his students: “Be honest! Be natural! Show yourselves as you really are!” Such a well-meaning fool would quickly realize the harsh truth captured in Horace’s old adage: *You may drive out nature with a pitchfork, but it will always return.* No matter how much effort is spent in refinement, plebeian instincts will always resurface.

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At the risk of offending delicate sensibilities, I assert that egoism is an essential trait of a noble soul. By this, I mean an unshakable belief that others naturally exist to serve and sacrifice for someone of *our* kind. The noble soul takes this for granted, without guilt, hesitation, or any sense of cruelty—it feels as natural as gravity. If he were to give this conviction a name, he would call it *justice*.

However, when confronted with others of the same rank—those who are also privileged—he acknowledges them as equals, though not without careful consideration. Once this recognition is made, he moves among them with the same self-assured grace and courtesy that he extends to himself. This is not an act of humility but an instinctive, almost cosmic order of things—like the stars following their celestial paths, guided by an unseen harmony.

His egoism extends even to his interactions with equals, shaping his sense of fairness. He respects them not out of weakness, but because he sees in them a reflection of his own worth. Among those of equal standing, the concept of “favor” has little meaning; true nobility neither begs nor bestows gifts in a patronizing way. There is, perhaps, a refined manner of receiving generosity—like allowing blessings to descend gracefully from above, drinking them in as one would morning dew—but such performances do not come naturally to the noble soul. His egoism prevents it.

In general, he does not look *upward* in admiration or submission. His gaze is forward—measured and deliberate—or downward, in recognition of those beneath him. He is fully aware of his own elevation.

266

"One can only truly respect a man who does not put himself first." — Goethe to Rath Schlosser.

267

The Chinese have a proverb that even mothers teach their children: *SIAO-SIN* ("Make your heart small"). This captures the core tendency of modern civilization. I have no doubt that an ancient Greek, upon meeting us Europeans today, would immediately notice this self-diminishing quality in us—and for that reason alone, he would likely find us *distasteful*.

268

What, after all, is ignobleness? Words are symbols for ideas, and ideas are mental representations of recurring and overlapping sensations. But simply using the same words does not mean we understand each other; we must also associate the same words with similar internal experiences. True understanding happens when people share common experiences.

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This is why people of the same nation understand one another better than those from different nations, even when speaking the same language. When people live together under similar conditions—facing the same climate, dangers, struggles, and needs—they form a collective understanding, a nation. Over time, certain experiences become dominant in their minds, making communication faster and more efficient. The history of language, in fact, is a history of abbreviation—people condense meaning to communicate quickly. And the greater the danger, the greater the need for immediate understanding. Misunderstanding each other in times of crisis is simply not an option.

This also applies to love and friendship: the moment people realize they associate the same words with different thoughts, emotions, or desires, their bond weakens. (The fear of *eternal misunderstanding* is what often prevents men and women from rushing into relationships, not Schopenhauer's so-called *genius of the species*).

The sensations that are most frequently triggered in a person's soul—their reflexive thoughts, emotions, and instincts—ultimately shape their values. A person's priorities and desires reveal the structure of their soul, what it needs to survive, and what it considers essential.

Since the beginning, necessity has brought together only those who could express similar needs and experiences using common symbols. This means that the ability to *easily communicate shared experiences* has always been one of the strongest forces shaping humanity.

As a result, the most *similar*, the most *ordinary* people—those who fit into the common mold—have always had the advantage. The rare, refined, and unique individuals, being harder to understand and less adaptable to the collective, tend to be isolated, suffer setbacks, and rarely pass on their traits. Immense opposing forces are required to counteract this natural drift toward similarity, toward mediocrity, toward *the gregarious and the ignoble*.

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A true psychologist—one who is naturally drawn to studying the depths of the soul—is at great risk of being overwhelmed by sympathy. More than anyone else, he needs both emotional toughness and a sense of humor to protect himself. This is because the downfall and corruption of exceptional individuals—those rare, extraordinary souls—is not an exception but the rule. And having to witness this rule again and again, throughout history, can be unbearable.

To see the same tragic pattern repeat itself—to always recognize, too late, that someone was doomed—can push the psychologist to despair, even self-destruction. He might try to escape by seeking the company of ordinary, well-adjusted people, as a kind of self-prescribed therapy, a way to forget the burden of what he knows. He fears his own memory. He might even find himself silently agreeing with others' opinions, though he knows better, just to avoid the weight of his own understanding.

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Perhaps the crudest irony is that while he develops both profound sympathy and deep contempt for these so-called "great men," the masses, the educated elite, and the dreamers, on the other hand, shower them with reverence. Society idolizes its so-called heroes—the statesmen, the conquerors, the artists—as if they were divine, while the psychologist sees them for what they truly are: often broken, tormented, and driven by wounds they can never heal.

History, of course, is full of deception. Success is the greatest liar of all. A person's work creates their legend, often rewriting their true self into something unrecognizable. The "great man" is usually just a myth, a carefully crafted illusion that history clings to.

Look at the poets Byron, Musset, Poe, Leopardi, Kleist, Gogol—men who, in reality, were reckless, impulsive, deeply flawed, often using their art to escape their own suffering. They were idealists, but not in the way the world imagines; they were idealists because they longed for something greater than themselves but were always dragged down by their own nature. They hovered like will-o'-the-wisps over the swamps of their own existence, pretending to be stars.

And then, there is woman—uniquely attuned to suffering, desperate to heal, yet blind to the limits of what love can do. She believes, above all, that love can fix everything. It is her personal superstition. But the psychologist knows otherwise. He knows that love, even at its best, is often powerless, clumsy, and more destructive than it is redemptive.

Perhaps this is the real tragedy hidden behind the story of Jesus—a soul that craved love so desperately, demanded it so fiercely, that he invented hell for those who refused him, and, in the end, had to create a God of pure love to make up for how small and disappointing human love truly is. A heart that wanted love beyond all else and realized too late that it would never be enough.

A person who understands love this deeply does not want to live.

But why dwell on such painful truths—unless one has no choice?

270

The deep suffering a person endures shapes their sense of superiority—it almost determines their rank, how high or low they stand among others. Those who have suffered profoundly carry within them a chilling certainty: that because of their suffering, they **know** more than even the wisest and most brilliant minds can ever comprehend. They have seen distant, terrifying worlds, places of experience and understanding where others have never set foot—and never will.

This intellectual pride, this quiet but unshakable certainty of being among the "initiated," among those who have been **sacrificed** to knowledge, demands protection. It must shield itself from the meddling hands of those who pity, from those who would try to "understand" but could never

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truly grasp what they have endured. Profound suffering separates—it makes a person noble, but also solitary.

One of the cleverest disguises for this suffering is **Epicureanism**—a kind of deliberate indulgence in pleasure, an ostentatious delight in taste, art, and superficial joy. These are people who act lighthearted, who take things playfully—precisely because they **do not** want to be understood. They choose to be mistaken for something they are not.

Others hide in **science**, using its cold rationality as a mask. Since scientific minds are often assumed to be detached, unemotional, even superficial, they take refuge in this assumption, misleading others into believing they lack depth.

Then there are those who adopt **cynicism**, an insolent, biting attitude, like Hamlet—brilliant but wounded, covering his pain with irony. Or like Galiani, sharp-tongued and bold, yet concealing a proud, incurable heart. Some even resort to **outright foolishness** as a disguise, pretending to be naive, whimsical, or careless—when in truth, they have seen too much, known too much, suffered too much.

From all this, one thing follows: those who are truly refined, those who understand human depth, must also respect the **mask**. They must know when **not** to pry, when **not** to use psychology and curiosity to strip away someone's carefully constructed shield.

Because sometimes, the mask is the only thing holding a person together.

271

What separates two people most profoundly is their **different sense of purity**. Honesty, mutual benefit, and goodwill don't bridge the gap—if their instincts for purity are too different, they simply "**cannot stand each other**."

The **strongest** instinct for purity isolates a person, making them an outsider, even a saint. This is because **holiness** is the highest refinement of this instinct. Such a person is driven by an **unceasing thirst** for cleansing, for moving from darkness into light, from suffering into clarity, brightness, and refinement.

But just as this instinct **distinguishes**, marking them as noble, it also **separates** them from others. The saint's **pity** is not for human suffering, but for the **uncleanness** of human nature itself. And at certain heights, even pity is seen as **impure**—a contamination to be rejected.

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Signs of nobility include never considering our responsibilities as being on the same level as those of everyone else. It is a refusal to renounce or share our duties, recognizing that our privileges and how we exercise them are in fact part of our obligations.

273

A man who seeks greatness views everyone he meets either as a way to advance, a delay, or a temporary pause. His unique generosity toward others becomes possible only once he has reached his higher position and is in control. Impatience and the awareness that he is constantly in a struggle, which he sees as a form of comedy—since every challenge hides the end result—ruin all interactions for him. This type of man is familiar with solitude and the toxic aspects it brings.

274

The problem for those who wait is that happy opportunities and countless unpredictable factors are necessary for a higher individual, who has a solution to a problem within them, to act or "break forth" at the right moment. On average, this does not happen. Across the world, there are many people who are waiting, often unaware of how much they are waiting, and even less aware that they are waiting in vain. Sometimes, the call to action comes too late—when their youth and energy have been spent in passivity. When they finally spring into action, they discover, to their horror, that their limbs are stiff and their spirits too heavy. "It's too late," they tell themselves, and become self-distrustful, rendered useless forever after. In the realm of genius, perhaps the "Raphael without hands" (taking the expression broadly) is not the exception, but the rule. Maybe genius is not so rare, but rather it is the five hundred hands required to seize the right moment—"the right time."

275

Those who do not want to acknowledge the greatness of a person tend to focus more intensely on their flaws and shortcomings, often emphasizing what is low or visible in the foreground. In doing so, they reveal their own limitations.

276

In situations of injury or loss, the coarser and lower soul is often better equipped to endure, as it faces fewer risks and dangers. The nobler soul, on the other hand, is more vulnerable and prone to failure due to the complex nature of its existence. Much like a lizard can regenerate a lost finger, humans lack the ability to easily recover what they have lost, especially in the face of deeper, more existential challenges.

277

It's always the same story: after a person has completed something, like building a house, they realize, often too late, that there was something crucial they should have known before they even started. The regret of the "too late" moment is inevitable—this is the melancholy that comes with completing anything.

278

Wanderer, who are you? I see you walking your path, neither scornful nor affectionate, with eyes that are deep and unfathomable, wet and sad like a weight that has returned to the light, having been saturated by every depth. What did you seek down there? Your chest never sighs, your lips hide their disdain, your hand only grasps slowly. Who are you? What have you done? Rest here; this place welcomes everyone—refresh yourself! Whoever you are, what is it that now pleases you? What will rejuvenate you? Name it, whatever I offer to you! "To refresh me? To refresh me? Oh, you inquisitive one, what are you asking? But give me, I beg you—" What? What? Speak up! "Another mask! A second mask!"

279

Men of deep sorrow reveal themselves when they experience happiness: they grasp at it with a desperation as if they want to suffocate it, driven by jealousy—oh, they are all too aware that it will soon slip away from them!

280

Bad! Bad! What? Does he not—go back? Yes! But you misunderstand him when you complain about it. He retreats like everyone who is about to make a great leap forward.

281

"Will people believe it of me? But I insist that they believe it of me: I have always thought very unsatisfactorily of myself and about myself, only in very rare cases, only compulsorily, always without delight in 'the subject,' ready to digress from 'myself,' and always without faith in the result, owing to an unconquerable distrust of the POSSIBILITY of self-knowledge, which has led me so far as to feel a CONTRADICTIO IN ADJECTO even in the idea of 'direct knowledge' which theorists allow themselves:—this matter of fact is almost the most certain thing I know about myself. There must be a sort of repugnance in me to BELIEVE anything definite about myself.—Is there perhaps some enigma therein? Probably; but fortunately nothing for my own

teeth.—Perhaps it betrays the species to which I belong?—but not to myself, as is sufficiently agreeable to me."

282

"But what has happened to you?"—"I do not know," he said, hesitatingly; "perhaps the Harpies have flown over my table."—It sometimes happens nowadays that a gentle, sober, retiring man becomes suddenly mad, breaks the plates, upsets the table, shrieks, raves, and shocks everybody—and finally withdraws, ashamed, and raging at himself—whither? for what purpose? To famish apart? To suffocate with his memories?—To him who has the desires of a lofty and dainty soul, and only seldom finds his table laid and his food prepared, the danger will always be great—nowadays, however, it is extraordinarily so. Thrown into the midst of a noisy and plebeian age, with which he does not like to eat out of the same dish, he may readily perish of hunger and thirst—or, should he nevertheless finally "fall to," of sudden nausea.—We have probably all sat at tables to which we did not belong; and precisely the most spiritual of us, who are most difficult to nourish, know the dangerous DYSPEPSIA which originates from a sudden insight and disillusionment about our food and our messmates—the AFTER-DINNER NAUSEA.

283

If one wishes to praise at all, it is a delicate and at the same time a noble self-control, to praise only where one DOES NOT agree—otherwise in fact one would praise oneself, which is contrary to good taste:—a self-control, to be sure, which offers excellent opportunity and provocation to constant MISUNDERSTANDING. To be able to allow oneself this veritable luxury of taste and morality, one must not live among intellectual imbeciles, but rather among men whose misunderstandings and mistakes amuse by their refinement—or one will have to pay dearly for it!—"He praises me, THEREFORE he acknowledges me to be right"—this asinine method of inference spoils half of the life of us recluses, for it brings the asses into our neighbourhood and friendship.

284

To live in a vast and proud tranquility; always beyond... To have, or not to have, one's emotions, one's For and Against, according to choice; to lower oneself to them for hours; to SEAT oneself on them as upon horses, and often as upon asses:—for one must know how to make use of their stupidity as well as of their fire. To conserve one's three hundred foregrounds; also one's black spectacles: for there are circumstances when nobody must look into our eyes, still less into our "motives." And to choose for company that roguish and cheerful vice, politeness. And to remain master of one's four virtues, courage, insight, sympathy, and solitude. For solitude is a virtue with

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us, as a sublime bent and bias to purity, which divines that in the contact of man and man—"in society"—it must be unavoidably impure. All society makes one somehow, somewhere, or sometime—"commonplace."

285

The greatest events and thoughts—the greatest thoughts, however, are the greatest events—are longest in being comprehended: the generations which are contemporary with them do not EXPERIENCE such events—they live past them. Something happens there as in the realm of stars. The light of the furthest stars is longest in reaching man; and before it has arrived man DENIES—that there are stars there. "How many centuries does a mind require to be understood?"—that is also a standard, one also makes a gradation of rank and an etiquette therewith, such as is necessary for mind and for star.

286

"Here is the prospect free, the mind exalted." — But there is a reverse kind of man, who is also upon a height, and has also a free prospect—but looks DOWNWARDS.

287

What is noble? What does the word "noble" still mean for us nowadays? How does the noble man betray himself, how is he recognized under this heavy overcast sky of the commencing plebeianism, by which everything is rendered opaque and leaden? It is not his actions which establish his claim—actions are always ambiguous, always inscrutable; neither is it his "works." One finds nowadays among artists and scholars plenty of those who betray by their works that a profound longing for nobleness impels them; but this very need of nobleness is radically different from the needs of the noble soul itself, and is in fact the eloquent and dangerous sign of the lack thereof. It is not the works, but the belief which is here decisive and determines the order of rank—to employ once more an old religious formula with a new and deeper meaning—it is some fundamental certainty which a noble soul has about itself, something which is not to be sought, is not to be found, and perhaps, also, is not to be lost. The noble soul has reverence for itself.

288

There are men who are unavoidably intellectual, let them turn and twist themselves as they will, and hold their hands before their treacherous eyes—as though the hand were not a betrayer; it always comes out at last that they have something which they hide—namely, intellect. One of the subtlest means of deceiving, at least as long as possible, and of successfully representing oneself

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to be stupider than one really is—which in everyday life is often as desirable as an umbrella—is called enthusiasm, including what belongs to it, for instance, virtue. As Galiani said, who was obliged to know it: "Virtue is enthusiasm."

289

In the writings of a recluse, one always hears something of the echo of the wilderness, something of the murmuring tones and timid vigilance of solitude; in his strongest words, even in his cry itself, there sounds a new and more dangerous kind of silence, of concealment. He who has sat day and night, from year's end to year's end, alone with his soul in familiar discord and discourse, he who has become a cave-bear, or a treasure-seeker, or a treasure-guardian and dragon in his cave—it may be a labyrinth, but can also be a gold-mine—his ideas themselves eventually acquire a twilight-colour of their own, and an odour, as much of the depth as of the mould, something uncommunicative and repulsive, which blows chilly upon every passer-by. The recluse does not believe that a philosopher—supposing that a philosopher has always in the first place been a recluse—ever expressed his actual and ultimate opinions in books: are not books written precisely to hide what is in us?—indeed, he will doubt whether a philosopher CAN have "ultimate and actual" opinions at all; whether behind every cave in him there is not, and must necessarily be, a still deeper cave: an ampler, stranger, richer world beyond the surface, an abyss behind every bottom, beneath every "foundation." Every philosophy is a foreground philosophy—this is a recluse's verdict: "There is something arbitrary in the fact that the PHILOSOPHER came to a stand here, took a retrospect, and looked around; that he HERE laid his spade aside and did not dig any deeper—there is also something suspicious in it." Every philosophy also CONCEALS a philosophy; every opinion is also a LURKING-PLACE, every word is also a MASK.

290

Every deep thinker is more afraid of being understood than of being misunderstood. The latter perhaps wounds his vanity; but the former wounds his heart, his sympathy, which always says: "Ah, why would you also have as hard a time of it as I have?"

291

Man, a complex, mendacious, artful, and inscrutable creature, uncanny to other animals due to his craftiness and intelligence rather than his physical strength, has invented the concept of a good conscience in order to enjoy his soul as something simple. The entirety of morality is, from this perspective, a long, audacious falsification, through which the enjoyment of the soul becomes possible. Viewed from this angle, the idea of "art" may hold much more significance than is commonly recognized.

292

A philosopher is a person who constantly experiences, perceives, hears, suspects, hopes, and dreams extraordinary things. He is struck by his own thoughts as if they come from the outside, from above and below, like events and lightning flashes that are unique to him. He might even be like a storm, pregnant with new lightning, a portentous figure surrounded by rumbling, mumbling, and something uncanny. A philosopher is, unfortunately, someone who often runs away from himself, afraid of his own nature—but whose curiosity always brings him back to himself again.

293

A man who says, "I like this, I claim it as my own, and I will defend it from anyone," is a man who can manage a case, carry out a resolution, stay true to his opinion, keep hold of a woman, punish and defeat insolence. He is a man with indignation and strength, and those who are weak, suffering, oppressed, and even animals naturally submit to and belong to him. In short, he is a man who is a master by nature—when such a man shows sympathy, that sympathy has value. But what is the worth of the sympathy of those who suffer, or those who preach sympathy? Today, in almost all of Europe, there is a sickly sensitivity towards pain, coupled with a repulsive and unrestrained way of complaining, an effeminating tendency that, with the help of religion and philosophical nonsense, tries to present itself as something superior—a veritable cult of suffering. The unmanliness of the "sympathy" promoted by these groups of visionaries is always the first thing that stands out. One must resolutely and radically reject this latest form of bad taste, and ultimately, I wish people would wear the good amulet, "GAI SABER" ("gay science," in ordinary language), around their heart and neck as a protection against it.

294

Despite the philosopher who, like a genuine Englishman, tried to bring laughter into disrepute among all thinking minds—claiming that "laughing is a bad infirmity of human nature, which every thinking mind will strive to overcome" (Hobbes)—I would even go as far as to rank philosophers based on the quality of their laughter, all the way up to those who are capable of GOLDEN laughter. And if we assume that gods also philosophize, which I am strongly inclined to believe for many reasons, I have no doubt that they too know how to laugh in a manner befitting the overman—a laugh that mocks all serious matters! Gods enjoy ridicule: it seems they cannot help but laugh even in sacred matters.

The genius of the heart, as it exists in that great, mysterious figure, the tempter-god and born manipulator of consciences, whose voice can reach into the depths of every soul, who speaks and acts in ways that always contain some allure, whose very presence compels his followers to come closer and follow more eagerly; the genius of the heart who imposes silence and attention on everything loud and self-important, who calms rough souls and makes them experience a new longing; to lie still like a mirror so that the deep heavens can be reflected in them; the genius of the heart that teaches the hasty hand to pause and take a gentler approach, that senses hidden treasures, goodness, and spirituality beneath thick layers of ice, and is able to find every grain of gold buried deep in the mud; the genius of the heart, from whose contact everyone leaves richer—not in the sense of being gratified by others' blessings, but richer in themselves, renewed, more fragile, yet filled with hopes and new will.

But what am I doing, my friends? Who am I talking about? Have I forgotten to even name this figure? Perhaps you've already guessed who I'm speaking of—this god, this spirit, who wants to be praised in such a way. As someone who has always lived in foreign lands and met many strange and dangerous spirits, I too encountered this figure repeatedly—the god Dionysus, the tempter and deceiver, to whom I once offered my first fruits in secret and reverence. I believe I may be the last one to offer such a sacrifice, for no one else has understood what I was doing. Since then, I've learned much—perhaps too much—about the philosophy of this god, and I, the last disciple of Dionysus, would like to share some of it with you, if I am allowed.

This philosophy is full of the mysterious, strange, and even unsettling. The very idea that Dionysus is a philosopher—that gods too philosophize—may seem strange, but it isn't entirely unfathomable. It may even provoke suspicion among philosophers themselves. You, my friends, may be less inclined to dismiss this, though it might be too late and not the right time for such ideas. These days, it seems people are reluctant to believe in gods. I must admit, my story may go beyond what is comfortable for your ears, but the god himself went much further than I ever did, always ahead of me in such matters.

If I were to describe him properly, I would have to acknowledge his courage, his honesty, his love for wisdom, and his fearlessness. But such a god is not interested in all that ceremonial praise. He would tell me to keep it for myself and others who need it, for he has no reason to hide his true nature. This god lacks not only shame, but perhaps in many ways, the gods could come to us for instruction. We humans are more “human” in some ways than the gods themselves.

He once said, “Under certain circumstances, I love mankind.” He admired humans for their inventiveness, bravery, and resilience, for their ability to make their way through all obstacles. He liked mankind, and often thought about how he could make them stronger, more evil, and more profound. “Stronger, more evil, and more profound?” I asked in shock. “Yes,” he replied,

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"stronger, more evil, and more profound, and also more beautiful." And with that, he smiled—a smile that was both calm and knowing, as if he had just given a charming compliment.

In this, we see that the gods, too, may lack shame and have much to teach us. We, as humans, are more in touch with our humanity than they could ever be.

296

Alas, what are you, my written and painted thoughts, really? Not long ago, you were so colorful, fresh, and provocative—full of sharpness and hidden depths—that you made me laugh and sneeze in surprise. But now? You've already lost your novelty, and some of you, I fear, are on the verge of becoming accepted truths—so timeless and honest, so repetitive! Has it always been like this? What do we, the creators, do? What do we, the ones who try to immortalize ideas, actually produce? Alas, we capture only what is already fading, losing its essence. We portray only things that are worn out and fading—storms that have passed, tired thoughts and feelings that come too late. We capture things that are about to be caught, just like exhausted birds that let themselves be caught easily. We immortalize things that are no longer alive, things that are spent and mellowed with time. And it's only for your "afternoon" that I have my colors, many colors—different shades of yellow, brown, green, and red. But no one will ever understand how you appeared in your prime, how you once sparked and amazed me in my solitude, my old, cherished—troubling thoughts!

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From the Heights

1.

Midday of life! Oh, what a season of joy!
My summer's playground!
Exciting joy to look, to hide, to listen—
I search for my friends, ready at any hour—
Where are you, my friends? The moment is now!

2.

Isn't the grey glacier today a vision for you,
Rose garlands on it?
The stream seeks you, the wind, the clouds, with longing,
And they push themselves higher into the blue,
To watch for you from the furthest eagle's view.

3.

My table is laid out for you on high—
Who lives so near the stars, so close to the dark pit below?
My realm—what realm has boundaries as wide as mine?
My honey—who has tasted its fragrance?

4.

Friends, you're here! Oh no, I'm not the one you're looking for!
You look at me, stop—your anger speaks louder!
Am I not myself? My hand, my walk, my face—have they changed?
What I am to you, friends, is now no longer who I was.

5.

Am I someone else? Am I strange to myself?
Yet I was born of myself.
A wrestler, often tangled in my own struggles?
I often hinder my own potential,
Wounded and held back by my own victories?

6.

I went where the wind blows the fiercest. There
I learned to live
Where no man dwells, in the desolate ice fields,
And unlearned all about man, god, curses, and prayers.
I became a ghost haunting the barren glaciers.

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7.

You, my old friends! Look! You turn pale, filled with love and fear!
Leave now! But not in anger. You could never live here.
Here, in the furthest ice and cliffs,
One must be like a hunter, soaring like a chamois.

8.

Was I a cruel hunter? See how tightly my bow was drawn!
The strongest is the one who shoots such an arrow—
Alas! That arrow carries great danger,
More dangerous than any. Have you found a safe place to return to?

9.

You leave! You've suffered enough, oh heart—
Your hope was strong;
Open your doors to new friends,
Let go of the old ones. Bid memory goodbye!
Were you young then? Now—you are better off being young again!

10.

What once tied us together, a single hope—
(Who now reads those lines, now fading, that Love once wrote?)
Is like old parchment, which the hand hesitates to touch—
Like crackling leaves, dry and withered.

11.

Oh! No more friends! What name can we give them now?
The phantom of friends,
Knocking on my heart's window at night,
Staring at me, saying "We were" and leaving—
Oh, those withered words, once as sweet as a rose!

12.

Longings of youth that I could not understand!
For which I yearned,
Which I thought had changed with me, part of my kin—
But they grew old, and so they were doomed and lost.
Only new companions are native to my land now!

13.

Midday of life! The joy of my second youth!
My summer's playground!

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Restless joy to yearn, to hide, to listen!
I search for my friends!—I am ready at any hour,
For my new friends. Come! Come! The time is now!

14.

This song is finished—the sweet, sad cry of regret
Has sung its final note;
A magician created it, he the timely friend,
The friend of midday—no, don't ask who;
It was at midday, when one became two.

15.

We celebrate our Feast of Feasts, certain of our goal,
Our aims all the same:
The Guest of Guests, our friend Zarathustra, has arrived!
The world now laughs, the dark veil is torn,
And Light and Dark were united on that wedding morning.