

Part 6 We scholars

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At the risk that moralizing will prove once again to be what it always was (namely, an undismayed *montrer ses plaies*,¹ in the words of Balzac), I will dare to speak out against an inappropriate and harmful shift in the rank order between science and philosophy; this shift has gone completely unnoticed and now threatens to settle in with what looks like the clearest of consciences. I mean: people need to speak from *experience* (and experience always seems to mean bad experience, doesn't it?) when it comes to such lofty questions of rank, or else they are like blind people talking about colors or like women and artists speaking out *against* science ("Oh, this awful science," their instincts and shame will sigh, "it always gets to the *bottom* of things!" –). The scientific man's declaration of independence, his emancipation from philosophy, is one of the more subtle effects of the democratic way of life (and death): this self-glorification and presumptuousness of the scholar is in the full bloom of spring, flowering everywhere you look, – which isn't to say that this self-importance has a pleasant smell. "Away with all masters!" – that's what the rabble instinct wants, even here. And now that science has been so utterly successful in fending off theology, after having been its "handmaiden" for far too long, it is so high in spirits and low on sense that it wants to lay down laws for philosophy and, for once, play at being "master" – what am I saying! play at being *philosopher*. My memory (the memory of a scientific man, if you will!) is teeming with the arrogantly naïve comments about philosophy and philosophers that I have heard from young natural scientists and old physicians (not to

¹ "Showing one's wounds."

mention from the most erudite and conceited scholars of all, the philologists and schoolmen, who are both by profession –). Sometimes it was the specialists and the pigeon-hole dwellers who instinctively resisted all synthetic tasks and skills; at other times it was the diligent workers who smelled the *otium*² and the noble opulence of the philosopher's psychic economy and consequently felt themselves restricted and belittled. Sometimes it was that color-blindness of utilitarian-minded people who considered philosophy to be just a series of *refuted* systems and a wasteful expenditure that never did anybody "any good." Sometimes a fear of disguised mysticism and changes to the limits of knowledge sprang up; at other times, there was disdain for particular philosophers that had unwittingly become a disdain for philosophy in general. In the end, I have found that what usually lies behind young scholars' arrogant devalorizations of philosophy is the nasty after-effect of some philosopher himself. These scholars had, for the most part, stopped listening to this philosopher, but without having emerged from under the spell of his dismissive valuations of other philosophers: – and this resulted in a generalized ill will against all philosophy. (The after-affects of Schopenhauer on Germany in the most recent past seem to me an example of this sort of thing: – with his unintelligent ranting against Hegel, he has caused the whole of the last generation of Germans to break off its ties to German culture, a culture that, all things considered, represented a supreme and divinatory refinement of the *historical sense*. But Schopenhauer was himself impoverished, insensitive, un-German to the point of genius on precisely this point.) Looking at the overall picture, the damage done to the respectability of philosophy might be primarily due to the human, all-too-human, and, in short, miserable condition of more recent philosophy itself, which has held open the door to the rabble instinct. We have to admit the degree to which our modern world has departed from the whole Heraclitean, Platonic, Empedoclean type (or whatever names all these princely and magnificent hermits of the spirit might have had); and with what justice a worthy man of science *can* feel that he is of a better type and a better lineage, given the sort of representatives of philosophy who, thanks to current fashions, are just as much talked up these days as they are washed up (in Germany, for instance, the two lions of Berlin: the anarchist Eugen Dühring and the amalgamist Eduard von Hartmann). And

² Leisure.

especially those hodgepodge philosophers who call themselves “philosophers of reality” or “positivists” – just the sight of them is enough to instill a dangerous mistrust in the soul of an ambitious young scholar. They are, at best, scholars and specialists themselves – you can just feel it! They have all been defeated but then *brought back* under the domination of science; they had wanted something *more* of themselves at one time (without any right to this “more” and its responsibility) – and now, in word and in deed, they respectably, wrathfully, vengefully represent a *skepticism* concerning philosophy’s master task and authority. In the end: how could it be any other way! Science is thriving these days, its good conscience shines in its face; meanwhile whatever state recent philosophy has gradually sunk to, whatever is left of philosophy today, inspires mistrust and displeasure, if not ridicule and pity. A philosophy reduced to “epistemology,” which is really no more than a timid epochism and doctrine of abstinence; a philosophy that does not even get over the threshold and scrupulously *denies* itself the right of entry – that is a philosophy in its last gasps, an end, an agony, something to be pitied. How could such a philosophy – *dominate*?

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There are so many different kinds of dangers involved in the development of a philosopher these days that it can be doubted whether this fruit is still capable of ripening at all. The height and width of the tower of science have grown to be so monstrously vast that the philosopher is that much more likely to become exhausted before he has even finished his education, or to let himself grab hold of something and “specialize.” And so he is never at his best, never reaches a high point in his development from which he would be able to look over, look around, and *look down*. Or he gets there too late, when he is already past his prime and his strength has started to fade; or he gets there disabled, having become coarse and degenerate, so that his gaze, his overall value judgment is largely meaningless. Perhaps the very refinement of his intellectual conscience lets him hesitate and be slowed down while underway; he is afraid of being seduced into becoming a dilettante, a millipede with a thousand feet and a thousand feelers; he knows too well that someone who has lost his self-respect will no longer command or *lead*, even in the field of knowledge: unless he wants to become a great actor, a philosophical Cagliostro and rabble-rouser of

spirits, in short, a seducer. In the end, this is a question of taste, even if it is not a question of conscience. And just to double the philosopher's difficulties again, there is the additional fact that he demands a judgment of himself, a Yes or a No, not about science but about life and the value of life. It is only with reluctance that he comes to believe he has a right or even a duty to render this sort of a judgment, and he has to draw on the most wide-ranging (and perhaps the most disturbing and destructive) experiences so that he can look – hesitantly, skeptically, silently – for a path to this right and this belief. In fact, the masses have misjudged and mistaken the philosopher for a long time, sometimes confusing him with the scientific man and ideal scholar, and sometimes with the religiously elevated, desensualized, desecularized enthusiasts and intoxicated men of God. If you hear anyone praised these days for living “wisely” or “like a philosopher” it basically just means he is “clever and keeps out of the way.” To the rabble, wisdom seems like a kind of escape, a device or trick for pulling yourself out of the game when things get rough. But the real philosopher (and isn't this how it seems to *us*, my friends?) lives “unphilosophically,” “unwisely,” in a manner which is above all *not clever*, and feels the weight and duty of a hundred experiments and temptations³ of life: – he constantly puts *himself* at risk, he plays *the* rough game . . .

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Compared to a genius, which is to say: compared to a being that either *begets* or *gives birth* (taking both words in their widest scope –), the scholar, the average man of science, is somewhat like an old maid. Like her, he has no expertise in the two most valuable acts performed by humanity. And, as a sort of compensation, both the scholar and the old maid are admitted to be respectable – respectability is always emphasized – although in both cases we are annoyed by the obligatory nature of this admission. Let us look more closely: what is the scientific man? In the first place, he is an ignoble type of person with the virtues that an ignoble type will have: this type is not dominant, authoritative, or self-sufficient. He is industrious, he is patiently lined up in an orderly array, he is regular and moderate in his abilities and needs, he has an instinct for his own kind and for the needs of his kind. These needs include: that piece of

³ In German: *Versuchen und Versuchungen* (see note 16, p. 39 above).

independence and green pasture without which there is no quiet for him to work in, that claim to honor and acknowledgment (whose first and foremost presupposition is recognition and being recognizable –), that sunshine of a good name, that constant seal on his value and his utility which is needed, time and again, in order to overcome the inner *mistrust* that lies at the bottom of the heart of all dependent men and herd animals. It is only fair that the scholar has the diseases and bad habits of an ignoble type as well. He is full of petty jealousies and has eyes like a hawk for the base aspects of natures whose heights he cannot attain. He is friendly, but only like someone who lets himself go without letting himself really *flow* out; and just when he is standing in front of people who really do flow out, he will act all the more cold and reserved, – at times like this, his eye is like a smooth and unwilling lake that will no longer allow a single ripple of joy or sympathy. The worst and most dangerous thing that a scholar is capable of doing comes from his type's instinct for mediocrity: from that Jesuitism of mediocrity that instinctively works towards the annihilation of the exceptional man and tries to break every taut bow or – even better! – to unbend it. Unbending it with consideration, and, of course, a gentle hand –, *unbending* it with friendly pity: that is the true art of Jesuitism, which has always known how to introduce itself as a religion of pity. –

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However gratefully we might approach the *objective* spirit – and who hasn't been sick to death at least once of everything subjective, with its damned *ipsissimosity*!⁴ – nevertheless, in the end we even have to be cautious of our gratitude, and put an end to the exaggerated terms in which people have recently been celebrating the desubjectivization and depersonification of spirit, as if this were some sort of goal in itself, some sort of redemption or transfiguration. This kind of thing tends to happen within the pessimist school, which has reasons of its own for regarding “disinterested knowing” with the greatest respect. The objective man who no longer swears or complains like the pessimist does, the *ideal* scholar who expresses the scientific instinct as it finally blossoms and blooms all the way (after things have gone partly or wholly wrong a thousand times over) – he is certainly

⁴ Nietzsche's coinage from the Latin “*ipsissima*” meaning “very own.”

one of the most expensive tools there is: but he belongs in the hands of someone more powerful. He is only a tool, we will say: he is a *mirror*, – he is not an “end in himself.” The objective man is really a mirror: he is used to subordinating himself in front of anything that wants to be known, without any other pleasure than that of knowing, of “mirroring forth.” He waits until something comes along and then spreads himself gently towards it, so that even light footsteps and the passing by of a ghostly being are not lost on his surface and skin. He has so thoroughly become a passageway and reflection of strange shapes and events, that whatever is left in him of a “person” strikes him as accidental, often arbitrary, and still more often as disruptive. It takes an effort for him to think back on “himself,” and he is not infrequently mistaken when he does. He easily confuses himself with others, he is wrong about his own basic needs, and this is the only respect in which he is crude and careless. Maybe his health is making him suffer, or the pettiness and provincial airs of a wife or a friend, or the lack of companions and company, – all right then, he makes himself think about his sufferings: but to no avail! His thoughts have already wandered off, towards *more general* issues, and by the next day he does not know how to help himself any more than he knew the day before. He has lost any serious engagement with the issue as well as the time to spend on it: he is cheerful, *not* for lack of needs but for lack of hands to grasp *his* neediness. The obliging manner in which he typically approaches things and experiences, the sunny and natural hospitality with which he accepts everything that comes at him, his type of thoughtless goodwill, of dangerous lack of concern for Yeses and Noes: oh, there are plenty of times when he has to pay for these virtues of his! – and being human, he all too easily becomes the *caput mortuum*⁵ of these virtues. If you want him to love or hate (I mean love and hate as a god, woman, or animal would understand the terms –) he will do what he can and give what he can. But do not be surprised if it is not much, – if this is where he comes across as fake, fragile, questionable, and brittle. His love is forced, his hatred artificial and more like *un tour de force*, a little piece of vanity and exaggeration. He is sincere only to the extent that he is allowed to be objective: he is “nature” and “natural” only in his cheerful totality. His mirror-like soul is forever smoothing itself out; it does not know how to affirm or negate any more. He does not command; and neither does he destroy.

⁵ Worthless residue.

“*Je ne méprise presque rien*,”⁶ he says with Leibniz: that *presque* should not be overlooked or underestimated! He is no paragon of humanity; he does not go in front of anyone or behind. In general, he puts himself at too great a distance to have any basis for choosing between good or evil. If people have mistaken him for a *philosopher* for so long, for a Caesar-like man who cultivates and breeds, for the brutal man of culture – then they have paid him much too high an honor and overlooked what is most essential about him, – he is a tool, a piece of slave (although, without a doubt, the most sublime type of slave) but nothing in himself, – *presque rien*! The objective person is a tool, an expensive measuring instrument and piece of mirror art that is easily injured and spoiled and should be honored and protected; but he is not a goal, not a departure or a fresh start, he is not the sort of complementary person in which the *rest* of existence justifies itself. He is not a conclusion – and still less a beginning, begetter or first cause; there is nothing tough, powerful or self-supporting that wants to dominate. Rather, he is only a gentle, brushed-off, refined, agile pot of forms, who first has to wait for some sort of content or substance in order “to shape” himself accordingly, – he is generally a man without substance or content, a “selfless” man. And consequently, *in parentheses*, nothing for women. –

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When a philosopher these days makes it known that he is not a skeptic, – and I hope that this could be detected in the account of the objective spirit just given – everyone gets upset. People look at him apprehensively, they have so many questions, questions . . . in fact, frightened eavesdroppers (and there are crowds of them these days) will begin to consider him dangerous. It is as if they could hear, in his rejection of skepticism, some sort of evil and ominous sound in the distance, as if a new explosive were being tested somewhere, a dynamite of the spirit, perhaps a newly discovered Russian *nihiline*,⁷ a pessimism *bonae voluntatis*⁸ that does not just *say* No or *will* No, but – the very thought is terrible! – *does* No. It is generally acknowledged nowadays that no tranquilizer or sedative works

⁶ “I despise almost nothing.” In lines that follow, *presque* means “almost” and *presque rien* means “almost nothing.”

⁷ A neologism coined from “nihilism.”

⁸ Of goodwill.

better against this type of “goodwill” – a will to the actual, violent negation of life – than skepticism, the soft, sweet, soothing, poppy flower of skepticism; and even *Hamlet* is prescribed by physicians today as a protection against “spirit” and its underground rumblings. “Aren’t people’s ears already filled with enough bad sounds?” the skeptic asks, being a friend of peace and almost a type of security police: “This subterranean No is awful! Be quiet already, you pessimistic moles!” Which is to say: the skeptic, that gentle creature, is all too easily frightened. His conscience has been trained to jump at every no, or even at a decisive and hardened yes, and to feel it like a bite. Yes! and No! – this is contrary to morality, as far as he is concerned. Conversely, he loves to treat his virtues to a feast of noble abstinence, when, for instance, he says, with Montaigne: “What do I know?” Or with Socrates: “I know that I don’t know anything.” Or “I don’t trust myself here, there aren’t any doors open to me.” Or: “Even if one were open, why go in right away!” Or: “What good are rash hypotheses? It might very well be good taste not to formulate any hypotheses at all. When something is crooked, do you people really need to straighten it right away? or plug something into every hole? Isn’t there plenty of time for that? Doesn’t time have plenty of time? Oh, you fiends, why can’t you just *wait* a while? Even uncertainty has its charms, even the Sphinx is a Circe, even Circe was a philosopher.” – This is how a skeptic comforts himself; and it is true that he needs some comfort. Skepticism is the most spiritual expression of a certain complex physiological condition which in layman’s terms is called weak nerves or a sickly constitution. It originates whenever races or classes that have been separated for a long time are suddenly and decisively interbred. The different standards and values, as it were, get passed down through the bloodline to the next generation where everything is in a state of restlessness, disorder, doubt, experimentation. The best forces have inhibitory effects, the virtues themselves do not let each other strengthen and grow, both body and soul lack a center of balance, a center of gravity and the assurance of a pendulum. But what is most profoundly sick and degenerate about such hybrids is the *will*: they no longer have any sense of independence in decision-making, or the bold feeling of pleasure in willing, – they doubt whether there is “freedom of will,” even in their dreams. Our contemporary Europe, the site of an absurdly sudden experiment in the radical mixing of classes and *consequently* of races, is therefore skeptical from its heights to its depths, sometimes with that agile kind of skepticism that leaps impatiently and

licentiously from one branch to another; at other times it is gloomy like a cloud overloaded with question-marks – and often sick to death of its will! Paralysis of the will: where *won't* you find this cripple today? And often how nicely dressed! How seductively dressed! This illness has the prettiest fancy-dress clothes and liar's outfits. And most of what presents itself in the shop windows these days as “objectivity,” for instance, or “scientificity,” “*l'art pour l'art*,”⁹ or “pure, will-less knowing,” is only dressed-up skepticism and paralysis of the will, – I will vouch for this diagnosis of the European disease. – The disease of the will has spread unevenly across Europe. It appears greatest and most varied where the culture has been at home for the longest period of time; and it becomes increasingly faint to the extent that “the barbarian” still – or once again – asserts his rights under the sagging robes of occidental cultivation. This is why the will is most sick in present-day France, a fact which can be logically concluded as easily as it can be palpably felt. France has always had the brilliant historical sense to turn even disastrous changes of its spirit into something charming and seductive. Now, it clearly indicates its culturally dominant position within Europe by being the school and showcase for all the magic spells of skepticism. The strength to will and, in fact, a will to will at length, is somewhat more vigorous in Germany, and stronger in the north of Germany than in the center. It is considerably stronger in England, Spain, and Corsica; in one place it is bound up with apathy, in another, with hard heads, – not to mention Italy, which is too young to know what it wants, and which first needs to prove that it *can* will –. But it is the strongest of all and the most amazing in that vast intermediary zone where Europe, as it were, flows back into Asia: in Russia. There, the strength to will has been laid aside and stored up over a long time; there, the will is waiting threateningly (uncertain whether as a will of negation or of affirmation), to be discharged (to borrow a favorite term from today's physicists). More than just Indian wars and Asian intrigues might be needed to relieve Europe of its greatest danger – inner rebellions might be needed as well, the dispersion of the empire into small bodies, and, above all, the introduction of parliamentary nonsense, added to which would be the requirement that every man read his newspaper over breakfast. This is not something I am hoping for. I would prefer the opposite, – I mean the sort of increase in the threat Russia poses that

⁹ “Art for art's sake.”

would force Europe into choosing to become equally threatening and, specifically, *to acquire a single will* by means of a new caste that would rule over Europe, a long, terrible will of its own, that could give itself millennia-long goals: – so that the long, spun-out comedy of Europe’s petty provincialism and its dynastic as well as democratic fragmentation of the will could finally come to an end. The time for petty politics is over: the next century will bring the struggle for the domination of the earth – the *compulsion* to great politics.

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The extent to which the new, warlike age that we Europeans have obviously entered into may, perhaps, also be favorable to the development of another, stronger type of skepticism – for the time being, I would like to restrict my remarks on this matter to a parable that the friends of German history will already understand. That completely unscrupulous devotee of tall, handsome grenadiers who, as king of Prussia, brought a military and skeptical genius into being (and with it, fundamentally, that new type of German which is only now approaching in triumph), the questionable, mad father of Frederick the Great,¹⁰ had the grasp and lucky claw of a genius too, although on one point only: he knew what was missing in Germany in those days, and which lack was a hundred times more urgent and anxiety-provoking than the lack of something like education or social decorum, – his dislike for young Frederick came from the anguish of a profound instinct. *Men were lacking*; and he suspected, to his most bitter distress, that his own son was not man enough. He was wrong about this, but who wouldn’t have been wrong in his place? He saw his son falling prey to atheism, *esprit*, and the entertaining, happy-go-lucky spirit of clever Frenchmen: he saw that enormous bloodsucker, the spider of skepticism, in the background, and he suspected the incurable misery of a heart that was no longer hard enough for evil or for good, of a shattered will that no longer commanded, that was no longer *able* to command. Meanwhile, however, a harsher and more dangerous new type of skepticism was growing in his son (and who knows how much it was encouraged precisely *by* his father’s hatred and the icy melancholy of an isolated will?) – the

¹⁰ Frederick William I.

skepticism of a bold masculinity, which is most closely related to the genius for war and conquest, and which first entered Germany in the shape of the great Frederick. This skepticism despises and nevertheless appropriates; it undermines and takes possession; it does not believe but does not die out on this account; it gives the spirit a dangerous freedom, but is severe on the heart. The *German* form of skepticism (being a continued Frederickianism that has been intensified to the most spiritual degree) has put Europe under the dominion of German spirit with its critical and historical mistrust for a long time. Thanks to the unyielding strength and tenacity in the masculine character of the great German philologists and critical historians (seen properly, they were also all artists of decay and destruction), and in spite of all the romanticism in music and philosophy, a *new* concept of the German spirit is gradually emerging, and it clearly tends towards a masculine skepticism: it might be the intrepidity of the gaze, the courage and severity of the dissecting hand, or the tenacious will to dangerous voyages of discovery, to spiritualized North Pole expeditions under desolate and dangerous skies. Warm-blooded and superficial humanitarians may have good reasons for crossing themselves in front of this spirit; *cet esprit fataliste, ironique, méphistophélique*¹¹ as Michelet calls it, not without a shudder. But this “man” in the German spirit, which has awoken Europe from its “dogmatic slumber,”¹² – if you want to understand how distinctive the fear of this “man” really is, just remember the earlier conception that this one had to overcome, – and how it was not so long ago that a masculinized woman¹³ could dare, with boundless presumption, to commend the Germans to European sympathies as gentle, good-hearted, weak-willed, poetic fools. You can really understand Napoleon’s surprise when he got to see Goethe:¹⁴ it showed what people had understood by the term “German spirit” for centuries. “*Voilà un homme!*” – which was to say: “Now there’s a *man*! And I’d only expected a German!” –

¹¹ “This fatalistic, ironical, Mephistophelian spirit.”

¹² An allusion to Kant’s claim in the *Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik* (*Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics*) (1783) that Hume’s empiricism awoke him from the dogmatic slumber of rationalism.

¹³ Madame de Staël in her *De l’Allemagne* (*On Germany*) (1810).

¹⁴ See Goethe’s *Unterredung mit Napoleon* (*Discussion with Napoleon*) (2 October 1808).

So, if something in the image of future philosophers makes us suspect that they will, perhaps, be skeptics (in the sense just mentioned), then it would only indicate some aspect of them and *not* who they themselves really are. They could be called critics with equal justification; and they will certainly be engaged in experiments. I have already laid particular emphasis on the notions of tempting, attempting, and the joy of experimenting in the name that I have dared to christen them with: is this because, as critics in body and soul, they love to experiment in a new, perhaps broader, perhaps more dangerous sense? In their passion for knowledge, won't they need to go further, with bold and painful experiments, than the faint-hearted, pampered taste of a democratic century can think proper? – Without a doubt: these coming philosophers will be least able to dispense with the qualities that distinguish the critic from the skeptic – qualities that are rather serious and by no means harmless. I mean: the certainty of value standards, the conscious implementation of a unity of method, a sly courage, a solitary stance, and capacity for responsibility. In fact, these philosophers admit to taking *pleasure* in saying no, in dissecting, and in a certain level-headed cruelty that knows how to guide a knife with assurance and subtlety, even when the heart is bleeding. They will be *more severe* (and perhaps not always with themselves alone) than humane people might wish them to be. They will not engage with “truth” in such a way that it “pleases” or “elevates” or “inspires” them; they will hardly believe that the *truth*, of all things, would keep the feelings this amused. These severe spirits will smile when they hear someone say: “This thought elevates me: how could it fail to be true?” Or: “This work charms me: how could it fail to be beautiful?” Or: “That artist ennobles me: how could he fail to be noble?” – they might be ready not just with a smile but with a genuine disgust for all these over-enthusiasms, idealisms, femininities, hermaphrodisms. And anyone who knows how to follow these spirits down into the secret chambers of their heart is not likely to discover any intention to reconcile “Christian feelings” with “ancient taste” or with anything like “modern parliamentarianism” (although these sorts of conciliatory overtures are said to take place in our very uncertain and consequently very conciliatory century, even among philosophers). These philosophers of the future will demand (and not only of themselves) critical discipline and every habit that leads to cleanliness and rigor in matters of the spirit. They might even wear these

like a type of jewel they have on display, – nevertheless, they still do not want to be called critics. They think it is no small disgrace for philosophy these days, when people are so happy to announce: “Philosophy itself is criticism and critical science – and nothing else whatsoever!” However much all the French and German positivists might approve of this evaluation of philosophy (– and it might even have flattered *Kant’s* heart and taste: just think of the titles of his major works –), our new philosophers will nevertheless say: critics are tools of philosophy and that is precisely why, being tools, they are so far from being philosophers! Even the great Chinaman of Königsberg¹⁵ was only a great critic. –

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I am going to insist that people finally stop mistaking philosophical laborers and scientific men in general for philosophers, – that here, of all places, people be strict about giving “each his due” and not too much to the one, and much too little to the other. In the course of his education, the genuine philosopher might have been required to stand on each of the steps where his servants, the philosophical scientific laborers, have come to a stop, – have *had to* come to a stop. Perhaps the philosopher has had to be a critic and a skeptic and a dogmatist and historian and, moreover, a poet and collector and traveler and guesser of riddles and moralist and seer and “free spirit” and practically everything, in order to run through the range of human values and value feelings and *be able* to gaze with many eyes and consciences from the heights into every distance, from the depths up to every height, from the corner onto every expanse. But all these are only preconditions for his task: the task itself has another will, – it calls for him to *create values*. The project for philosophical laborers on the noble model of Kant and Hegel is to establish some large class of given values (which is to say: values that were once *posited* and created but have come to dominate and have been called “truths” for a long time) and press it into formulas, whether in the realm of *logic* or *politics* (morality) or *art*. It is up to these researchers to make everything that has happened or been valued so far look clear, obvious, comprehensible, and manageable, to abbreviate everything long, even “time” itself, and to *overwhelm* the entire past. This is an enormous and wonderful task, in whose service any subtle

¹⁵ An allusion to Kant, who spent his life in Königsberg.

pride or tough will can certainly find satisfaction. *But true philosophers are commanders and legislators:* they say “That is how it *should* be!” they are the ones who first determine the “where to?” and “what for?” of people, which puts at their disposal the preliminary labor of all philosophical laborers, all those who overwhelm the past. True philosophers reach for the future with a creative hand and everything that is and was becomes a means, a tool, a hammer for them. Their “knowing” is *creating*, their creating is a legislating, their will to truth is – *will to power*. – Are there philosophers like this today? Have there ever been philosophers like this? Won’t there *have to be* philosophers like this? . . .

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It seems increasingly clear to me that the philosopher, being *necessarily* a person of tomorrow and the day after tomorrow, has, in every age, been and has *needed* to be at odds with his today: his enemy has always been the ideal of today. So far, all these extraordinary patrons of humanity who are called philosophers (and who have seldom felt like friends of wisdom, but like disagreeable fools and dangerous question-marks instead –) have found that their task, their harsh, unwanted, undeniable task (though in the end, the *greatness* of their task) lay in being the bad conscience of their age. In applying a vivisectioning knife directly to the chest of the *virtues of the age*, they gave away their own secret: to know a *new* greatness in humanity, a new, untraveled path to human greatness. Every time they have done this, they have shown how much hypocrisy and laziness, how much letting yourself go and letting go of yourself, how many lies are hidden beneath the most highly honored type of their present-day morality, and how much virtue is *out of date*. Every time, they have said: “We need to go there, out there, out where *you* feel least at home today.” When encountering a world of “modern ideas” which would gladly banish everyone into a corner and “specialization,” a philosopher (if there could be philosophers today) would be compelled to locate the greatness of humanity, the concept of “greatness,” in the very scope and variety of humanity, in its unity in multiplicity. He would determine even value and rank according to how much and how many things someone could carry and take upon himself, how *far* someone could stretch his responsibility. Today, the will is weakened and diluted by the tastes and virtues of the times, and nothing is as timely as weakness of will: this is why precisely strength of will and

the hardness and capacity for long-term resolutions must belong to the concept of “greatness,” in the philosopher’s ideal. With equal justice, the opposite doctrine and the ideal of a stupid, self-abnegating, humble, selfless humanity was suited to an opposite age, to an age like the sixteenth century that suffered from its accumulated energy of the will and from the most savage floods and storm tides of egoism. In the age of Socrates, among honest people with tired instincts, among conservatives of ancient Athens who let themselves go – “toward happiness,” as they put it, toward pleasure, as they did it – and who kept mouthing old, magnificent words (words that they had absolutely no right to use any more, given the lives they were leading), – here, perhaps, *irony* was needed for greatness of soul, that malicious, Socratic certainty of the old physician and man of the rabble who cut brutally into his own flesh like he cut into the flesh and heart of the “noble,” with a glance that spoke clearly enough: “Don’t act some part in front of me! Here – we are equals!” These days, by contrast, when only the herd animal gets and gives honor in Europe, when “equal rights” could all too easily end up as equal wrongs (I mean, in waging a joint war on everything rare, strange, privileged, on the higher man, higher soul, higher duty, higher responsibility, on creative power and mastery) – these days, the concept of “greatness” will include: being noble, wanting to be for yourself, the ability to be different, standing alone and needing to live by your own fists. And the philosopher will be revealing something of his own ideal when he proposes: “Greatest of all is the one who can be the most solitary, the most hidden, the most different, the person beyond good and evil, the master of his virtues, the one with an abundance of will. Only this should be called *greatness*: the ability to be just as multiple as whole, just as wide as full.” And to ask once again: is greatness *possible* today?

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It is difficult to learn what a philosopher is, because it cannot be taught: you have to “know” by experience, – or you should be proud that you do *not* know it at all. But nowadays everyone talks about things that they *cannot* experience, and most especially (and most terribly) when it comes to philosophers and philosophical matters. Hardly anyone knows about them or is allowed to know, and all popular opinions about them are false. So, for instance, the genuinely philosophical compatibility between a bold and lively spirituality that runs along at a *presto*, and a dialectical rigor and

necessity that does not take a single false step – this is an experience most thinkers and scholars would find unfamiliar and, if someone were to mention it, unbelievable. They think of every necessity as a need, a painstaking having-to-follow and being-forced; and they consider thinking itself as something slow and sluggish, almost a toil and often enough “worth the *sweat* of the noble.” Not in their wildest dreams would they think of it as light, divine, and closely related to dance and high spirits! “Thinking” and “treating an issue seriously,” “with gravity” – these belong together, according to most thinkers and scholars: that is the only way they have “experienced” it –. Artists might have a better sense of smell even in this matter: they are the ones who know only too well that their feeling of freedom, finesse and authority, of creation, formation, and control only reaches its apex when they have stopped doing anything “voluntarily” and instead do everything necessarily, – in short, they know that inside themselves necessity and “freedom of the will” have become one. In the last analysis, there is a rank order of psychic states which corresponds to the rank order of problems; and the highest problems will ruthlessly repel anyone who dares to get close without being predestined by sheer stature and power of spirituality to reach a solution. What good is it if, as happens so often these days, agile, ordinary minds or clumsy, worthy mechanists and empiricists throng with their plebeian ambition to these problems and into, as it were, the “inner courtyard”! But crude feet would never be allowed on a carpet like this: this has already been provided for in the primordial laws of things. The door will stay barred against these intruders, however much they push or pound their heads against it! You need to have been born for any higher world; to say it more clearly, you need to have been *bred* for it: only your descent, your ancestry can give you a right to philosophy – taking that word in its highest sense. Even here, “bloodline” is decisive. The preparatory labor of many generations is needed for a philosopher to come about; each of his virtues needs to have been individually acquired, cared for, passed down, and incorporated: and not only the bright, light, gentle gait and course of his thoughts, but above all the eagerness for great responsibilities, the sovereignty of his ruling gazes and downward gazes, the feeling of separation from the crowd with its duties and virtues, the genial protection and defense of anything misunderstood and slandered, whether it is god or devil, the pleasure and practice in great justice, the art of command, the expanse of the will, the slow eye that hardly ever admires, hardly ever looks up, hardly ever loves . . .