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Schopenhauer as Educator

A traveller who had seen many lands and peoples and several of the earth's continents was asked what quality in men he had discovered everywhere he had gone. He replied: 'They have a tendency to laziness.' To many it will seem that he ought rather to have said: 'They are all timid. They hide themselves behind customs and opinions.' In his heart every man knows quite well that, being unique, he will be in the world only once and that no imaginable chance will for a second time gather together into a unity so strangely variegated an assortment as he is: he knows it but he hides it like a bad conscience – why? From fear of his neighbour, who demands conventionality and cloaks himself with it. But what is it that constrains the individual to fear his neighbour, to think and act like a member of a herd, and to have no joy in himself? Modesty, perhaps, in a few rare cases. With the great majority it is indolence, inertia, in short that tendency to laziness of which the traveller spoke. He is right: men are even lazier than they are timid, and fear most of all the inconveniences with which unconditional honesty and nakedness would burden them. Artists alone hate this sluggish promenading in borrowed fashions and appropriated opinions and they reveal everyone's secret bad conscience, the law that every man is a unique miracle; they dare to show us man as he is, uniquely himself to every last movement of his muscles, more, that in being thus strictly consistent in uniqueness he is beautiful, and worth regarding, and in no way tedious. When the great thinker despises mankind, he despises its laziness: for it is on account of their laziness that men seem like factory products, things of no consequence and unworthy to be associated with or instructed. The man who does not wish to belong to the mass needs only to cease taking himself easily; let him follow his conscience, which calls to him: 'Be your self! All you are now doing, thinking, desiring, is not you yourself.'

Every youthful soul hears this call day and night and trembles when he hears it; for the idea of its liberation gives it a presentiment of the measure of happiness allotted it from all eternity – a happiness to which it can by no means attain so long as it lies fettered by the chains of fear and convention. And how dismal and senseless life can

be without this liberation! There exists no more repulsive and desolate creature in the world than the man who has evaded his genius and who now looks furtively to left and right, behind him and all about him. In the end such a man becomes impossible to get hold of, since he is wholly exterior, without kernel, a tattered, painted bag of clothes, a decked-out ghost that cannot inspire even fear and certainly not pity. And if it is true to say of the lazy that they kill time, then it is greatly to be feared that an era which sees its salvation in public opinion, that is to say private laziness, is a time that really will be killed: I mean that it will be struck out of the history of the true liberation of life. How reluctant later generations will be to have anything to do with the relics of an era ruled, not by living men, but by pseudo-men dominated by public opinion; for which reason our age may be to some distant posterity the darkest and least known, because least human, portion of human history. I go along the new streets of our cities and think how, of all these gruesome houses which the generation of public opinion has built for itself, not one will be standing in a hundred years' time, and how the opinions of these house-builders will no doubt by then likewise have collapsed. On the other hand, how right it is for those who do not feel themselves to be citizens of this time to harbour great hopes; for if they were citizens of this time they too would be helping to kill their time and so perish with it – while their desire is rather to awaken their time to life and so live on themselves in this awakened life.

But even if the future gave us no cause for hope – the fact of our existing at all in this here-and-now must be the strongest incentive to us to live according to our own laws and standards: the inexplicable fact that we live precisely today, when we had all infinite time in which to come into existence, that we possess only a shortlived today in which to demonstrate why and to what end we came into existence now and at no other time. We are responsible to ourselves for our own existence; consequently we want to be the true helmsman of this existence and refuse to allow our existence to resemble a mindless act of chance. One has to take a somewhat bold and dangerous line with this existence: especially as, whatever happens, we are bound to lose it. Why go on clinging to this clod of earth, this way of life, why pay heed to what your neighbour says? It is so parochial to bind oneself to views which are no longer binding even a couple of hundred miles away. Orient and Occident are chalk-lines drawn before us to fool our timidity. I will make an attempt to attain freedom, the youthful soul says to itself; and is it to be hindered in this by the fact that two nations happen to hate and fight one

another, or that two continents are separated by an ocean, or that all around it a religion is taught which did not yet exist a couple of thousand years ago. All that is not you, it says to itself. No one can construct for you the bridge upon which precisely you must cross the stream of life, no one but you yourself alone. There are, to be sure, countless paths and bridges and demi-gods which would bear you through this stream; but only at the cost of yourself: you would put yourself in pawn and lose yourself. There exists in the world a single path along which no one can go except you: whither does it lead? Do not ask, go along it. Who was it who said: 'a man never rises higher than when he does not know whither his path can still lead him'?*

But how can we find ourselves again? How can man know himself? He is a thing dark and veiled; and if the hare has seven skins, man can slough off seventy times seven and still not be able to say: 'this is really you, this is no longer outer shell'. Moreover, it is a painful and dangerous undertaking thus to tunnel into oneself and to force one's way down into the shaft of one's being by the nearest path. A man who does it can easily so hurt himself that no physician can cure him. And, moreover again, what need should there be for it, since everything bears witness to what we are, our friendships and enmities, our glance and the clasp of our hand, our memory and that which we do not remember, our books and our handwriting. This, however, is the means by which an inquiry into the most important aspect can be initiated. Let the youthful soul look back on life with the question: what have you truly loved up to now, what has drawn your soul aloft, what has mastered it and at the same time blessed it? Set up these revered objects before you and perhaps their nature and their sequence will give you a law, the fundamental law of your own true self. Compare these objects one with another, see how one completes, expands, surpasses, transfigures another, how they constitute a stepladder upon which you have clambered up to yourself as you are now; for your true nature lies, not concealed deep within you, but immeasurably high above you, or at least above that which you usually take yourself to be. Your true educators and formative teachers reveal to you that the true, original meaning and basic stuff of your nature is something completely incapable of being educated or formed and is in any case something difficult of access, bound and paralysed; your educators can be only your liberators.

*Oliver Cromwell, as quoted in Ralph Waldo Emerson's essay 'Circles'. Nietzsche read Emerson's *Essays* in G. Fabricus's German translation (1858), a copy of which he owned and studied with great care.

And that is the secret of all culture: it does not provide artificial limbs, wax noses or spectacles – that which can provide these things is, rather, only sham education. Culture is liberation, the removal of all the weeds, rubble and vermin that want to attack the tender buds of the plant, an outstreaming of light and warmth, the gentle rustling of nocturnal rain, it is imitation and worship of nature where nature is in her motherly and merciful mood, it is the perfecting of nature when it deflects her cruel and merciless assaults and turns them to good, and when it draws a veil over the expressions of nature's step-motherly mood and her sad lack of understanding.

Certainly there may be other means of finding oneself, of coming to oneself out of the bewilderment in which one usually wanders as in a dark cloud, but I know of none better than to think on one's true educators and cultivators. And so today I shall remember one of the teachers and taskmasters of whom I can boast, *Arthur Schopenhauer* – and later on I shall recall others.

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If I am to describe what an event my first glance at Schopenhauer's writings was for me, I must dwell for a moment on an idea which used to come to me in my youth more pressingly, and more frequently, than perhaps any other. When in those days I roved as I pleased through wishes of all kinds, I always believed that at some time fate would take from me the terrible effort and duty of educating myself: I believed that, when the time came, I would discover a philosopher to educate me, a true philosopher whom one could follow without any misgiving because one would have more faith in him than one had in oneself. Then I asked myself: what would be the principles by which he would educate you? – and I reflected on what he might say about the two educational maxims which are being hatched in our time. One of them demands that the educator should quickly recognize the real strength of his pupil and then direct all his efforts and energy and heat at them so as to help that one virtue to attain true maturity and fruitfulness. The other maxim, on the contrary, requires that the educator should draw forth and nourish *all* the forces which exist in his pupil and bring them to a harmonious relationship with one another. But should he who has a decided inclination to be a goldsmith for that reason be forcibly compelled to study music? Is one to agree that Benvenuto Cellini's father was right continually to force him to play the 'dear little horn' – 'that accursed

‘piping’, as his son called it? In the case of such strong and definite talents one would not agree: so could it perhaps be that that maxim advocating a harmonious development should be applied only to more mediocre natures in which, though there may reside a congeries of needs and inclinations, none of them amounts to very much taken individually? But where do we discover a harmonious whole at all, a simultaneous sounding of many voices in one nature, if not in such men as Cellini, men in whom everything, knowledge, desire, love, hate, strives towards a central point, a root force, and where a harmonious system is constructed through the compelling domination of this living centre? And so perhaps these two maxims are not opposites at all? Perhaps the one simply says that man should have a centre and the other that he should also have a periphery? That educating philosopher of whom I dreamed would, I came to think, not only discover the central force, he would also know how to prevent its acting destructively on the other forces: his educational task would, it seemed to me, be to mould the whole man into a living solar and planetary system and to understand its higher laws of motion.

In the meantime I still lacked this philosopher, and I tried this one and that one; I discovered how wretched we modern men appear when compared with the Greeks and Romans even merely in the matter of a serious understanding of the tasks of education. With the need for this in one’s heart one can run through all Germany, especially its universities, and fail to find what one is seeking; for many far simpler and more basic desires are still unfulfilled there. Anyone who seriously wanted to train in Germany as an orator, for example, or intended to enter a school for writers, would find that school nowhere; it seems not to have been realized that speaking and writing are arts which cannot be acquired without the most careful instruction and arduous apprenticeship. Nothing, however, displays the arrogant self-satisfaction of our contemporaries more clearly or shamefully than their half niggardly, half thoughtless undemandingness in regard to teachers and educators. What will not suffice, even among our noblest and best-instructed families, under the name of family tutor; what a collection of antiques and eccentrics is designated a grammar school and not found wanting; what are we not content with for a university – what leaders, what institutions, in comparison with the difficulty of the task of educating a man to be a man! Even the much admired way in which our German men of learning set about their scientific pursuits reveals above all

that they are thinking more of science than they are of mankind, that they have been trained to sacrifice themselves to it like a legion of the lost, so as in turn to draw new generations on to the same sacrifice. If it is not directed and kept within bounds by a higher maxim of education, but on the contrary allowed to run wilder and wilder on the principle 'the more the better', traffic with science is certainly as harmful to men of learning as the economic principle of *laissez faire* is to the morality of whole nations. Who is there that still remembers that the education of the scholar is an extremely difficult problem, if his humanity is not to be sacrificed in the process – and yet this difficulty is plainly obvious when one regards the numerous examples of those who through an unthinking and premature devotion to science have become crookedbacked and humped. But there is an even weightier witness to the absence of all higher education, weightier and more perilous and above all much more common. If it is at once obvious why an orator or a writer cannot now be educated in these arts – because there are no educators for them –; if it is almost as obvious why a scholar must now become distorted and contorted – because he is supposed to be educated by science, that is to say by an inhuman abstraction – then one finally asks oneself: where are we, scholars and unscholarly, high placed and low, to find the moral exemplars and models among our contemporaries, the visible epitome of morality for our time? What has become of any reflection on questions of morality – questions that have at all times engaged every more highly civilized society? There is no longer any model or any reflection of any kind; what we are in fact doing is consuming the moral capital we have inherited from our forefathers, which we are incapable of increasing but know only how to squander; in our society one either remains silent about such things or speaks of them in a way that reveals an utter lack of acquaintance with or experience of them and that can only excite revulsion. Thus it has come about that our schools and teachers simply abstain from an education in morality or make do with mere formalities: and virtue is a word that no longer means anything to our teachers or pupils, an old-fashioned word that makes one smile – and it is worse if one does not smile, for then one is being a hypocrite.

The explanation of this spiritlessness and of why all moral energy is at such a low ebb is difficult and involved; but no one who considers the influence victorious Christianity had on the morality of our ancient world can overlook the reaction of declining Christianity upon our own time. Through the exaltedness of its ideal, Chris-

tianity excelled the moral systems of antiquity and the naturalism that resided in them to such a degree that this naturalism came to excite apathy and disgust; but later on, when these better and higher ideals, though now known, proved unattainable, it was no longer possible to return to what was good and high in antique virtue, however much one might want to. It is in this oscillation between Christianity and antiquity, between an imitated or hypocritical Christianity of morals and an equally despondent and timid revival of antiquity, that modern man lives, and does not live very happily; the fear of what is natural he has inherited and the renewed attraction of this naturalness, the desire for a firm footing somewhere, the impotence of his knowledge that reels back and forth between the good and the better, all this engenders a restlessness, a disorder in the modern soul which condemns it to a joyless unfruitfulness. Never have moral educators been more needed, and never has it seemed less likely they would be found; in the times when physicians are required the most, in times of great plagues, they are also most in peril. For where are the physicians for modern mankind who themselves stand so firmly and soundly on their feet that they are able to support others and lead them by the hand? A certain gloominess and torpor lies upon even the finest personalities of our time, a feeling of ill-humour at the everlasting struggle between dissimulation and honesty which is being fought out within them, a lack of steady confidence in themselves – whereby they become quite incapable of being signposts and at the same time taskmasters for others.

It was thus truly roving through wishes to imagine I might discover a true philosopher as an educator who could raise me above my insufficiencies insofar as these originated in the age and teach me again to be *simple* and *honest* in thought and life, that is to say to be untimely, that word understood in the profoundest sense; for men have now become so complex and many-sided they are bound to become dishonest whenever they speak at all, make assertions and try to act in accordance with them.

It was in this condition of need, distress and desire that I came to know Schopenhauer.

I am one of those readers of Schopenhauer who when they have read one page of him know for certain they will go on to read all the pages and will pay heed to every word he ever said. I trusted him at once and my trust is the same now as it was nine years ago. Though this is a foolish and immodest way of putting it, I understand him as though it were for me he had written. Thus it is that I have never dis-

covered any paradox in him, though here and there a little error; for what are paradoxes but assertions which carry no conviction because their author himself is not really convinced of them and makes them only so as to glitter and seduce and in general cut a figure. Schopenhauer never wants to cut a figure: for he writes for himself and no one wants to be deceived, least of all a philosopher who has made it a rule for himself: deceive no one, not even yourself! Not even with the pleasant sociable deception which almost every conversation entails and which writers imitate almost unconsciously; even less with the conscious deception of the orator and by the artificial means of rhetoric. Schopenhauer, on the contrary, speaks with himself: or, if one feels obliged to imagine an auditor, one should think of a son being instructed by his father. It is an honest, calm, goodnatured discourse before an auditor who listens to it with love. We are lacking such writers. The speaker's powerful sense of well-being embraces us immediately he begins to speak; we feel as we do on entering the high forest, we take a deep breath and acquire that sense of wellbeing ourselves. We feel that here we shall always find a bracing air; here there is a certain inimitable unaffectedness and naturalness such as is possessed by men who are within themselves masters of their own house, and a very rich house at that: in contrast to those writers who surprise themselves most when they for once say something sensible and whose style therefore acquires something restless and unnatural. Schopenhauer's voice reminds us just as little of the scholar whose limbs are naturally stiff and whose chest is narrow and who therefore goes about with awkward embarrassment or a strutting gait; while on the other hand Schopenhauer's rough and somewhat bear-like soul teaches us not so much to feel the absence of the suppleness and courtly charm of good French writers as to disdain it, and no one will discover in him that imitated, as it were silver-plated pseudo-Frenchness in which German writers so much indulge. Schopenhauer's way of expressing himself reminds me here and there a little of Goethe, but otherwise he recalls no German model at all. For he understands how to express the profound with simplicity, the moving without rhetoric, the strictly scientific without pedantry: and from what German could he have learned this? He is also free of the over-subtle, over-supple and – if I may be allowed to say so – not very German style that characterizes Lessing: which is a great merit in him, for Lessing is the most seductive of all German writers of prose. And, to say without more ado the highest thing I can say in regard to his style, I cannot do better than

quote a sentence of his own: 'a philosopher must be very honest not to call poetry or rhetoric to his aid'. That there is something called honesty and that it is even a virtue belongs, I know, in the age of public opinion to the private opinions that are forbidden; and thus I shall not be praising Schopenhauer but only characterizing him if I repeat: he is honest even as a writer; and so few writers are honest that one ought really to mistrust anyone who writes. I know of only one writer whom I would compare with Schopenhauer, indeed set above him, in respect of honesty: Montaigne. That such a man wrote has truly augmented the joy of living on this earth. Since getting to know this freest and mightiest of souls, I at least have come to feel what he felt about Plutarch: 'as soon as I glance at him I grow a leg or a wing.'^{*} If I were set the task, I could endeavour to make myself at home in the world with him.

Schopenhauer has a second quality in common with Montaigne, as well as honesty: a cheerfulness that really cheers. *Aliis laetus, sibi sapiens*.[†] For there are two very different kinds of cheerfulness. The true thinker always cheers and refreshes, whether he is being serious or humorous, expressing his human insight or his divine forbearance; without peevish gesturing, trembling hands, tearfilled eyes, but with certainty and simplicity, courage and strength, perhaps a little harshly and valiantly but in any case as a victor: and this it is – to behold the victorious god with all the monsters he has combated – that cheers one most profoundly. The cheerfulness one sometimes encounters in mediocre writers and bluff and abrupt thinkers, on the other hand, makes us feel miserable when we read it: the effect produced upon me, for example, by David Strauss's cheerfulness. One feels downright ashamed to have such cheerful contemporaries, because they compromise our time and the people in it before posterity. This kind of cheerful thinker simply does not see the sufferings and the monsters he purports to see and combat; and his cheerfulness is vexing because he is deceiving us: he wants to make us believe that a victory has been fought and won. For at bottom there is cheerfulness only where there is a victory; and this applies to the works of true thinkers just as much as it does to any work of art. Let its content be as dreadful and as serious as the problem of life itself: the work will produce a depressing and painful effect only if

^{*} A misunderstanding of Montaigne's assertion: 'Je ne le puis si peu accointer que je n'en tire cuisse ou aile', which Florio translates as: 'He can no sooner come in my sight but I pull some leg or wing from him.'

[†] *Aliis laetus, sibi sapiens*: cheerful for others, wise for himself

the semi-thinker and semi-artist has exhaled over it the vapour of his inadequacy; while nothing better or happier can befall a man than to be in the proximity of one of those victors who, precisely because they have thought most deeply, must love what is most living and, as sages, incline in the end to the beautiful. They speak truly, they do not stammer, and do not chatter about what they have heard; they are active and live truly and not the uncanny masquerade men are accustomed to live: which is why in their proximity we for once feel human and natural and might exclaim with Goethe: 'How glorious and precious a living thing is! how well adapted to the conditions it lives in, how true, how full of being!'^{*}

I am describing nothing but the first, as it were physiological, impression Schopenhauer produced upon me, that magical outpouring of the inner strength of one natural creature on to another that follows the first and most fleeting encounter; and when I subsequently analyse that impression I discover it to be compounded of three elements, the elements of his honesty, his cheerfulness and his steadfastness. He is honest because he speaks and writes to himself and for himself, cheerful because he has conquered the hardest task by thinking, and steadfast because he has to be. His strength rises straight and calmly upwards like a flame when there is no wind, imperturbably, without restless wavering. He finds his way every time before we have so much as noticed that he has been seeking it; as though compelled by a law of gravity he runs on ahead, so firm and agile, so inevitably. And whoever has felt what it means to discover among our tragelaphine men† of today a whole, complete, self-moving, unconstrained and unhampered natural being will understand my joy and amazement when I discovered Schopenhauer: I sensed that in him I had discovered that educator and philosopher I had sought for so long. But I had discovered him only in the form of a book, and that was a great deficiency. So I strove all the harder to see through the book and to imagine the living man whose great testament I had to read and who promised to make his heirs only those who would and could be more than merely his readers: namely his sons and pupils.

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I profit from a philosopher only insofar as he can be an example. That he is capable of drawing whole nations after him through this

^{*}From the *Italienische Reise*, 9 October 1786.

† 'Tragelaphen-Menschheit'. A 'tragelaph' is a 'goat-stag', i.e. a 'horned beast'.

example is beyond doubt; the history of India, which is almost the history of Indian philosophy, proves it. But this example must be supplied by his outward life and not merely in his books – in the way, that is, in which the philosophers of Greece taught, through their bearing, what they wore and ate, and their morals, rather than by what they said, let alone by what they wrote. How completely this courageous visibility of the philosophical life is lacking in Germany! where the body is only just beginning to liberate itself long after the spirit seems to have been liberated; and yet it is only an illusion that a spirit can be free and independent if this achieved unlimitedness – which is at bottom creative self-limitation – is not demonstrated anew from morn till night through every glance and every gesture. Kant clung to his university, submitted himself to its regulations, retained the appearance of religious belief, endured to live among colleagues and students: so it is natural that his example has produced above all university professors and professorial philosophy. Schopenhauer had little patience with the scholarly castes, separated himself from them, strove to be independent of state and society – this is his example, the model he provides – to begin with the most superficial things. But many stages in the liberation of the philosophical life are still unknown among the Germans, though they will not always be able to remain unknown. Our artists are living more boldly and more honestly; and the mightiest example we have before us, that of Richard Wagner, shows how the genius must not fear to enter into the most hostile relationship with the existing forms and order if he wants to bring to light the higher order and truth that dwells within him. ‘Truth’, however, of which our professors speak so much, seems to be a more modest being from which no disorder and nothing extraordinary is to be feared: a self-contented and happy creature which is continually assuring all the powers that be that no one needs to be the least concerned on its account; for it is, after all, only ‘pure science’. Thus what I was trying to say is that the philosopher in Germany has more and more to unlearn how to be ‘pure science’: and it is to precisely that end that Schopenhauer as a human being can serve as an example.

It is, however, nothing less than a miracle that he was able to become this human example: for he was pressed upon, from within and without, by the most tremendous dangers which would have crushed or shattered any weaker being. It seems to me there was a strong probability that Schopenhauer the human being would

perish and at best leave behind 'pure science': but this too only at best; most probably neither human being nor science would remain.

An Englishman recently described the most general danger facing uncommon men who live in a society tied to convention: 'Such alien characters at first become submissive, then melancholic, then ill and finally they die. A Shelley would not have been able to live in England, and a race of Shelleys would have been impossible.'^{*} Our Hölderlin and Kleist, and who knows who else besides, were ruined by their uncommonness and could not endure the climate of so-called German culture; and only natures of iron, such as Beethoven, Goethe, Schopenhauer and Wagner are able to stand firm. But these too exhibit many of the effects of the wearying struggle they have had to engage in: they breathe heavily and their voice can easily become too loud. A practised diplomat who had seen and spoken with Goethe only now and then told his friends: 'Voilà un homme, qui a eu de grands chagrins!' – which Goethe translated as: 'There is another one who has had a hard time of it' and added: 'If the traces of the sufferings we have endured and the deeds we have carried through cannot be expunged from our faces, it is no wonder if everything that remains of us and of our endeavours bears the same impress.' And this is the Goethe whom our cultural philistines point to as the happiest of Germans, so as to demonstrate that it must therefore be possible to be happy among them – with the implication that anyone who feels unhappy and solitary among them has only himself to blame. It is from this proposition that they derive and give practical expression to their cruel dogma that if a person is a solitary it must be because he harbours a secret guilt. Now, poor Schopenhauer had such a secret guilt on his conscience, namely that of valuing his philosophy more than his contemporaries; and he was, moreover, unhappily aware, precisely from the case of Goethe, that if he was to save his philosophy from perishing he had at any cost to defend it against the indifference of his contemporaries; for there exists a species of inquisitorial censorship in which, according to Goethe, the Germans are very skilled; it is called: unbreakable silence. And it had achieved at any rate this much: the greater part of the first edition of his chief work had to be reduced to waste paper. The threatening danger that his great deed would be undone simply through indifference created in him a terrible, barely controllable

^{*}Quoted, possibly from memory for it is not entirely accurate, from Walter Bagehot's *Physics and Politics*. Bagehot refers to New England, not England.

agitation; not a single adherent of any note appeared. It makes us sad to see him hunting for the slightest sign that he was not utterly unknown; and his loud, too loud, triumphing when he did finally acquire readers (*'legor et legar'*)* has something painfully moving in it. All the traits he exhibits that are not those of the great philosopher are those of the suffering human being fearful for the safety of his noblest possessions; thus he is tormented by fear of losing his modest income and then perhaps being unable still to maintain his pure and truly antique attitude towards philosophy; thus he often failed in his many attempts to establish firm and sympathetic friendships and was repeatedly obliged to return with a downcast eye to his faithful dog. He was a total solitary; he had not a single companion truly of his own kind to console him – and between one and none there lies, as always between something and nothing, an infinity. No one who possesses true friends knows what true solitude is, even though he have the whole world around him for his enemies. – Ah, I well understand that you do not know what solitude is. Where there have been powerful societies, governments, religions, public opinions, in short wherever there has been tyranny, there the solitary philosopher has been hated; for philosophy offers an asylum to a man into which no tyranny can force its way, the inward cave, the labyrinth of the heart: and that annoys the tyrants. There the solitaries conceal themselves: but there too lurks their greatest danger. These people who have fled inward for their freedom also have to live outwardly, become visible, let themselves be seen; they are united with mankind through countless ties of blood, residence, education, fatherland, chance, the importunity of others; they are likewise pre-supposed to harbour countless opinions simply because these are the ruling opinions of the time; every gesture which is not clearly a denial counts as agreement; every motion of the hand that does not destroy is interpreted as approval. They know, these solitaries, free in spirit, that they continually seem other than what they think: while they desire nothing but truth and honesty, they are encompassed by a net of misunderstandings; and however vehemently they may desire, they cannot prevent a cloud of false opinions, approximations, half-admissions, indulgent silence, erroneous interpretation from gathering about their actions. Because of this a cloud of melancholy gathers on their brows; for such as these it is more hateful than death itself to be forced to present a semblance to the world;

**legor et legar*: I am read, I shall be read

and their perpetual bitter resentment of this constraint fills them with volcanic menace. From time to time they revenge themselves for their enforced concealment and compelled restraint. They emerge from their cave wearing a terrifying aspect; their words and deeds are then explosions and it is possible for them to perish by their own hand. This was the dangerous way in which Schopenhauer lived. It is precisely such natures as he who want love, who need companions before whom they can venture to be as simple and open as they are before themselves and in whose presence they can cease to suffer the torment of silence and dissimulation. If you remove these companions you create an increasingly dangerous condition; Heinrich von Kleist perished of not being loved, and the most terrible antidote to uncommon men is to drive them so deep into themselves that when they re-emerge it is always as a volcanic eruption. Yet there will always be demi-gods who can endure to live, and live victoriously, under such terrible conditions; and if you want to hear their lonely song, listen to the music of Beethoven.

This was the first danger in whose shadow Schopenhauer grew up: isolation. The second was despair of the truth. This danger attends every thinker who sets out from the Kantian philosophy, provided he is a vigorous and whole man in suffering and desire and not a mere clattering thought- and calculating-machine. Now we all know very well the shameful implications of this presupposition; it seems to me, indeed, that Kant has had a living and life-transforming influence on only a very few men. One can read everywhere, I know, that since this quiet scholar produced his work a revolution has taken place in every domain of the spirit; but I cannot believe it. For I cannot see it in those men who would themselves have to be revolutionized before a revolution could take place in any whole domain whatever. If Kant ever should begin to exercise any wide influence we shall be aware of it in the form of a gnawing and disintegrating scepticism and relativism; and only in the most active and noble spirits who have never been able to exist in a state of doubt would there appear instead that undermining and despair of all truth such as Heinrich von Kleist for example experience as the effect of the Kantian philosophy. 'Not long ago', he writes in his moving way, 'I became acquainted with the Kantian philosophy – and I now have to tell you of a thought I derived from it, which I feel free to do because I have no reason to fear it will shatter you so profoundly and painfully as it has me. – We are unable to decide whether that which we call truth really is truth, or whether it only

appears to us to be. If the latter, then the truth we assemble here is nothing after our death, and all endeavour to acquire a possession which will follow us to the grave is in vain. – If the point of this thought does not penetrate your heart, do not smile at one who feels wounded by it in the deepest and most sacred part of his being. My one great aim has failed me and I have no other.’* When, indeed, will men again feel in this natural Kleistian fashion, when will they again learn to assess the meaning of a philosophy in the ‘most sacred part’ of their being? And yet this must be done if we are to understand what, after Kant, Schopenhauer can be to us – namely the leader who leads us from the depths of sceptical gloom or criticizing renunciation up to the heights of tragic contemplation, to the nocturnal sky and its stars extended endlessly above us, and who was himself the first to take his path. His greatness lies in having set up before him a picture of life as a whole, in order to interpret it as a whole; while even the most astute heads cannot be dissuaded from the error that one can achieve a more perfect interpretation if one minutely investigates the paint with which this picture is produced and the material upon which it is painted; perhaps with the result that one concludes that it is a quite intricately woven canvas with paint upon it which is chemically inexplicable. To understand the picture one must divine the painter – that Schopenhauer knew. Nowadays, however, the whole guild of the sciences is occupied in understanding the canvas and the paint but not the picture; one can say, indeed, that only he who has a clear view of the picture of life and existence as a whole can employ the individual sciences without harm to himself, for without such a regulatory total picture they are threads that nowhere come to an end and only render our life more confused and labyrinthine. Schopenhauer is, as I said, great in that he pursues this picture as Hamlet pursues the ghost, without letting himself be led aside, as scholars are, or becoming enmeshed in abstract scholasticism, as is the fate of rabid dialecticians. The study of quarter-philosophers is enticing only so as to recognize that they make at once for the places in the edifices of great philosophies where scholarly for and against, where brooding, doubting, contradicting are permitted, and that they thereby elude the challenge of every great philosophy, which as a whole always says only: this is the picture of all life, and learn from it the meaning of your own life. And the reverse: only read your own life and comprehend from it

*Letter to Wilhelmine von Zenge, 22 March 1801.

the hieroglyphics of universal life. And this is how Schopenhauer's philosophy should also always be interpreted at first: individually, by the individual only for himself, so as to gain insight into his own want and misery, into his own limitedness, so as then to learn the nature of his antidotes and consolations: namely, sacrifice of the ego, submission to the noblest ends, above all to those of justice and compassion. He teaches us to distinguish between those things that really promote human happiness and those that only appear to do so: how neither riches nor honours nor erudition can lift the individual out of the profound depression he feels at the valuelessness of his existence, and how the striving after these valued things acquires meaning only through an exalted and transfiguring overall goal: to acquire power so as to aid the evolution of the *physis* and to be for a while the corrector of its follies and ineptitudes. At first only for yourself, to be sure; but through yourself in the end for everyone. It is true that this is a striving which by its nature leads towards resignation: for what and how much is amenable to any kind of improvement at all, in the individual or in the generality!

If we apply these words to Schopenhauer, we touch on the third and most characteristic danger in which he lived and which lay concealed in the whole structure and skeleton of his being. Every human being is accustomed to discovering in himself some limitation, of his talent or of his moral will, which fills him with melancholy and longing; and just as his feeling of sinfulness makes him long for the saint in him, so as an intellectual being he harbours a profound desire for the genius in him. This is the root of all true culture; and if I understand by this the longing of man to be *reborn* as saint and genius, I know that one does not have to be a Buddhist to understand this myth. Where we discover talent devoid of that longing, in the world of scholars or that of the so-called cultivated, we are repelled and disgusted by it; for we sense that, with all their intellect, such people do not promote an evolving culture and the procreation of genius – which is the goal of all culture – but hinder it. It is a state of petrification, equivalent in value to that routine, cold and self-laudatory virtuousness which is also farthest, and keeps itself far, from true saintliness. Now, Schopenhauer's nature contained a strange and extremely dangerous dualism. Few thinkers have felt with a comparable intensity and certainty that genius moved within them; and his genius promised him the highest – that there would be no deeper furrow than that which his ploughshare was digging in the ground of modern mankind. Thus he knew half his nature to be satisfied, its

desires stilled, sure of its strength; thus he victoriously fulfilled his calling with greatness and dignity. In the other half there dwelt a burning longing; we comprehend it when we hear that he turned away with a pained expression from the picture of the great founder of *la Trappe*,* Rancé, with the words: 'That is a matter of grace.' For the genius longs more deeply for sainthood because from his watchtower he has seen farther and more clearly than other men, down into the reconciliation of knowledge with being, over into the domain of peace and denial of the will, across to the other coast of which the Indians speak. But precisely here is the miracle: how inconceivably whole and unbreakable must Schopenhauer's nature have been if it could not be destroyed even by this longing and yet was not petrified by it! What that means, each will understand according to what and how much he is: and none of us will ever fully understand it.

The more one reflects on the three dangers just described, the more surprising it becomes that Schopenhauer should have defended himself against them with such vigour and emerged from the battle in such good shape. He bore many scars and open wounds, it is true; and he had acquired a disposition that may perhaps seem a little too astringent and sometimes also too pugnacious. But even the greatest of men cannot attain to his own ideal. That Schopenhauer can offer us a model is certain, all these scars and blemishes notwithstanding. One might say, indeed, that that in his nature which was imperfect and all too human brings us closer to him in a human sense, for it lets us see him as a fellow sufferer and not only in the remote heights of a genius.

Those three constitutional dangers that threatened Schopenhauer threaten us all. Each of us bears a productive uniqueness within him as the core of his being; and when he becomes aware of it, there appears around him a strange penumbra which is the mark of his singularity. Most find this something unendurable, because they are, as aforesaid, lazy, and because a chain of toil and burdens is suspended from this uniqueness. There can be no doubt that, for the singular man who encumbers himself with this chain, life withholds almost everything – cheerfulness, security, ease, honour – that he desired of it in his youth; solitude is the gift his fellow men present to him; let him live where he will, he will always find there the desert and the cave. Let him see to it that he does not become subjugated,

**la Trappe*: monastery from which the Trappist order takes its name.

that he does not become depressed and melancholic. And to that end let him surround himself with pictures of good and brave fighters, such as Schopenhauer was. But the second danger which threatened Schopenhauer is not altogether rare, either. Here and there a man is equipped by nature with mental acuteness, his thoughts like to do the dialectical double-step; how easy it is, if he carelessly lets go the reins of his talent, for him to perish as a human being and to lead a ghostly life in almost nothing but 'pure science'; or, grown accustomed to seeking the for and against in all things, for him to lose sight of truth altogether and then be obliged to live without courage or trust, in denial and doubt, agitated and discontented, half hopeful, expecting to be disappointed: 'No dog would go on living like this!'^{*} The third danger is that of petrification, in the moral or the intellectual sphere; a man severs the bonds that tied him to his ideal; he ceases to be fruitful, to propagate himself, in this or that domain; in a cultural sense he becomes feeble or useless. The uniqueness of his being has become an indivisible, uncommunicating atom, an icy rock. And thus one can be reduced to ruin by this uniqueness just as well as by the fear of it, by oneself as well as by surrender of oneself, by longing as well as by petrification: and to live at all means to live in danger.

Besides these constitutional dangers to which Schopenhauer would have been exposed in whatever century he had lived, there are also dangers which arose from his *age*; and this distinction between constitutional dangers and those proceeding from the age he lived in is essential for an understanding of what is exemplary and educative in Schopenhauer's nature. Let us think of the philosopher's eye resting upon existence: he wants to determine its value anew. For it has been the proper task of all great thinkers to be lawgivers as to the measure, stamp and weight of things. How it must obstruct him if the mankind most immediate to him is a feeble and worm-eaten fruit! How much allowance he has to make for the valuelessness of his time if he is to be just to existence as a whole! If occupation with the history of past or foreign nations is of any value, it is of most value to the philosopher who wants to arrive at a just verdict on the whole fate of man – not, that is, only on the average fate but above all on the highest fate that can befall individual men or entire nations. But everything contemporary is importunate; it affects and directs the eye even when the philosopher does not want it to; and in the total

^{*} Quoted from Goethe's *Faust*, Part I Scene 1.

accounting it will involuntarily be appraised too high. That is why, when he compares his own age with other ages, the philosopher must deliberately under-assess it and, by overcoming the present in himself, also overcome it in the picture he gives of life, that is to say render it unremarkable and as it were paint it over. This is a difficult, indeed hardly achievable task. The verdict of the philosophers of ancient Greece on the value of existence says so much more than a modern verdict does because they had life itself before and around them in luxuriant perfection and because, unlike us, their minds were not confused by the discord between the desire for freedom, beauty, abundance of life on the one hand and on the other the drive to truth, which asks only: what is existence worth as such? It will always be worth knowing what Empedocles, living as he did in the midst of the most vigorous and exuberant vitality of Greek culture, had to say about existence; his verdict possesses great weight, especially as it is not contradicted by a counter-verdict from any other great philosopher of the same great era. He speaks the most clearly, but essentially – that is if we listen carefully – they are all saying the same thing. A modern thinker will, to repeat, always suffer from an unfulfilled desire: he will want first to be shown life again, true, red-blooded, healthy life, so that he may then pronounce his judgment on it. To himself at least he will regard it as necessary that he should be a living human being if he is to believe he can be a just judge. This is the reason it is precisely the more modern philosophers who are among the mightiest promoters of life, of the will to live, and why from out of their own exhausted age they long for a culture, for a transfigured physis. But this longing also constitutes their *danger*: there is a struggle within them between the reformer of life and the philosopher, that is to say the judge of life. Wherever the victory may incline, it is a victory that will involve a loss. And how, then, did Schopenhauer elude this danger too?

If it is commonly accepted that the great man is the genuine child of his age, if he in any event suffers from the deficiencies of his age more acutely than do smaller men, then a struggle by such a great man *against* his age seems to be only a senseless and destructive attack on himself. But only seems so; for he is contending against those aspects of his age that prevent him from being great, which means, in his case, being free and entirely himself. From which it follows that his hostility is at bottom directed against that which, though he finds it in himself, is not truly himself: against the indecent compounding and confusing of things eternally incompat-

ible, against the soldering of time-bound things on to his own untimeliness; and in the end the supposed child of his time proves to be only its stepchild. Thus Schopenhauer strove from his early youth against that false, idle and unworthy mother, his age, and by as it were expelling her from him, he healed and purified his being and rediscovered himself in the health and purity native to him. That is why Schopenhauer's writings can be used as a mirror of his age; and it is certainly not due to a fault in the mirror if everything time-bound in his age appears as a disfiguring illness, as thin and pale, as enervated and hollow eyed, as the recognizable sufferings of his stepchildhood. The longing for a stronger nature, for a healthier and simpler humanity, was in his case a longing for himself; and when he had conquered his age in himself he beheld with astonished eyes the genius in himself. The secret of his being was now revealed to him, the intention of his stepmother age to conceal his genius from him was frustrated, the realm of transfigured *physis* was disclosed. When he now turned his fearless eye upon the question: 'What is life worth as such?' – it was no longer a confused and pallid age and its hypocritical, uncertain life upon which he had to pass judgment. He knew well that there is something higher and purer to be found and attained on this earth than the life of his own time, and that he who knows existence only in this ugly shape, and assesses it accordingly, does it a grave injustice. No, genius itself is now summoned, so that one may hear whether genius, the highest fruit of life, can perhaps justify life as such; the glorious, creative human being is now to answer the question: 'Do you affirm this existence in the depths of your heart? Is it sufficient for you? Would you be its advocate, its redeemer? For you have only to pronounce a single heartfelt Yes! – and life, though it faces such heavy accusations, shall go free.' – What answer will he give? – The answer of Empedocles.

4

This last remark may be allowed to remain incomprehensible for the moment: for I have now to deal with something extremely comprehensible, namely to explain how through Schopenhauer we are all *able* to educate ourselves *against* our age – because through him we possess the advantage of really *knowing* this age. Supposing, that is, that it *is* an advantage! In any event, it may no longer be possible a couple of centuries hence. I find it amusing to reflect on the idea that mankind may sometime soon grow tired of reading and that writers

will do so too, that the scholar will one day direct in his last will and testament that his corpse shall be buried surrounded by his books and especially by his own writings. And if it is true that the forests are going to get thinner and thinner, may the time not come one day when the libraries should be used for timber, straw and brushwood? Since most books are born out of smoke and vapour of the brain, they ought to return to smoke and vapour. And if they have no fire of their own in them, fire should punish them for it. It is thus possible that a later century will regard our era as a *saeculum obscurum*,* because its productions have been used most abundantly for heating the stoves. How fortunate we are, therefore, that we are still able to know this age. For if concerning oneself with one's own age makes any sense at all, then it is a good thing to concern oneself with it as thoroughly as possible, so as to leave absolutely no doubt as to its nature: and it is precisely this that Schopenhauer enables us to do.

Of course, it would be a hundred times better if this investigation should reveal that nothing so proud and full of hope as our own age has ever before existed. And there are indeed at this moment naive people in this and that corner of the earth, in Germany for instance, who are prepared to believe such a thing, and even go so far as to assert in all seriousness that the world was put to rights a couple of years ago† and that those who persist in harbouring dark misgivings about the nature of existence are refuted by the 'facts'. The chief fact is that the founding of the new German Reich is a decisive and annihilating blow to all 'pessimistic' philosophizing – that is supposed to be firm and certain. – Whoever is seeking to answer the question of what the philosopher as educator can mean in our time has to contest this view, which is very widespread and is propagated especially in our universities; he must declare: it is a downright scandal that such nauseating, idolatrous flattery can be rendered to our time by supposedly thinking and honourable men – a proof that one no longer has the slightest notion how different the seriousness of philosophy is from the seriousness of a newspaper. Such men have lost the last remnant not only of a philosophical but also of a religious mode of thinking, and in their place have acquired not even optimism but journalism, the spirit and spiritlessness of our day and our daily papers. Every philosophy which believes that the problem of existence is touched on, not to say solved, by a political

**Saeculum obscurum*: dark age

†i.e. with the founding of the Reich in 1871.

event is a joke- and pseudo-philosophy. Many states have been founded since the world began; that is an old story. How should a political innovation suffice to turn men once and for all into contented inhabitants of the earth? But if anyone really does believe in this possibility he ought to come forward, for he truly deserves to become a professor of philosophy at a German university, like Harms in Berlin; Jürgen Meyer in Bonn and Carrière in Munich.

Here, however, we are experiencing the consequences of the doctrine, lately preached from all the rooftops, that the state is the highest goal of mankind and that a man has no higher duty than to serve the state: in which doctrine I recognize a relapse not into paganism but into stupidity. It may be that a man who sees his highest duty in serving the state really knows no higher duties; but there are men and duties existing beyond this – and one of the duties that seems, at least to me, to be higher than serving the state demands that one destroys stupidity in every form, and therefore in this form too. That is why I am concerned here with a species of man whose teleology extends somewhat beyond the welfare of a state, with philosophers, and with these only in relation to a world which is again fairly independent of the welfare of a state, that of culture. Of the many rings which, interlocked together, make up the human community, some are of gold and others of pinchbeck.

Now, how does the philosopher view the culture of our time? Very differently, to be sure, from how it is viewed by those professors of philosophy who are so well contented with their new state. When he thinks of the haste and hurry now universal, of the increasing velocity of life, of the cessation of all contemplativeness and simplicity, he almost thinks that what he is seeing are the symptoms of a total extermination and uprooting of culture. The waters of religion are ebbing away and leaving behind swamps or stagnant pools; the nations are again drawing away from one another in the most hostile fashion and long to tear one another to pieces. The sciences, pursued without any restraint and in a spirit of the blindest *laissez faire*, are shattering and dissolving all firmly held belief; the educated classes and states are being swept along by a hugely contemptible money economy. The world has never been more worldly, never poorer in love and goodness. The educated classes are no longer lighthouses or refuges in the midst of this turmoil of secularization; they themselves grow daily more restless, thoughtless and loveless. Everything, contemporary art and science included, serves the coming barbarism. The cultured man has degenerated to the greatest enemy

of culture, for he wants lyingly to deny the existence of the universal sickness and thus obstructs the physicians. They become incensed, these poor wretches, whenever one speaks of their weakness and resists their pernicious lying spirit. They would dearly like to make us believe that of all the centuries theirs has borne the prize away, and they shake with artificial merriment. Their way of hypocritically simulating happiness sometimes has something touching about it, because their happiness is something so completely incomprehensible. One does not even feel like asking them what Tannhäuser asked Biterolf: 'What then, poor man, have you enjoyed?''* For ah! we ourselves know better and know otherwise. A winter's day lies upon us, and we dwell in high mountains, dangerously and in poverty. Every joy is brief, and every ray of sunlight is pale that creeps down to us on our white mountain. Music sounds, an old man turns a barrel-organ, the dancers revolve – the wanderer is deeply moved when he sees it: all is so wild, so taciturn, so colourless, so hopeless, and now there sounds within it a note of joy, of sheer, unreflecting joy! But already the mists of early evening are creeping in, the note dies away, the wanderer's step grates on the ground; for as far as he can still see, he sees nothing but the cruel and desolate face of nature.

If it may be one-sided to emphasize only the weakness of the outlines and the dullness of the colours in the picture of modern life, the other side of the picture is in no way more gratifying but only more disturbing. There are certainly forces there, tremendous forces, but savage, primal and wholly merciless. One gazes upon them with a fearful expectation, as though gazing into the cauldron of a witch's kitchen: at any moment sparks and flashes may herald dreadful apparitions. For a century we have been preparing for absolutely fundamental convulsions; and if there have recently been attempts to oppose this deepest of modern inclinations, to collapse or to explode, with the constitutive power of the so-called nation state, the latter too will for a long time serve only to augment the universal insecurity and atmosphere of menace. That individuals behave as though they knew nothing of all these anxieties does not mislead us: their restlessness reveals how well they know of them; they think with a precipitancy and with an exclusive preoccupation with themselves never before encountered in man, they build and plant for their own day alone, and the pursuit of happiness is never greater than when it

*In Wagner's *Tannhäuser*, Act II.

has to be caught today or tomorrow: because perhaps by the day after tomorrow there will be no more hunting at all. We live in the age of atoms, of atomistic chaos. In the Middle Ages the hostile forces were held together by the church and, through the strong pressure it exerted, to some extent assimilated with one another. When the bond broke, the pressure relaxed, they rebelled against one another. The Reformation declared many things to be *adiaphora*, domains where religion was not to hold sway; this was the price at which it purchased its existence: just as Christianity had already had to pay a similar price in face of the much more religiously inclined world of antiquity. From there on the division spread wider and wider. Nowadays the crudest and most evil forces, the egoism of the money-makers and the military despots, hold sway over almost everything on earth. In the hands of these despots and money-makers, the state certainly makes an attempt to organize everything anew out of itself and to bind and constrain all those mutually hostile forces: that is to say, it wants men to render it the same idolatry they formerly rendered the church. With what success? We have still to learn; we are, in any case, even now still in the ice-filled stream of the Middle Ages; it has thawed and is rushing on with devastating power. Ice-floe piles on ice-floe, all the banks have been inundated and are in danger of collapse. The revolution is absolutely unavoidable, and it will be the atomistic revolution: but what are the smallest indivisible basic constituents of human society?

It is incontestable that the spirit of humanity is almost in greater danger during the approach of such eras than it is when they and the chaotic turmoil they bring with them have actually arrived: the anxiety of waiting and the greedy exploitation of every minute brings forth all the cowardice and the self-seeking drives of the soul, while the actual emergency, and especially a great universal emergency, usually improves men and makes them more warm-hearted. Who is there then, amid these dangers of our era, to guard and champion *humanity*, the inviolable sacred treasure gradually accumulated by the most various races? Who will set up the *image of man* when all men feel in themselves only the self-seeking worm and curish fear and have thus declined from that image to the level of the animals or even of automata?

There are three images of man which our modern age has set up one after the other and which will no doubt long inspire mortals to a transfiguration of their own lives: they are the man of Rousseau, the man of Goethe and finally the man of Schopenhauer. Of these, the

first image possesses the greatest fire and is sure of producing the greatest popular effect; the second is intended only for the few, for contemplative natures in the grand style, and is misunderstood by the crowd. The third demands contemplation only by the most active men; only they can regard it without harm to themselves, for it debilitates the contemplative and frightens away the crowd. From the first there has proceeded a force which has promoted violent revolutions and continues to do so; for in every socialist earthquake and upheaval it has always been the man of Rousseau who, like Typhon under Etna, is the cause of the commotion. Oppressed and half crushed by arrogant upper classes and merciless wealth, ruined by priests and bad education and rendered contemptible to himself by ludicrous customs, man cries in his distress to 'holy nature' and suddenly feels that it is as distant from him as any Epicurean god. His prayers do not reach it, so deeply is he sunk in the chaos of unnaturalness. Scornfully he throws from him all the gaudy finery which only a short time before had seemed to him to constitute his essential humanity, his arts and sciences, the advantages of a refined life; he beats with his fists against the walls in whose shadow he has so degenerated, and demands light, sun, forest and mountain. And when he cries: 'Only nature is good, only the natural is human,' he despises himself and longs to go beyond himself: a mood in which the soul is ready for fearful decisions but which also calls up from its depths what is noblest and rarest in it.

The man of Goethe is no such threatening power, indeed in a certain sense he is the corrective and sedative for precisely those dangerous excitations of which the man of Rousseau is the victim. In his youth Goethe was himself a devotee of the gospel of nature with his whole loving heart; his Faust was the highest and boldest reproduction of the man of Rousseau, at any rate so far as concerns his ravenous hunger for life, his discontent and longing, his traffic with the demons of the heart. But then see what eventuates from this great bank of clouds – certainly not lightning! And it is in precisely this that there is revealed the new image of man, Goethean man. One would think that Faust would be led through a life everywhere afflicted and oppressed as an insatiable rebel and liberator, as the power that denies out of goodness, as the actual religious and demonic genius of subversion, in contrast to his altogether undemonic companion, though he cannot get rid of this companion and has to employ and at the same time despise his sceptical malice and denial – as is the tragic fate of every rebel and liberator. But one is mistaken if one expects

anything of that kind; the man of Goethe here turns away from the man of Rousseau; for he hates all violence, all sudden transition – but that means: all action; and thus the world-liberator becomes as it were only a world-traveller. All the realms of life and nature, all the past, all the arts, mythologies and sciences, see the insatiable spectator fly past them, the deepest desires are aroused and satisfied, even Helen does not detain him for very long – and then there must come the moment for which his mocking companion is lying in wait. At some suitable spot on earth his flight comes to an end, his wings fall off, Mephistopheles is at hand. When the German ceases to be Faust there is no greater danger than that he will become a philistine and go to the Devil – heavenly powers alone can save him from it. The man of Goethe is, as I have said, the contemplative man in the grand style, who can avoid languishing away on earth only by bringing together for his nourishment everything great and memorable that has ever existed or still exists and thus lives, even though his life may be a living from one desire to the next; he is not the man of action: on the contrary, if he does ever become a member of any part of the existing order established by the men of action one can be sure that no good will come of it – Goethe's own enthusiastic participation in the world of the theatre is a case in point – and, above all, that no 'order' will be overthrown. The Goethean man is a preservative and conciliatory power – but with the danger, already mentioned, that he may degenerate to a philistine, just as the man of Rousseau can easily become a Catilinst. If the former had a little more muscle-power and natural wildness, all his virtues would be greater. Goethe seems to have realized where the danger and weakness of his type of man lay, and he indicates it in the words of Jarno to Wilhelm Meister: 'You are vexed and bitter, that is very good; if only you would get really angry for once it would be even better.'*

Thus, to speak frankly: it is necessary for us to get really angry for once in order that things shall get better. And to encourage us to that we have the Schopenhauerean image of man. *The Schopenhauerean man voluntarily takes upon himself the suffering involved in being truthful*, and this suffering serves to destroy his own wilfulness and to prepare that complete overturning and conversion of his being, which it is the real meaning of life to lead up to. This utterance of truth seems to other men a discharge of malice, for they regard the conservation of their inadequacies and humbug as a human duty and think that any-

* In *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1795–6), Book 8.

one who disrupts their child's play in this way must be wicked. They are tempted to cry to such a man what Faust said to Mephistopheles: 'So to the eternal active and creative power you oppose the cold hand of the Devil';* and he who would live according to Schopenhauer would probably seem more like a Mephistopheles than a Faust – seem, that is, to purblind modern eyes, which always see in denial the mark of evil. But there is a kind of denying and destroying that is the discharge of that mighty longing for sanctification and salvation and as the first philosophical teacher of which Schopenhauer came among us desanctified and truly secularized men. All that exists that can be denied deserves to be denied; and being truthful means: to believe in an existence that can in no way be denied and which is itself true and without falsehood. That is why the truthful man feels that the meaning of his activity is metaphysical, explicable through the laws of another and higher life, and in the profoundest sense affirmative: however much all that he does may appear to be destructive of the laws of this life and a crime against them. So it is that all his acts must become an uninterrupted suffering; but he knows what Meister Eckhart also knows: 'The beast that bears you fastest to perfection is suffering.' I would think that anyone who set such a life's course before his soul must feel his heart open and a fierce desire arise within him to be such a Schopenhauerean man: that is to say, strangely composed about himself and his own welfare, in his knowledge full of blazing, consuming fire and far removed from the cold and contemptible neutrality of the so-called scientific man, exalted high above all sullen and ill-humoured reflection, always offering himself as the first sacrifice to perceived truth and permeated with the awareness of what sufferings must spring from his truthfulness. He will, to be sure, destroy his earthly happiness through his courage; he will have to be an enemy to those he loves and to the institutions which have produced him; he may not spare men or things, even though he suffers when they suffer; he will be misunderstood and for long thought an ally of powers he abhors; however much he may strive after justice he is bound, according to the human limitations of his insight, to be unjust: but he may console himself with the words once employed by his great teacher, Schopenhauer: 'A happy life is impossible: the highest that man can attain to is a *heroic one*. He leads it who, in whatever shape or form, struggles against great difficulties for something that is to the benefit

*In *Faust*, Part I Scene 3.

of all and in the end is victorious, but who is ill-rewarded for it or not rewarded at all. Then, when he has done, he is turned to stone, like the prince in Gozzi's *Re corvo*, but stands in a noble posture and with generous gestures. He is remembered and is celebrated as a hero; his will, mortified a whole life long by effort and labour, ill success and the world's ingratitude, is extinguished in Nirvana.* Such a heroic life, to be sure, together with the mortification accomplished in it, corresponds least of all to the paltry conception of those who make the most noise about it, celebrate festivals to the memory of great men, and believe that great men are great in the same way as they are little, as it were through a gift and for their own satisfaction or by a mechanical operation and in blind obedience to this inner compulsion: so that he who has not received this gift, or does not feel this compulsion, has the same right to be little as the other has to be great. But being gifted or being compelled are contemptible words designed to enable one to ignore an inner admonition, slanders on him who has paid heed to this admonition, that is to say on the great man; he least of all lets himself be given gifts or be compelled – he knows as well as any little man how to take life easily and how soft the bed is on which he could lie down if his attitude towards himself and his fellow men were that of the majority: for the objective of all human arrangements is through distracting one's thoughts to cease *to be aware* of life. Why does he desire the opposite – to be aware precisely of life, that is to say to suffer from life – so strongly? Because he realizes that he is in danger of being cheated out of himself, and that a kind of agreement exists to kidnap him out of his own cave. Then he bestirs himself, pricks up his ears, and resolves: 'I will remain my own!' It is a dreadful resolve; only gradually does he grasp that fact. For now he will have to descend into the depths of existence with a string of curious questions on his lips: why do I live? what lesson have I to learn from life? how have I become what I am and why do I suffer from being what I am? He torments himself, and sees how no one else does as he does, but how the hands of his fellow men are, rather, passionately stretched out to the fantastic events portrayed in the theatre of politics, or how they strut about in a hundred masquerades, as youths, men, greybeards, fathers, citizens, priests, officials, merchants, mindful solely of their collective comedy and

*From Schopenhauer's *Parerga und Paralipomena*: 'Nachträge zur Lehre von der Bejahung und Verneinung des Willens zum Leben'.

not at all of themselves. To the question: 'To what end do you live?' they would all quickly reply with pride: '*To become* a good citizen, or scholar, or statesman' – and yet they *are* something that can never become something else, and why are they precisely this? And not, alas, something better? He who regards his life as no more than a point in the evolution of a race or of a state or of a science, and thus regards himself as belonging wholly to the history of becoming, has not understood the lesson set him by existence and will have to learn it over again. This eternal becoming is a lying puppet-play in beholding which man forgets himself, the actual distraction which disperses the individual to the four winds, the endless stupid game which the great child, time, plays before us and with us. That heroism of truthfulness consists in one day ceasing to be the toy it plays with. In becoming, everything is hollow, deceptive, shallow and worthy of our contempt; the enigma which man is to resolve he can resolve only in being, in being thus and not otherwise, in the imperishable. Now he starts to test how deeply he is entwined with becoming, how deeply with being – a tremendous task rises before his soul: to destroy all that is becoming, to bring to light all that is false in things. He too wants to know everything, but not, in the way the Goethean man does, for the sake of a noble pliability, to preserve himself and to take delight in the multiplicity of things; he himself is his first sacrifice to himself. The heroic human being despises his happiness and his unhappiness, his virtues and vices, and in general the measuring of things by the standard of himself; he hopes for nothing more from himself and in all things he wants to see down to this depth of hopelessness. His strength lies in forgetting himself; and if he does think of himself he measures the distance between himself and his lofty goal and seems to see behind and beneath him only an insignificant heap of dross. The thinkers of old sought happiness and truth with all their might – and what has to be sought shall never be found, says nature's evil principle. But for him who seeks untruth in everything and voluntarily allies himself with unhappiness a miracle of disappointment of a different sort has perhaps been prepared: something inexpressible of which happiness and truth are only idolatrous counterfeits approaches him, the earth loses its gravity, the events and powers of the earth become dreamlike, transfiguration spreads itself about him as on summer evenings. To him who sees these things it is as though he were just beginning to awaken and what is playing about him is only the clouds of a vanishing dream. These too will at some time be wafted away: then it will be day. –

But I have undertaken to exhibit my experience of Schopenhauer as an *educator*, and it is thus not nearly sufficient for me to paint, and to paint imperfectly, that ideal man who, as his Platonic ideal as it were, holds sway in and around him. The hardest task still remains: to say how a new circle of duties may be derived from this ideal and how one can proceed towards so extravagant a goal through a practical activity – in short, to demonstrate that this ideal *educates*. One might otherwise think it nothing but an intoxicating vision granted us only for moments at a time, and then leaving us all the more painfully in the lurch and prey to an even deeper dissatisfaction. It is also indisputable that that is how we *begin* our association with this ideal – with a sudden contrast of light and darkness, intoxication and nausea – and that this is a repetition of an experience which is as old as ideals themselves. But we ought not to stand long in the doorway, we ought soon to get through the beginning. And so we have seriously to ask the definite question: is it possible to bring that incredibly lofty goal so close to us that it educates us while it draws us aloft? – that Goethe's mighty words may not be fulfilled in us: 'Man is born to a limited situation; he is able to understand simple, accessible, definite goals, and he accustoms himself to employing the means that happen to lie close at hand; but as soon as he oversteps his limits he knows neither what he wants nor what he ought to do, and it is all one whether he is distracted by the multiplicity of the things he encounters or whether his head is turned by their loftiness and dignity. It is always a misfortune when he is induced to strive after something which he cannot proceed towards through self-initiated and regulated activity.'^{*} The Schopenhauerean man appears to be singularly open to this objection: his dignity and loftiness can only turn our heads and thereby exclude us from any participation in the world of action; coherent duties, the even flow of life are gone. One man perhaps at last accustoms himself to living discontentedly according to two different rules of conduct, that is to say in conflict with himself, uncertain of how to act and therefore daily more feeble and unfruitful: while another may even renounce all action on principle and almost cease to pay any attention to the actions of others. The dangers are always great when things are made too difficult for a man and when he is in-

^{*}From *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, Book 6, 'Confession of a Beautiful Soul'.

capable of *fulfilling* any duties at all; stronger natures can be destroyed by it, the weaker, more numerous natures decline into a reflective laziness and in the end forfeit through laziness even their ability to reflect.

Now, in face of such objections I am willing to concede that in precisely this respect our work has hardly begun and that from my own experience I am sure of only one thing: that from that ideal image it is possible to fasten upon ourselves a chain of fulfillable duties, and that some of us already feel the weight of this chain. But before I can conscientiously reduce this new circle of duties to a formula I must offer the following preliminary observations.

More profoundly feeling people have at all times felt sympathy for the animals because they suffer from life and yet do not possess the power to turn the thorn of suffering against itself and to understand their existence metaphysically; one is, indeed, profoundly indignant at the sight of senseless suffering. That is why there has arisen in more than one part of the earth the supposition that the bodies of animals contain the guilt-laden souls of men, so that this suffering which at first sight arouses indignation on account of its senselessness acquires meaning and significance as punishment and atonement before the seat of eternal justice. And it is, truly, a harsh punishment thus to live as an animal, beset by hunger and desire yet incapable of any kind of reflection on the nature of this life; and no harder fate can be thought of than that of the beast of prey pursued through the wilderness by the most gnawing torment, rarely satisfied and even then in such a way that satisfaction is purchased only with the pain of lacerating combat with other animals or through inordinate greed and nauseating satiety. To hang on to life madly and blindly, with no higher aim than to hang on to it; not to know that or why one is being so heavily punished but, with the stupidity of a fearful desire, to thirst after precisely this punishment as though after happiness – that is what it means to be an animal; and if all nature presses towards man, it thereby intimates that man is necessary for the redemption of nature from the curse of the life of the animal, and that in him existence at last holds up before itself a mirror in which life appears no longer senseless but in its metaphysical significance. Yet let us reflect: where does the animal cease, where does man begin? – man, who is nature's sole concern! As long as anyone desires life as he desires happiness he has not yet raised his eyes above the horizon of the animal, for he only desires more consciously what the animal seeks through blind impulse. But that is

what we all do for the greater part of our lives: usually we fail to emerge out of animality, we ourselves are the animals whose suffering seems to be senseless.

But there are moments *when we realize this*: then the clouds are rent asunder, and we see that, in common with all nature, we are pressing towards man as towards something that stands high above us. In this sudden illumination we gaze around us and behind us with a shudder: we behold the more subtle beasts of prey and there we are in the midst of them. The tremendous coming and going of men on the great wilderness of the earth, their founding of cities and states, their wars, their restless assembling and scattering again, their confused mingling, mutual imitation, mutual outwitting and downtreading, their wailing in distress, their howls of joy in victory – all this is a continuation of animality: as though man was to be deliberately retrogressed and defrauded of his metaphysical disposition, indeed as though nature, after having desired and worked at man for so long, now drew back from him in fear and preferred to return to the unconsciousness of instinct. Nature needs knowledge and it is terrified of the knowledge it has need of; and so the flame flickers restlessly back and forth as though afraid of itself and seizes upon a thousand things before it seizes upon that on account of which nature needs knowledge at all. In individual moments we all know how the most elaborate arrangements of our life are made only so as to flee from the tasks we actually ought to be performing, how we would like to hide our head somewhere as though our hundred-eyed conscience could not find us out there, how we hasten to give our heart to the state, to money-making, to sociability or science merely so as no longer to possess it ourselves, how we labour at our daily work more ardently and thoughtlessly than is necessary to sustain our life because to us it is even more necessary not to have leisure to stop and think. Haste is universal because everyone is in flight from himself; universal too is the shy concealment of this haste because everyone wants to seem content and would like to deceive more sharp-eyed observers as to the wretchedness he feels; and also universal is the need for new tinkling word-bells to hang upon life and so bestow upon it an air of noisy festivity. Everyone is familiar with the strange condition in which unpleasant memories suddenly assert themselves and we then make great efforts, through vehement noise and gestures, to banish them from our minds: but the noise and gestures which are going on everywhere reveal that we are all in such a condition all the time, that we live in fear of memory and of

turning inward. But what is it that assails us so frequently, what is the gnat that will not let us sleep? There are spirits all around us, every moment of our life wants to say something to us, but we refuse to listen to these spirit-voices. We are afraid that when we are alone and quiet something will be whispered into our ear, and so we hate quietness and deafen ourselves with sociability.

Now and again, as already said, we realize all this, and are amazed at all this vertiginous fear and haste and at the whole dreamlike condition in which we live, which seems to have a horror of awakening and dreams the more vividly and restlessly the closer it is to this awakening. But we feel at the same time that we are too weak to endure those moments of profoundest contemplation for very long and that we are not the mankind towards which all nature presses for its redemption: it is already much that we should raise our head above the water at all, even if only a little, and observe what stream it is in which we are so deeply immersed. And even this momentary emerging and awakening is not achieved through our own power, we have to be lifted up – and who are they who lift us?

They are those true *men*, *those who are no longer animal*, the philosophers, artists and saints; nature, which never makes a leap, has made its one leap in creating them, and a leap of joy moreover, for nature then feels that for the first time it has reached its goal – where it realizes it has to unlearn having goals and that it has played the game of life and becoming with too high stakes. This knowledge transfigures nature, and a gentle evening-weariness, that which men call ‘beauty’, reposes upon its face. That which it now utters with this transfigured countenance is the great *enlightenment* as to the character of existence; and the supreme wish that mortals can wish is lastingly and with open ears to participate in this enlightenment. If we think of how much Schopenhauer for instance must have *heard* during the course of his life, then we might well say to ourselves afterwards: ‘Alas, your deaf ears, your dull head, your flickering understanding, your shrivelled heart, all that I call mine, how I despise you! Not to be able to fly, only to flutter! To see what is above you but not to be able to reach it! To know the way that leads to the immeasurable open prospect of the philosopher, and almost to set foot on it, but after a few steps to stagger back! And if that greatest of all wishes were fulfilled for only a day, how gladly one would exchange for it all the rest of life! To climb as high into the pure icy Alpine air as a philosopher ever climbed, up to where all the mist and obscurity cease and where the fundamental constitution of things speaks in a voice rough and

rigid but ineluctably comprehensible! Merely to think of this makes the soul infinitely solitary; if its wish were fulfilled, however, if its glance once fell upon things straight and bright as a beam of light, if shame, fear and desire died away – what word could then describe the condition it would be in, that new and enigmatic animation without agitation with which it would, like the soul of Schopenhauer, lie extended over the tremendous hieroglyphics of existence, over the petrified doctrine of becoming, not as the darkness of night but as the glowing light of dawn streaming out over all the world. And what a fate, on the other hand, to sense sufficient of the certainty and happiness of the philosopher to be able to feel the whole uncertainty and unhappiness of the non-philosopher, of him who desires without hope! To know oneself a fruit on the tree which can never become ripe because one is too much in the shadow, and at the same time to see close at hand the sunshine that one lacks!

There is enough torment here to make a man who is mis-talented in such a way malicious and envious, if he is capable of malice and envy at all; probably, however, he will at last turn his soul in another direction so that it shall not consume itself in vain longing – and now he will *discover* a new circle of duties.

Here I have arrived at an answer to the question whether it is possible to pursue the great ideal of the Schopenhauerean man by means of a practical activity. One thing above all is certain: these new duties are not the duties of a solitary; on the contrary, they set one in the midst of a mighty community held together, not by external forms and regulations, but by a fundamental idea. It is the fundamental idea of *culture*, insofar as it sets for each one of us but one task: *to promote the production of the philosopher, the artist and the saint within us and without us and thereby to work at the perfecting of nature*. For, as nature needs the philosopher, so does it need the artist, for the achievement of a metaphysical goal, that of its own self-enlightenment, so that it may at last behold as a clear and finished picture that which it could see only obscurely in the agitation of its evolution – for the end, that is to say, of self-knowledge. It was Goethe who declared, in an arrogant but profound assertion, that nature's experiments are of value only when the artist finally comes to comprehend its stammerings, goes out to meet it halfway, and gives expression to what all these experiments are really about. 'I have often said', he once exclaimed, 'and I shall often repeat, that the *causa finalis* of the activities of men and the world is dramatic poetry. For the stuff is of absolutely no other use.' And so nature at last needs the saint, in whom the ego is completely

melted away and whose life of suffering is no longer felt as his own life – or is hardly so felt – but as a profound feeling of oneness and identity with all living things: the saint in whom there appears that miracle of transformation which the game of becoming never hits upon, that final and supreme becoming-human after which all nature presses and urges for its redemption from itself. It is incontestable that we are all related and allied to the saint, just as we are related to the philosopher and artist; there are moments and as it were bright sparks of the fire of love in whose light we cease to understand the word ‘I’, there lies something beyond our being which at these moments moves across into it, and we are thus possessed of a heartfelt longing for bridges between here and there. It is true that, as we usually are, we can contribute nothing to the production of the man of redemption: that is why we *hate* ourselves as we usually are, and it is this hatred which is the root of that pessimism which Schopenhauer had again to teach our age, though it has existed for as long as the longing for culture has existed. Its root, not its flower; its bottom floor, so to speak, not its roof; the commencement of its course, not its goal: for at some time or other we shall have to learn to hate something else, something more universal, and cease to hate our own individuality and its wretched limitations, changeableness and restlessness: it will be in that elevated condition in which we shall also love something else, something we are now unable to love. Only when, in our present or in some future incarnation, we ourselves have been taken into that exalted order of philosophers, artists and saints, shall we also be given a new goal for our love and hate – in the meantime we have our task and our circle of duties, our hate and our love. For we know what culture is. Applied to the Schopenhauerean man, it demands that we prepare and promote his repeated production by getting to know what is inimical to it and removing it – in short, that we unwearyingly combat that which would deprive *us* of the supreme fulfilment of our existence by preventing us from becoming such Schopenhauerean men ourselves. –

6

Sometimes it is harder to accede to a thing than it is to see its truth; and that is how most people may feel when they reflect on the proposition: ‘Mankind must work continually at the production of individual great men – that and nothing else is its task.’ How much

one would like to apply to society and its goals something that can be learned from observation of any species of the animal or plant world: that its only concern is the individual higher exemplar, the more uncommon, more powerful, more complex, more fruitful – how much one would like to do this if inculcated fancies as to the goal of society did not offer such tough resistance! We ought really to have no difficulty in seeing that, when a species has arrived at its limits and is about to go over into a higher species, the goal of its evolution lies, not in the mass of its exemplars and their wellbeing, let alone in those exemplars who happen to come last in point of time, but rather in those apparently scattered and chance existences which favourable conditions have here and there produced; and it ought to be just as easy to understand the demand that, because it can arrive at a conscious awareness of its goal, mankind ought to seek out and create the favourable conditions under which those great redemptive men can come into existence. But everything resists this conclusion: here the ultimate goal is seen to lie in the happiness of all or of the greatest number, there in the development of great communities; and though one may be ready to sacrifice one's life to a state, for instance, it is another matter if one is asked to sacrifice it on behalf of another individual. It seems to be an absurd demand that one man should exist for the sake of another man; 'for the sake of all others, rather, or at least for as many as possible!' O worthy man! as though it were less absurd to let number decide when value and significance are at issue! For the question is this: how can your life, the individual life, receive the highest value, the deepest significance? How can it be least squandered? Certainly only by your living for the good of the rarest and most valuable exemplars, and not for the good of the majority, that is to say those who, taken individually, are the least valuable exemplars. And the young person should be taught to regard himself as a failed work of nature but at the same time as a witness to the grandiose and marvellous intentions of this artist: nature has done badly, he should say to himself; but I will honour its great intentions by serving it so that one day it may do better.

By coming to this resolve he places himself within the circle of *culture*; for culture is the child of each individual's self-knowledge and dissatisfaction with himself. Anyone who believes in culture is thereby saying: 'I see above me something higher and more human than I am; let everyone help me to attain it, as I will help everyone who knows and suffers as I do: so that at last the man may appear who feels himself perfect and boundless in knowledge and love, per-

ception and power, and who in his completeness is at one with nature, the judge and evaluator of things.' It is hard to create in anyone this condition of intrepid self-knowledge because it is impossible to teach love; for it is love alone that can bestow on the soul, not only a clear, discriminating and self-contemptuous view of itself, but also the desire to look beyond itself and to seek with all its might for a higher self as yet still concealed from it. Thus only he who has attached his heart to some great man receives thereby the *first consecration to culture*; the sign of that consecration is that one is ashamed of oneself without any accompanying feeling of distress, that one comes to hate one's own narrowness and shrivelled nature, that one has a feeling of sympathy for the genius who again and again drags himself up out of our dryness and apathy and the same feeling in anticipation for all those who are still struggling and evolving, with the profoundest conviction that almost everywhere we encounter nature pressing towards man and again and again failing to achieve him, yet everywhere succeeding in producing the most marvellous beginnings, individual traits and forms: so that the men we live among resemble a field over which is scattered the most precious fragments of sculpture where everything calls to us: come, assist, complete, bring together what belongs together, we have an immeasurable longing to become whole.

This sum of inner states is, I said, the first consecration to culture; I now have to describe the effects of the *second* consecration, and I realize that here my task is more difficult. For now we have to make the transition from the inward event to an assessment of the outward event; the eye has to be directed outwards so as to rediscover in the great world of action that desire for culture it recognized in the experiences of the first stage just described; the individual has to employ his own wrestling and longing as the alphabet by means of which he can now read off the aspirations of mankind as a whole. But he may not halt even here; from this stage he has to climb up to a yet higher one; culture demands of him, not only inward experience, not only an assessment of the outward world that streams all around him, but finally and above all an act, that is to say a struggle on behalf of culture and hostility towards those influences, habits, laws, institutions in which he fails to recognize his goal: which is the production of the genius.

He who is capable of raising himself to this second stage is struck first of all by *how extraordinarily sparse and rare knowledge of this goal is*,

how universal, by contrast, cultural endeavour is and what an unspeakable amount of energy is expended in its service. One asks oneself in amazement: is such knowledge perhaps completely unnecessary? Does nature attain its goal even when the majority misunderstand the objective of their endeavours? He who has accustomed himself to thinking highly of the unconscious purposefulness of nature will perhaps experience no difficulty in replying: 'Yes, that is how it is! Men may reflect and argue about their ultimate goal as much as they like, in the obscure impulse in the depths of them they are well aware of the rightful path.' To be able to contradict this, one must have experienced certain things; but he who really is convinced that the goal of culture is to promote the production of true *human beings* and nothing else, and then sees how even now, with all our expenditure and pomp of culture, the production of such human beings is hardly to be distinguished from cruelty to animals protracted into the human world, will think it very necessary finally to replace that 'obscure impulse' with a conscious willing. And he will think so especially for a second reason: that it shall cease to be possible for that drive which does not know its goal, that celebrated obscure impulse, to be employed for quite different objectives and directed on to paths which can never lead to the supreme goal, the production of the genius. For there exists a species of *misemployed and appropriated culture* – you have only to look around you! And precisely those forces at present most actively engaged in promoting culture do so for reasons they reserve to themselves and not out of pure disinterestedness.

Among these forces is, first of all, *the greed of the money-makers*, which requires the assistance of culture and by way of thanks assists culture in return, but at the same time, of course, would like to dictate its standards and objectives. It is from this quarter that there comes that favourite proposition and chain of conclusions which goes something like this: as much knowledge and education as possible, therefore as much demand as possible, therefore as much production as possible, therefore as much happiness and profit as possible – that is the seductive formula. Education would be defined by its adherents as the insight by means of which, through demand and its satisfaction, one becomes time-bound through and through but at the same time best acquires all the ways and means of making money as easily as possible. The goal would then be to create as many current human beings as possible, in the sense in which one speaks of a coin as being current; and, according to this conception,

the more of these current human beings it possesses the happier a nation will be. Thus the sole intention behind our modern educational institutions should be to assist everyone to become current to the extent that lies in his nature, to educate everyone in such a way that they can employ the degree of knowledge and learning of which they are capable for the accumulation of the greatest possible amount of happiness and profit. What is demanded here is that the individual must be able, with the aid of this general education, exactly to assess himself with regard to what he has a right to demand of life; and it is asserted, finally, that there exists a natural and necessary connection between 'intelligence and property', between 'wealth and culture', more, that this connection is a *moral* necessity. Here there is a hatred of any kind of education that makes one a solitary, that proposes goals that transcend money and money-making, that takes a long time; such more serious forms of education are usually disparaged as 'refined egoism' and as 'immoral cultural Epicureanism'. Precisely the opposite of this is, of course, held in esteem by the morality that here counts as valid: namely, a speedy education so that one may quickly become a money-earning being, yet at the same time an education sufficiently thorough to enable one to earn a very great deal of money. A man is allowed only as much culture as it is in the interest of general money-making and world commerce he should possess, but this amount is likewise demanded of him. In short: 'Man has a claim to earthly happiness and for that reason he needs education, but only for that reason!'

Secondly, there is *the greed of the state*, which likewise desires the greatest possible dissemination and universalization of culture and has in its hands the most effective instruments for satisfying this desire. Presupposing it knows itself sufficiently strong to be able, not only to unchain energies, but at the right time also to yoke them, presupposing its foundations are sufficiently broad and secure to sustain the whole educational structure, then the dissemination of education among its citizens can only be to its advantage in its competition with other states. Whenever one now speaks of the 'cultural state', one sees it as facing the task of releasing the spiritual energies of a generation to the extent that will serve the interests of existing institutions: but only to this extent; as a forest river is partially diverted with dams and breakwaters so as to operate a mill with the diminished driving-power thus produced – while the river's full driving-power would rather endanger the mill than operate it. This releasing of energies is at the same time, and much more, an

enchaining of them. One has only to recall what Christianity has gradually become through the greed of the state. Christianity is certainly one of the purest revelations of the impulse to culture and especially of the impulse to the ever-renewed production of the saint; but since it has been employed in a hundred ways to propel the mills of state power it has gradually become sick to the very marrow, hypocritical and untruthful, and degenerated into a contradiction of its original goal. Even the most recent event in its history, the German Reformation, would have been no more than a sudden and quickly extinguished flare-up if it had not stolen fresh fuel from the fires of conflict between the states.

Thirdly, culture is promoted by all those who are conscious of possessing an *ugly or boring content* and want to conceal the fact with so-called '*beautiful form*'. Under the presupposition that what is inside is usually judged by what is outside, the observer is to be constrained to a false assessment of the content through externalities, through words, gestures, decoration, display, ceremoniousness. It sometimes seems to me that modern men bore one another to a boundless extent and that they finally feel the need to make themselves interesting with the aid of all the arts. They have themselves served up by their artists as sharp and pungent repasts; they soak themselves in all the spices of the Orient and the Occident, and to be sure! they now smell very interesting, smelling as they do of all the Orient and the Occident. Now they are suitably prepared for satisfying every taste; and everyone shall have something, whether his inclination be for the fresh-smelling or foul-smelling, for the sublimated or for peasant coarseness, for the Greek or the Chinese, for tragedies or for dramatized lewdness. The most celebrated chefs for these modern men who want to be interesting and interested at any cost are, as is well known, to be found among the French, the worst among the Germans. At bottom this fact is more consoling to the latter than to the former, and let us not hold it against the French in the least if they mock at us precisely because we are uninteresting and lack elegance and if, when individual Germans desire to be suave and elegant, it reminds them of the Indian who wanted a ring through his nose and demanded to be tattooed.

– And here I shall make a digression. Since the late war with France there have been many changes in Germany and it is clear that the return to peace has also brought with it certain new demands in regard to German culture. The war was for many their first visit to the more elegant half of the world; how unprejudiced the victor now

appears when he does not disdain to acquire a little culture from the vanquished! Handicrafts especially are repeatedly invited to compete with the more cultivated neighbour, the fitting-out of the German house is to be made similar to that of the French, even the German language is, through the foundation of an academy after the French model, to acquire 'sound taste' and rid itself of the questionable influence supposedly exerted upon it by Goethe – a view expressed quite recently by the Berlin academician Dubois-Reymond. Our theatres have for long been quietly and with due decorum aspiring towards the same goal, even the elegant German scholar has already been invented: so that we can expect that everything that has up to now refused to conform to the law of elegance – German music, tragedy and philosophy – will henceforth be set aside as un-German. – But truly, German culture would not be worth lifting a finger for if the German understood by the culture he still lacks and is to aspire to, nothing but arts and artifices for prettifying life, including all the ingenuities of the dancing-master and the wallpaper-hanger, if in the matter of language too he was concerned only with academically approved rules and a certain general polish. The late war and self-comparison with the French seem, however, hardly to have evoked any higher pretensions than these; on the contrary, I am often assailed by the suspicion that the German now wants violently to cast off those ancient obligations which his wonderful talentedness and the profound seriousness of his nature imposed upon him. He prefers to play monkey-tricks and to learn the arts and manners that make life entertaining. But there can be no more grievous slander against the German spirit than to treat it as though it were wax to be moulded in any way one pleases and thus also into a semblance of elegance. And if it is unfortunately true that a good proportion of the German nation is only too willing to be moulded and kneaded into shape in this fashion, then one has to reiterate until the words are heeded: it no longer dwells in you, that ancient German nature which, though hard, austere and full of resistance, is so as the most precious of materials, upon which only the greatest of sculptors are permitted to work because they alone are worthy of it. What you have in you, on the contrary, is soft, pulpy matter; make with it what you will, form it into elegant dolls and interesting idols – here too the words of Richard Wagner will hold true: 'The German is angular and clumsy when he affects polish and politeness; but he is sublime and superior to everyone when he catches fire.' And the elegant have every reason to beware of this German fire, or one day it may con-

sume them together with all their dolls and idols of wax. – One could, to be sure, derive that inclination for ‘beautiful form’ now getting the upper hand in Germany from other and deeper sources: from the prevailing haste, from the breathless grasping at every moment, from the precipitation that plucks all things from the bough too soon, from the race and pursuit that nowadays carves furrows in men’s faces and as it were covers all they do with tattoos. As though a potion that prevents them from catching their breath were working within them, they storm ahead with indecent anxiety as the harassed slaves of the moment, opinion and fashion: so that the lack of dignity and decorum is indeed all too painfully evident and a deceitful elegance required to mask the sickness of this undignified haste. For that is how the fashionable greed for beautiful form is connected with the ugly content of contemporary man: the former is intended to conceal, the latter to be concealed. To be cultivated means: to hide from oneself how wretched and base one is, how rapacious in going for what one wants, how insatiable in heaping it up, how shameless and selfish in enjoying it. When I have in the past pointed out to someone that a German culture does not exist, more than once I have received the reply: ‘But that is quite natural, for hitherto the Germans have been too poor and modest. Just let our compatriots become rich and self-confident, and then they will possess a culture too!’ Though belief may make blessed, *this* kind of belief has the opposite effect on me, because I feel that the German culture which is here believed to possess a future – a culture of wealth, polish and feigned gentility – is the most hostile antithesis of the German culture in which I believe. Certainly, he who has to live among Germans suffers greatly from the notorious greyness of their life and thought, from their formlessness, their stupidity and dull-mindedness, their coarseness in more delicate affairs, even more from their envy and a certain secretiveness and uncleanness in their character; he is pained and offended by their rooted joy in what is false and ungentle, in bad imitations, in the translation of good foreign things into bad native ones: now, however, that one has in addition, and as the most painful experience of all, their feverish restlessness, their search for success and profit, their overestimation of the moment, one is limitlessly indignant to think that all these maladies and weaknesses are on principle never to be cured but only painted over – with a ‘culture of interesting form’! And this in the case of a nation which produced *Schopenhauer* and *Wagner*! And ought to do so often again! Or are we desperately deceiving ourselves? Do

those named perhaps no longer offer any guarantee whatever that such energies as theirs still exist in the German mind and spirit? Are they themselves exceptions, as it were the last tendrils of qualities formerly regarded as German? I admit I am here nonplussed, and thus I return to the path of more general reflection from which my anxious doubts often seek to divert me. I have not yet numbered all those powers which, though they demand culture, do so without recognizing the goal of culture, the production of the genius; three have been named: the greed of the money-makers, the greed of the state, and the greed of all those who have reason to disguise themselves behind form. I name fourthly *the greed of the sciences* and the characteristic qualities of their servants, the *men of learning*.

Science is related to wisdom as virtuousness is related to holiness; it is cold and dry, it has not love and knows nothing of a deep feeling of inadequacy and longing. It is as useful to itself as it is harmful to its servants, insofar as it transfers its own character to them and thereby ossifies their humanity. As long as what is meant by culture is essentially the promotion of science, culture will pass the great suffering human being by with pitiless coldness, because science sees everywhere only problems of knowledge and because within the world of the sciences suffering is really something improper and incomprehensible, thus at best only one more problem.

But if one accustoms oneself to translating every experience into a dialectical question-and-answer game and into an affair purely of the head, it is astonishing in how short a time such an occupation will wither a man up, how soon he becomes almost nothing but bones. Everyone knows and perceives this fact: so how is it nonetheless possible for young men not to start back at the sight of such skeletons, but on the contrary again and again blindly to give themselves over to the sciences without restraint or selectivity? It can hardly originate in any supposed 'desire for truth': for how could there exist any desire at all for cold, pure, inconsequential knowledge! What it really is that impels the servants of science is only too obvious to the unprejudiced eye: and it is very advisable to examine and dissect the men of learning themselves for once, since they for their part are quite accustomed to laying bold hands on everything in the world, even the most venerable things, and taking them to pieces. If I am to speak out, I would say this: the man of learning consists of a confused network of very various impulses and stimuli, he is an altogether impure metal. First of all there is a strong and ever more intense curiosity, the search for adventures in the domain of

knowledge, the constant stimulation exercised by the new and rare in contrast to the old and tedious. Then there is a certain drive to dialectical investigation, the huntsman's joy in following the sly fox's path in the realm of thought, so that it is not really truth that is sought but the seeking itself, and the main pleasure consists in the cunning tracking, encircling, and correct killing. Now add to this the impulse to contradiction, the personality wanting to be aware of itself and to make itself felt in opposition to all others; the struggle becomes a pleasure and the goal is personal victory, the struggle for truth being only a pretext. Then, the man of learning is to a great extent also motivated to the discovery of *certain* 'truths', motivated that is by his subjection to certain ruling persons, castes, opinions, churches, governments: he feels it is to his advantage to bring 'truth' over to their side. The following qualities are also prominently displayed in the man of learning, less regularly than the previous ones yet frequently enough. Firstly, probity and a sense for simplicity, very worthy things provided they are something more than clumsiness and lack of practice in dissimulation, for which, after all, a certain amount of wit is needed. Indeed, wherever wit and dexterity are strikingly in evidence, one should be a little on one's guard and reserve one's judgment as to the uprightness of character of the person possessing them. On the other hand, this probity is for the most part of little worth and seldom fruitful even in the cause of science, since it is wholly tied to convention and usually tells the truth only in simple things or in *adiaphoris*; for in these cases laziness finds it easier to tell the truth than to keep silent about it. And because everything new makes it necessary to relearn, this probity will always, in case of need, reverse the old opinion and reproach the innovator with a lack of *sensus recti*.^{*} It certainly resisted the teachings of Copernicus because in this case it had appearance and convention on its side. The hatred of philosophy not at all uncommon among men of learning is above all hatred of the long chains of conclusions and the artificiality of the proofs. At bottom, indeed, every generation of men of learning has an unconscious canon of *permitted* sagacity; whatever goes beyond it is called into question and all but employed to cast suspicion on the probity of its propounder. – Secondly, sharp-sightedness for things close up, combined with great myopia for distant things and for what is universal. His field of vision is usually very small and he has to hold his eyes close to the object. If the man of learning wants to go

^{*}*sensus recti*: sense of what is right

from one point he has just subjected to scrutiny to another, he has to move his whole seeing-apparatus to this new point. He dissects a picture into little patches, like one who employs opera-glasses to view the stage and then has a sight now of a head, now of a piece of clothing, but never of anything whole. He never gets to see these patches joined together, his perception of how they are connected is only the result of a conclusion, and thus he has no very strong conception of anything universal. Because he is incapable of viewing a piece of writing as a whole, for example, he judges it by a few passages or sentences or errors; he would be tempted to assert that an oil-painting is a disorderly heap of blots. – Thirdly, the sobriety and conventionality of his nature in its likes and dislikes. This quality leads him to take an especial pleasure in history, insofar as he can trace the motives of men of the past in accordance with the motives he himself knows of. A mole-tunnel is the right place for a mole. He is secure against any artificial or extravagant hypotheses; if he sticks at it, he will dig out all the commonplace motives that inform the past, because he feels himself to be of the same commonplace species. For precisely that reason, of course, he is usually incapable of understanding or appreciating what is rare, great and uncommon, that is to say what is essential and vital, in the past. – Fourthly, poverty of feeling and aridity. It makes him capable even of vivisection. He has no inkling of the suffering which knowledge often brings with it, and therefore has no fear of venturing into regions where the hearts of others fail them. He is cold and may therefore easily seem cruel. He is also considered daring, but he is no more daring than the mule, which is immune from vertigo. – Fifthly, low self-esteem, amounting to modesty. Though confined to a wretched little corner, they feel no sense of being sacrificed or wasted, they often seem to realize in the depths of them that they are not flying but creeping creatures. There is even something touching about this quality. – Sixth, loyalty towards their teachers and leaders. They sincerely want to help them, and they are well aware that they can best help them through discovery of truth. For their feeling towards them is one of gratitude, for it is only through them that they have gained entry to the worthy halls of science, which they would never have been able to do on their own. He who nowadays knows how to open up a new field within which even the weakest heads can labour with some degree of success becomes famous in a very short time: so great is the crowd that at once presses in. Every one of these loyal and grateful people is at the same time a misfortune for the master, to be

sure, since they all imitate him and his defects then seem disproportionately great and exaggerated because they appear in such tiny individuals, while it is the opposite with his virtues, which are proportionately diminished when these same individuals display them. – Seventh, routine continuation along the path on to which the scholar has been pushed, a conception of truth determined by unthinking subjection to an acquired habit. Such natures are collectors, explainers, compilers of indices and herbariums; they study and prow around a single domain simply because it never occurs to them that other domains exist. Their industriousness possesses something of the tremendous stupidity of the force of gravity: which is why they often achieve a great deal. – Eighth, flight from boredom. While the genuine thinker longs for nothing more than he longs for leisure, the ordinary scholar flees from it because he does not know what to do with it. His consolation lies in books: that is to say, he listens to what someone else thinks, and in this way he lets himself be entertained throughout the long day. He chooses especially books which in some way or other excite his personal sympathies, which permit him, through the arousal of like or dislike, to feel some emotion: that is to say, books in which he himself, or his class, his political or aesthetic or even merely grammatical dogmas, are the subject of discussion; and if there is a field of study in which he specializes he never lacks means of entertainment or fly-swatters against boredom. – Ninth, the motive of breadwinning, that is to say at bottom the celebrated ‘borborygm of an empty stomach’. Truth is served when it is in a position directly to procure salaries and advancement, or at least to win the favour of those who have bread and honours to distribute. But it is only *this* truth which is served: which is why a frontier can be drawn between the profitable truths served by many and the unprofitable truths: only a very few – those who do not act on the principle *ingenii largitor venter** – are devotees of the latter. – Tenth, recognition by fellow scholars, fear of lacking their recognition; a rarer and higher motive than the previous one, yet still very common. All the members of the guild keep a very jealous watch on one another, so that the truth upon which so much – bread, office, honours – depends shall be baptized with the name of its real discoverer. One gives punctual recognition to the discoverer of a truth, so that one can demand it in return if one should happen to discover a truth oneself. Untruth, error, is resoundingly exploded, so that the number

**ingenii largitor venter*: “the stomach is the squanderer of talent”, from the prologue to the *Satires* of Persius.

of fellow candidates shall not grow too big; yet now and then the actual truth is exploded too, so as to make room, at least for a time, for obstinate and impudent errors; since here as elsewhere there is no lack of 'moral idiocies', otherwise called roguish pranks. – Eleventh, the scholar from vanity, a rarer variety. He wants if possible to have a domain all to himself and to that end selects strange and curious studies, especially if they necessitate an unusually high expenditure, travelling, excavations, numerous connections in various countries. He is usually content to be gazed at in astonishment as something strange and curious himself and has no thought of earning his bread by means of his scholarly studies. – Twelfth, the scholar for fun. The amusement consists in looking for tangles in the sciences and unravelling them, while at the same time taking care not to lose the feeling of playing through trying too hard. This scholar, it goes without saying, never penetrates into the depths of a problem, yet he will often notice things that the professional, with his laborious poring over it, never does. – If, finally, I designate as the thirteenth motive for scholarship the impulse to justice, one could object that this noble impulse, which is indeed likely to be regarded as virtually a metaphysical one, is altogether too hard to distinguish from the other impulses and fundamentally vague and ungraspable to the human eye; which is why I append this last number with the pious hope that this impulse is more common and influential among scholars than it appears to be. For a spark from the fire of justice fallen into a scholar's soul suffices to enkindle and purify his life and strivings, so that he no longer knows any rest and is for ever expelled from the lukewarm or frosty mood in which scholars usually accomplish their daily work.

If one now imagines all these elements, or some of them, vigorously mingled and shaken together, one has the coming-into-being of the servant of truth. It is very strange how here, for the benefit of an affair basically extra- and suprahuman, pure, inconsequential and thus impulseless knowledge, a host of little, very human impulses should be poured together to produce a chemical compound, and how the product, the man of learning, should appear so transfigured in the light of that supraterrrestrial, exalted and altogether pure affair that one quite forgets the mixing and mingling that was needed for his production. Yet there are times when one is obliged to think of and remember precisely this: those times when the scholar's significance for culture is in question. For he who knows how to must observe that the scholar is by nature

unfruitful – a consequence of how he comes into existence! – and that he harbours a certain natural hatred for the fruitful man; which is why geniuses and scholars have at all times been at odds with one another. For the latter want to kill, dissect and understand nature, while the former want to augment nature with new living nature; and so there exists a conflict of activities and intentions. Wholly fortunate ages did not need the scholar and did not know him, wholly morbid and listless ages have valued him as the highest and most venerable of men and accorded him the highest rank.

How it stands with our own age in regard to health and sickness – who is sufficient of a physician to know that! Certainly the scholar is in very many ways still too highly valued, which has a harmful effect especially in all that concerns the evolving genius. The scholar has no heart for the latter's distress; he speaks past him in a sharp, cold voice, and all too soon he shrugs his shoulders as though over something queer and strange for which he has neither time nor inclination. Knowledge of the goal of culture cannot be found in him either. –

But what have we gained at all from these reflections? The knowledge that where today culture seems to be most vigorously pursued nothing is known of this goal. However loudly the state may proclaim its service to culture, it furthers culture in order to further itself and cannot conceive of a goal higher than its own welfare and continued existence. What the money-makers really want when they ceaselessly demand instruction and education is in the last resort precisely money. When those who require form ascribe to themselves the actual labour on behalf of culture and opine, for instance, that all art belongs to them and must stand in the service of their requirements, what is quite clear is that by affirming culture they are merely affirming themselves: that they too are therefore still involved in a misunderstanding. Enough has been said of the scholarly man of learning. And so we see that, however zealous all four powers together may be in promoting their *own* interests with the aid of culture, they are dull and without inspiration when these interests are not involved. And that is why the conditions for the production of the genius have *not improved* in modern times, and why antipathy for original men has increased to such an extent that Socrates could not have lived among us and would in any event not have attained seventy.

Now I recall the theme I developed in the third section: that our whole modern world has so little the appearance of permanence and

solidity that one cannot prophesy an eternity even for its conception of culture. One has even to consider it probable that the next thousand years will hit on a couple of new ideas which might make the hair of our contemporaries stand on end. *The belief in a metaphysical significance of culture* would in the end not be as alarming as all that: but perhaps some of the inferences one might draw from it in respect of education and schooling might be.

It demands, to be sure, a quite exceptional reflective capacity to be able to see beyond the educational institutions of the present to those altogether strange and different institutions which may perhaps be required only two or three generations hence. For while the efforts of our present-day higher educators serve to produce either the scholar or the civil servant or the money-maker or the cultural philistine or, finally and more usually, a compound of them all, those institutions still to be invented would have a more difficult task – though not one more difficult as such, since it would be in any event a more natural and to that extent also easier task; and can anything be more difficult than, for example, to train a young man to be a scholar, a thing contrary to nature by the methods at present employed? The difficulty, however, lies for mankind in relearning and envisaging a new goal; and it will cost an unspeakable amount of effort to exchange the fundamental idea behind our present system of education, which has its roots in the Middle Ages and the ideal of which is actually the production of the medieval scholar, for a new fundamental idea. It is already time we took a clear view of these antitheses, for some generation has to commence the struggle if another is to win it. The individual who has grasped this new fundamental idea of culture already finds himself at the crossroads; if he takes one path he will be welcome to his own age, it will not fail to offer him laurels and rewards, powerful parties will bear him along, behind him there will be as many likeminded men as there will be before him, and when the man in the front line gives the word of command it will re-echo through all the ranks. Here the first duty is ‘to fight in rank and file’, the second to treat as enemies all who refuse to fall in. The other path will offer him companions more seldom, it will be more difficult, more tortuous, steeper; those who have taken the first path will mock at him because his path is more wearisome and more often dangerous, and will try to entice him over to themselves. If the two paths happen to cross he will be mishandled, thrown aside or isolated by being cautiously walked around. Now, what does a cultural institution mean to these dis-

similar wanderers on differing paths? The tremendous crowd that presses towards its goal along the first path understands by its rules and arrangements by means of which it itself is brought to order and marches forward and through which all the solitary and recalcitrant, all who are looking for higher and more remote goals, are excommunicated. For the smaller band on the other path an institution would have a quite different purpose to fulfil; it wants the protection of a firm organization so as to prevent itself from being washed away and dispersed by that tremendous crowd, and so that the individuals that comprise it shall not die from premature exhaustion or even become alienated from their great task. These individuals have to complete their work – that is the sense of their staying together; and all who participate in the institution have, through continual purification and mutual support, to help to prepare within themselves and around them for the birth of the genius and the ripening of his work. Not a few, including some from the ranks of the second- and third-rate talents, are destined for the task of rendering this assistance and only in subjection to such a destiny do they come to feel they have a duty and that their lives possess significance and a goal. Nowadays, however, it is precisely these talents who are diverted from their path and estranged from their instincts by the seductive voices of that modish ‘culture’; the temptation is directed at their self-seeking impulses, at their weaknesses and vanities; it is to them precisely that the *Zeitgeist* whispers insinuatingly: ‘Follow me and do not go there! For there you are only servants, assistants, instruments, outshone by higher natures, never happy in being what you really are, pulled along in bonds, laid in chains, as slaves, indeed as automata; here with me you shall, as masters, enjoy your free personality, your talents may glitter by their own light, you yourselves shall stand in the foremost rank, a tremendous following will throng around you, and the public acclamation will surely please you better than a noble assent bestowed from the cold ethereal heights of genius.’ Even the best can succumb to such enticements: and what is decisive here is hardly the rarity and strength of the talent but rather the influence of a certain heroic basic disposition and the degree of profound kinship and involvement with the genius. For there *do* exist men who feel it as their *own* distress when they see the genius involved in toilsome struggle, or in danger of destroying himself, or when the shortsighted greed of the state, the superficiality of the money-makers, the arid self-satisfaction of the scholars treat his work with indifference: and so I also hope there

are some who understand what I am trying to say with this exhibition of Schopenhauer's destiny and to what end, according to my notion, Schopenhauer as educator is actually *to educate*. –

7

But leaving aside all thoughts of the distant future and a possible revolution in education: what would one have to desire and, if necessary, procure for an evolving philosopher *at present* to enable him to enjoy any leisure at all and, in the most favourable case, achieve the kind of existence demonstrated by Schopenhauer – not an easy one, to be sure, but certainly possible? What would have also to be devised to make it more probable that he would produce some effect on his contemporaries? And what obstacles would have to be removed so that above all his example should produce its full effect, so that the philosopher should again educate philosophers? Here our reflections turn to practicalities and hard realities.

Nature wants always to be of universal utility, but it does not know how to find the best and most suitable means and instruments for this end: that is what it suffers from most, that is why nature is melancholy. That nature has wanted to make existence explicable and significant to man through the production of the philosopher and the artist is, given nature's own desire for redemption, certain; yet how uncertain, how dull and feeble is the effect it generally achieves with the philosophers and artists! How rarely does it achieve any effect at all! In the case of the philosopher especially it experiences great difficulty in employing him in a universally useful way; the means it employs seem to be only probing experiments and ideas it has chanced upon, so that countless times it fails to achieve its objective and most philosophers fail to become universally useful. Nature seems to be bent on squandering; but it is squandering, not through a wanton luxuriousness, but through inexperience; it can be assumed that if nature were human it would never cease to be annoyed at itself and its ineptitude. Nature propels the philosopher into mankind like an arrow; it takes no aim but hopes the arrow will stick somewhere. But countless times it misses and is depressed at the fact. Nature is just as extravagant in the domain of culture as it is in that of planting and sowing. It achieves its aims in a broad and ponderous manner: and in doing so it sacrifices much too much energy. The artist is related to the lovers of his art as a heavy cannon is to a flock of sparrows. It is an act of simplicity to start an avalanche

so as to sweep away a little snow, to strike a man dead so as to kill a fly on his nose. The artist and the philosopher are evidence against the purposiveness of nature as regards the means it employs, though they are also first-rate evidence as to the wisdom of its purpose. They strike home at only a few, while they ought to strike home at everybody – and even these few are not struck with the force with which philosopher and artist launch their shot. It is sad to have to arrive at an assessment of art as cause so different from our assessment of art as effect: how tremendous it is as cause, how paralysed and hollow as effect! The artist creates his work according to the will of nature for the good of other men: that is indisputable; nonetheless he knows that none of these other men will ever love and understand his work as he loves and understands it. Thus this greater degree of love and understanding is, given the ineptitude of nature, required for the production of a smaller degree; the greater and nobler is employed as a means of producing the lesser and ignoble. Nature is a bad economist: its expenditure is much larger than the income it procures; all its wealth notwithstanding, it is bound sooner or later to ruin itself. It would have ordered its affairs more rationally if its house-rule were: small expenses and hundredfold profit; if, for example, there were only a few artists, and these of weaker powers, but on the other hand numerous recipients of art of a stronger and more mighty species than the species of the artist: so that the effect of the work of art in relation to its cause would be a hundredfold magnification. Or ought one not at least to expect that cause and effect would be of equal force? – but how little nature comes up to this expectation! It often seems as though an artist and especially a philosopher only *chances* to exist in his age, as a hermit or a wanderer who has lost his way and been left behind. Just think of the true greatness of Schopenhauer – and then of how absurdly small his effect has been! No honourable man of our age can fail to feel ashamed when he sees how Schopenhauer seems to belong to it only by accident and what forces and impotencies are to blame for the fact that his influence has been so minimal. First, for a long time, and to the everlasting shame of our era of literature, he had against him his lack of readers; then, when he acquired them, he had against him the inadequacy of his earliest advocates: even more, it seems to me, he had against him the obtuseness on the part of all modern men with regard to books, which they are altogether unwilling to take seriously; a new danger has gradually appeared in addition, deriving from the manifold attempts that have been made to adapt

Schopenhauer to this feeble age or even to employ him as an exotic and stimulating spice, as it were a kind of metaphysical pepper. So it is that, though he has gradually become famous and his name is, I think, already known to more people than Hegel's, he is nonetheless still a hermit and has still produced no effect! The honour of this achievement belongs least of all to his actual literary opponents and denigrators, firstly because there are few who can endure to read them, secondly because they lead those who can endure to do so directly to Schopenhauer; for who would let a donkey-driver dissuade him from mounting a handsome horse, no matter how extravagantly he extolled his donkey at the horse's expense?

He who has recognized the unreason in the nature of this age, then, will have to think of means of rendering it a little assistance; his task, however, will be to make the free spirits and those who suffer profoundly from our age acquainted with Schopenhauer, assemble them together and through them to engender a current capable of overcoming the ineptitude with which nature employs the philosopher. Such men will come to realize that the forces which blunt the effect of a great philosophy are the same as those which stand in the way of the production of a philosopher; which is why they are entitled to regard it as their goal to prepare the way for the reproduction of Schopenhauer, that is to say of the philosophical genius. That which opposed the effect and propagation of his teaching from the first, however, that which in the end wants to vitiate any rebirth of the philosopher with every means in its power, is, to speak bluntly, the perversity of contemporary human nature: which is why all great human beings have to squander an incredible amount of energy in the course of their development merely to fight their way through this perversity in themselves. The world they now enter is shrouded in humbug; it does not have to be religious dogma, it can also be such bogus concepts as 'progress', 'universal education', 'national', 'modern state', 'cultural struggle'; one can say, indeed, that all generalizing words now wear artificial and unnatural finery, so that a more enlightened posterity will reproach our age with being to an unheard-of degree distorted and degenerate, however much we may boast of our 'health'. The beauty of antique vessels, says Schopenhauer, arises from the fact that they express in so naive a way what they are intended to be and to perform; and the same applies to all the other articles of the ancients: on beholding them one feels that, if nature produced vases, amphorae, lamps, tables, chairs, helmets, shields, armour and so forth, this is how they would

look. Conversely: whoever observes general modern attitudes to art, state, religion, education – not to speak, for good reasons, of our ‘vessels’ – discovers in mankind a certain barbaric capriciousness and intemperance of expression, and the genius is hampered most of all in his development by the prevalence in his time of such strange concepts and fanciful requirements: these are the leaden pressures which, invisible and inexplicable, so often weigh down his hand when he sets it to the plough – so that, because even his supreme works have had to force their way up violently, they too to some extent bear the traces of this violence.

If I now seek out the conditions with the assistance of which a born philosopher can in the most favourable case at least avoid being crushed by the perversity of our times just described, I notice something singular: they are in part precisely the conditions under which Schopenhauer himself on the whole grew up. There is no lack of contrary conditions, to be sure: the perversity of the age came fearfully close to him, for example, in the person of his vain and culturally pretentious mother. But the proud, free, republican character of his father as it were saved him from his mother and bestowed upon him the first thing a philosopher needs: inflexible and rugged manliness. This father of his was neither an official nor a scholar: he travelled a great deal with the boy in foreign countries – all of these things so many encouragements for one who was to study not books but men, and revere not governments but truth. He learned in good time to be indifferent to national narrownesses or extremely critical of them; he lived in England, France and Italy as he did in his own country and felt not a little affinity with the spirit of Spain. On the whole he did not regard it as an honour to have been born among Germans; and I do not know that he would have felt differently under the new political dispensation. As is well known, he considered the purpose of the state to be to provide protection against forces from without, protection against forces from within, and protection against the protectors, and that if any purpose was invented for it other than the provision of protection its true purpose could easily be imperilled –: that is why, to the horror of all so-called liberals, he left his property to the survivors among the Prussian troops whose comrades had fallen fighting for the preservation of order in 1848. It will probably be increasingly the sign of spiritual superiority from now on if a man takes the state and his duties

towards it lightly; for he who has the *furor philosophicus** within him will already no longer have time for the *furor politicus*† and will wisely refrain from reading the newspapers every day, let alone working for a political party: though he will not hesitate for a moment to be at his place when his fatherland experiences a real emergency. Every state in which anyone other than the statesman has to concern himself with politics is ill organized and deserves to perish by all these politicians.

Another great advantage Schopenhauer enjoyed was the fact that he was not brought up destined from the first to be a scholar, but actually worked for a time, if with reluctance, in a merchant's office and in any event breathed throughout his entire youth the freer air of a great mercantile house. A scholar can never become a philosopher; for even Kant was unable to do so but, the inborn pressure of his genius notwithstanding, remained to the end as it were in a chrysalis stage. He who thinks that in saying this I am doing Kant an injustice does not know what a philosopher is, namely not merely a great thinker but also a real human being; and when did a scholar ever become a real human being? He who lets concepts, opinions, past events, books, step between himself and things – he, that is to say, who is in the broadest sense born for history – will never have an immediate perception of things and will never be an immediately perceived thing himself; but both these conditions belong together in the philosopher, because most of the instruction he receives he has to acquire out of himself and because he serves himself as a reflection and brief abstract of the whole world. If a man perceives himself by means of the opinions of others, it is no wonder if he sees in himself nothing but the opinions of others! And that is how scholars are, live and see. Schopenhauer, on the other hand, had the indescribable good fortune to be able to see genius from close up not only in himself, but also outside himself in Goethe: through this twofold reflection he was aware of and wise to all scholarly goals and cultures from the ground up. By virtue of this experience he knew what the strong and free human being for which every artistic culture longs must be like; given this insight, how could he have had much desire left to involve himself with so-called 'art' in the scholarly or hypocritical

**furor philosophicus*: philosophical passion

†*furor politicus*: political passion

manner of modern man? For he had seen something higher: a dreadful scene in a supraterrrestrial court in which all life, even the highest and most perfect, had been weighed and found wanting: he had seen the saint as judge of existence. We cannot determine at all closely how early in his life Schopenhauer must have perceived this picture of life in all its details and as he sought to reproduce it in all his subsequent writings; we can demonstrate that he saw this tremendous vision as a young man, and can well believe he had already seen it as a child. Everything he subsequently appropriated to himself from life and books, from the whole wealth of the sciences, was to him hardly more than colouring and means of expression; he employed even the Kantian philosophy above all as an extraordinary rhetorical instrument through which he believed he could speak of that picture more clearly: just as he occasionally made use of Buddhist and Christian mythology to the same end. For him there was only one task and a hundred-thousand means of encompassing it: one meaning and countless hieroglyphics with which to express it.

Among the most glorious conditions of his existence was the fact that he was able, in accordance with his motto *vitam impendere vero*,* really to live for such a task and that he was oppressed by none of the petty necessities of life: – how generously he attributed this circumstance to the efforts of his father is well known; whereas in Germany the theoretical man usually pursues his scholarly destiny at the expense of the purity of his character, as a ‘thinking ragamuffin’, greedy for posts and honours, cautious and pliable, ingratiating towards those with influence and position. Of all the offence Schopenhauer has given to numerous scholars, nothing has offended them more than the unfortunate fact that he does not resemble them.

8

These, then, are some of the conditions under which the philosophical genius can at any rate come into existence in our time despite the forces working against it: free manliness of character, early knowledge of mankind, no scholarly education, no narrow patriotism, no necessity for bread-winning, no ties with the state – in short, freedom and again freedom: that wonderful and perilous element in which the Greek philosophers were able to grow up.

**vitam impendere vero*: devote one's life to the truth

Whoever wants to reproach him, as Niebuhr reproached Plato, with being a bad citizen, let him do so and be a good citizen himself: thus he will be in the right and so will Plato. Another will see this great freedom as a piece of presumption: he too is right, for he himself would do nothing with it and it would be very presumptuous in him to claim it for himself. That freedom is in fact a heavy debt which can be discharged only by means of great deeds. In truth, every ordinary son of earth has the right to regard with resentment a man favoured in this way: only may some god guard him from being thus favoured himself, that is from becoming so fearfully indebted. For he would at once perish of his freedom and solitude, and become a fool, and a malicious fool at that, out of boredom. –

From what we have discussed perhaps some father or other may be able to learn something and apply it in some way to the private education of his son; though it is truly not to be expected that fathers will want only philosophers for sons. It is probable that fathers in every age have put up the most determined resistance to their sons' being philosophers, as though it were extremely perverse; as is well known, Socrates fell victim to the wrath of the fathers over his 'seduction of youth', and Plato for that reason considered it necessary to institute a whole new state if the existence of the philosopher was not to be imperilled by the unreason of the fathers. It almost looks now as though Plato really did achieve something. For the modern state regards the promotion of philosophy as among *its* tasks and seeks at all times to bless a number of men with that 'freedom' which we understand as the most essential condition for the genesis of the philosopher. But historically speaking Plato has been singularly unfortunate: as soon as a structure has appeared which has essentially corresponded to his proposals, it has always turned out on close examination to be a changeling, an ugly elf-child; such as the medieval priestly state was by comparison with the rule of the 'sons of god' he had dreamed of. The last thing the modern state wants to do, of course, is to install philosophers as rulers – God be praised! every Christian will add –: but even promotion of philosophy as the state understands it will one day have to be inspected to see whether the state understands it *Platonically*, which is to say as seriously and honestly as though its highest objective were to produce new Platos. If the philosopher as a rule appears in his age by chance – does the state now really set itself the task of consciously translating this fortuitousness into necessity and here too rendering assistance to nature?

Experience unfortunately teaches us better – or rather, worse: it tells us that nothing stands so much in the way of the production and propagation of the great philosopher by nature as does the bad philosopher who works for the state. A painful fact, is it not? – recognizably the same as that to which Schopenhauer first directed attention in his celebrated treatise on university philosophy. I shall return to it later: for one has to compel men to take it seriously, that is to say to let it inspire them to action, and I consider every word behind which there does not stand such a challenge to action to have been written in vain; and it is in any event a good thing again to demonstrate the truth of Schopenhauer's always valid propositions, and to do so by direct reference to our closest contemporaries, since a well-disposed man might think that since he launched his accusations everything has taken a turn for the better in Germany. Even on this point, minor though it is, his work is not yet done.

Considered more closely, that 'freedom' with which, as I have said, the state now blesses some men for the good of philosophy is no freedom at all but an office of profit. The promotion of philosophy nowadays consists, it seems, only in the state's enabling a number of men to *live* from their philosophy by making of it a means of livelihood: whereas the sages of ancient Greece were not paid by the state but at most were, like Zeno, honoured with a gold crown and a monument in the Ceramicus. Whether truth is served when one is shown a way of living off it I cannot say in general, because here it all depends on the quality of the individual who is shown it. I could well envisage a degree of pride and self-esteem which would lead a man to say to his fellow-men: look after me, for I have something better to do, namely to look after you. In the case of Plato or Schopenhauer, such grandeur of disposition and expression would not alienate one; which is why precisely they could even be university philosophers, as Plato was for a time a court philosopher, without demeaning the dignity of philosophy. But even Kant was, as we scholars are accustomed to be, cautious, subservient and, in his attitude towards the state, without greatness: so that, if university philosophy should ever be called to account, he at any rate could not justify it. And if there are natures capable of justifying it – such natures as those of Schopenhauer and Plato – I fear they will never have occasion for doing so, since no state would ever dare to favour such men and install them in university posts. Why is that so? Because every state fears them and will favour only philosophers it does not fear. For it does happen that the state is afraid of philosophy

as such, and when this is the case it will try all the more to draw to it philosophers who will give it the appearance of having philosophy on its side – because it has on its side those men who bear the name of philosopher and yet are patently nothing to inspire fear. If, however, a man should arise who really gave the impression of intending to apply the scalpel of truth to all things, including the body of the state, then the state would, since it affirms its own existence before all else, be justified in expelling such a man and treating him as an enemy: just as it expels and treats as an enemy a religion which sets itself above the state and desires to be its judge. So if anyone is to tolerate being a philosopher in the employ of the state, he will also have to tolerate being regarded as having abandoned any attempt to pursue truth into all its hideouts. At the very least he is obliged, so long as he is the recipient of favours and offices, to recognize something as being higher than truth, namely the state. And not merely the state but at the same time everything the state considers necessary for its wellbeing: a certain form of religion, for example, or of social order, or of army regulations – a *noli me tangere** is inscribed upon everything of this sort. Can a university philosopher ever have realized to the full the whole gamut of duties and limitations imposed upon him? I do not know; if he has done so and has nonetheless remained an official of the state he has been a bad friend of truth; if he has never done so – well, I would say he would still be no friend of truth.

This is the most general objection: to people as they are now, however, it is of course the weakest objection and the one to which they are most indifferent. Most will be content to shrug their shoulders and say: ‘as though anything great and pure has ever been able to maintain itself on this earth without making concessions to human baseness! Would you prefer it if the state persecuted the philosopher rather than paid him and took him into service?’ Without immediately replying to this question, I shall only observe that these concessions to the state on the part of philosophy go very far at the present time. Firstly: it is the state which selects its philosophical servants, and which selects just the number it needs to supply its institutions; it therefore takes on the appearance of being able to distinguish between good philosophers and bad ones and, even worse, it presupposes that there must always be a sufficiency of *good* philosophers to fill all its academic chairs. It is now the authority, not only with regard to the quality of philosophers, but also in

**noli me tangere*: do not touch me

regard to how many good philosophers are needed. Secondly: it compels those it has chosen to reside in a certain place, to live among certain people, to undertake a certain activity; they are obliged to instruct every academic youth who desires instruction, and to do so daily at certain fixed hours. Question: can a philosopher really undertake with a good conscience to have something to teach every day? And to teach it to anyone who cares to listen? Will he not be obliged to give the impression of knowing more than he does know? Will he not be obliged to speak before an audience of strangers of things which he can safely speak of only among his nearest friends? And speaking generally: is he not robbing himself of his freedom to follow his genius whenever and wherever it calls him? – through being obligated to think in public about predetermined subjects at predetermined hours? And to do so before youths! Is such thinking not as it were emasculated from the first! Supposing one day he said to himself: I can't think of anything today, at least not of anything worthwhile – he would still have to present himself and pretend to think!

But, you will object, he is not supposed to be a thinker at all, but at most a learned presenter of what others have thought: and as to that, he will always have something to say his pupils do not already know. – But precisely this – to undertake to appear first and foremost as scholarliness – is the third perilous concession which philosophy makes to the state. Above all when it appears as knowledge of the history of philosophy: for to the genius, who gazes upon things as a poet does, with pure and loving eyes, and cannot immerse himself too deeply in them, grubbing around in countless strange and perverse opinions is the most repugnant and inappropriate occupation imaginable. The learned history of the past has never been the business of a true philosopher, neither in India nor in Greece; and if a professor of philosophy involves himself in such work he must at best be content to have it said of him: he is a fine classical scholar, antiquary, linguist, historian – but never: he is a philosopher. And that, as remarked, is only at best: for most of the learned work done by university philosophers seems to a classicist to be done badly, without scientific rigour and mostly with a detestable tediousness. Who, for example, can clear the history of the Greek philosophers of the soporific miasma spread over it by the learned, though not particularly scientific and unfortunately all too tedious, labours of Ritter, Brandis and Zeller? I for one prefer reading Laertius Diogenes to Zeller, because the former at least breathes the spirit of the

philosophers of antiquity, while the latter breathes neither that nor any other spirit. And finally, what in the world have our young men to do with the history of philosophy? Is the confusion of opinions supposed to discourage them from having opinions of their own? Are they supposed to learn how to join in the rejoicing at how wonderfully far we ourselves have come? Are they supposed even to learn to hate philosophy or to despise it? One might almost think so when one knows how students have to torment themselves for the sake of their philosophical examinations so as to cram into their poor brain the maddest and most caustic notions of the human spirit together with the greatest and hardest to grasp. The only critique of a philosophy that is possible and that proves something, namely trying to see whether one can live in accordance with it, has never been taught at universities: all that has ever been taught is a critique of words by means of other words. And now imagine a youthful head, not very experienced in living, in which fifty systems in the form of words and fifty critiques of them are preserved side-by-side and intermingled – what a desert, what a return to barbarism, what a mockery of an education in philosophy! But of course it is admittedly no such thing; it is a training in passing philosophical examinations, the usual outcome of which is well known to be that the youth to be tested – tested all too severely, alas! – admits to himself with a sigh of relief: ‘Thank God I am no philosopher, but a Christian and a citizen of my country!’

What if this sigh of relief were the state’s actual objective and ‘education in philosophy’ only a means of deterring from philosophy? Let one ask oneself this question. – If it really is so, however, there is only one thing to be feared: that youth may one day finally come to realize to what end philosophy is here being misused. The supreme objective, the production of the philosophical genius, nothing but a pretext? The goal perhaps the prevention of his production? The meaning of it all reversed into its opposite? In that case – woe to the whole complex of state and professorial policy! –

And is something of the sort not supposed to have transpired already? I do not know; but I do know that university philosophy is now the object of universal disrespect and scepticism. This is in part due to the fact that a feebler race now holds sway over the lecture-room; and if Schopenhauer had to write his treatise on university philosophy now, he would no longer have need of the club but would conquer with a reed. They are the heirs and progeny of those pseudo-thinkers whose much-turned heads he battered: their

appearance is sufficiently infantile and dwarfish for us to be reminded of the Indian saying: 'Men are born, in accordance with their deeds, stupid, dumb, deaf, misshapen.' Their fathers deserved such a progeny by virtue of their 'deeds', as the saying has it. That is why it is quite indisputable that academic youth will very soon be able to manage without the philosophy taught at their universities, and that unacademic men are already able to manage without it. One has only to recall one's own student days; in my case, for example, academic philosophers were men towards whom I was perfectly indifferent: I counted them as people who raked together something for themselves out of the results of the other sciences and employed their leisure time in reading newspapers and going to concerts, and for the rest were treated by their own academic comrades with a politely masked contempt. They were credited with knowing little and with never being at a loss for some obscure expression with which to conceal this lack of knowledge. They thus preferred to dwell in gloomy places where the clear-eyed cannot endure to be for long. One of them urged it against the natural sciences: none of them can completely explain to me the simplest process of becoming, so what have any of them to do with me? Another said of history: to him who has ideas it has nothing new to say – in short, they always discovered reasons why it was more philosophical to know nothing than to learn something. If they did engage in learning, their secret motive in doing so was to elude science and to found a dark domain in one or other of its lacunae. Thus they went on ahead of the sciences only in the sense that the deer is ahead of the huntsmen who are after it. Lately they have been content to assert that they are really no more than the frontier guards and spies of the sciences; to which end they are especially served by the teachings of Kant, out of which they are intent upon fashioning an idle scepticism that will soon be of no interest to anybody. Only now and then does one of them still hoist himself up to a little system of metaphysics, with the consequences that usually follow, namely dizziness, headache and nosebleed. After having so often enjoyed no success on this trip into the mist and clouds, after some rude, hard-headed disciple of the real sciences has again and again seized them by the pigtail and pulled them back down, their face habitually assumes an expression of primness and of having been found out. They have lost their confidence, so that none of them lives even a moment for the sake of his philosophy. Formerly some of them believed themselves capable of inventing new religions or of replacing old ones with their philosophical sys-

tems; nowadays they have lost all this old arrogance and are as a rule pious, timid and uncertain folk, never brave like Lucretius or wrathful at human oppression. Neither can one any longer learn from them how to think logically and, with a correct estimation of their powers, they have ceased the formal disputations they used to practise. It is indisputable that the individual sciences are now pursued more logically, cautiously, modestly, inventively, in short more philosophically, than is the case with so-called philosophers: so that everyone will agree with the impartial Englishman Bagehot when he says of our contemporary system-builders: 'Who is not almost sure beforehand that they will contain a strange mixture of truth and error, and therefore that it will not be worthwhile to spend life in reasoning over their consequences? The mass of a system attracts the young and impresses the unwary; but cultivated people are very dubious about it. They are ready to receive hints and suggestions and the smallest real truth is ever welcome. But a large book of deductive philosophy is much to be suspected. Unproved abstract principles without number have been eagerly caught up by sanguine men and then carefully spun out into books and theories which were to explain the whole world. The world goes totally against these abstractions, and it must do so since they require it to go in antagonistic directions.'* If formerly philosophers, especially in Germany, used to be sunk in such profound reflection that they were in constant danger of hitting their head on a beam, they are now supplied with a whole regiment of flappers, such as Swift describes in the *Voyage to Laputa*, to give them a gentle blow now and then on the eyes or elsewhere. Sometimes these blows may be a little too heavy, on which occasions the enraptured thinker can easily forget himself and hit back – something that always results in his discomfiture. Can't you see the beam, you sleepy-head! the flapper then says – and often the philosopher really does see the beam and becomes tractable again. These flappers are history and the natural sciences; they have gradually come so to overawe the German dream- and thought-business which was for long confused with philosophy that these thought-mongers would be only too glad to abandon any attempt at an independent existence; if however they should happen to impede the former or try to fasten leading-strings on to them, the flappers at once start to flap as violently as they can – as though they

*Quoted from Bagehot's *Physics and Politics*. The order of the sentences in the original passage is inverted in Nietzsche's quotation of it, but this appears not to affect the meaning.

wanted to say: 'For a thought-monger like this to profane our history or natural sciences would be the last straw! Away with him!' Then they totter back into their own uncertainty and perplexity: they really do want to get a little natural science into their possession, perhaps like the Herbartians in the shape of empirical psychology, they really do want a little history as well – then they can act, at least in public, as though they were engaged in scientific undertakings, even though in private they would like to consign all philosophy and science to the devil.

But granted that this troop of bad philosophers is ludicrous – and who will not grant it? – to what extent are they also *harmful*? The answer, in brief, is: *to the extent that they make philosophy itself ludicrous*. As long as this officially recognized guild of pseudo-thinkers continues to exist, any effectiveness of a true philosophy will be brought to naught or at least obstructed, and it will suffer this fate through nothing other than the curse of the ludicrous which the representatives of that philosophy have called down upon themselves but which also strikes at philosophy itself. That is why I say it is a demand of culture that philosophy should be deprived of any kind of official or academic recognition and that state and academy be relieved of the task, which they cannot encompass, of distinguishing between real and apparent philosophy. Let the philosophers grow untended, deny them all prospect of place and position within the bourgeois professions, cease to entice them with salaries, more, persecute them, show them disfavour – you will behold miracles! The poor seeming philosophers will flee apart and seek a roof wherever they can find it; one will become a parson, another a schoolmaster, a third will creep into the shelter of an editorial job on a newspaper, a fourth will write instruction manuals for girls' high schools, the most sensible of them will take up the plough and the vainest will go to court. Suddenly it will all be empty, everyone will have flown the nest: for it is easy to get rid of bad philosophers, one only has to cease rewarding them. And that is in any event more advisable than for the state publicly to patronize any philosophy, *whichever it may be*.

The state never has any use for truth as such, but only for truth which is useful to it, more precisely for anything whatever useful to it whether it be truth, half-truth or error. A union of state and philosophy can therefore make sense only if philosophy can promise to be unconditionally useful to the state, that is to say, to set usefulness to the state higher than truth. It would of course be splendid for the state if it also had truth in its pay and service; but the state itself

well knows that it is part of the *essence* of truth that it never accepts pay or stands in anyone's service. Thus what the state has is only false 'truth', a person in a mask; and unfortunately this cannot do for it what it so much desires genuine truth to do: validate and sanctify it. It is true that if a medieval prince wanted to be crowned by the Pope but the Pope refused to do it, he nominated an anti-Pope who then performed for him this service. This might have worked then to some extent; but for a modern state to nominate an anti-philosophy to legitimize it will not work: for it will still have philosophy against it as before, and now more than before. I believe in all seriousness that it is more useful to the state to have nothing at all to do with philosophy, to desire nothing from it and for as long as possible to regard it as something to which it is completely indifferent. If this condition of indifference does not endure, if it becomes dangerous and hostile to the state, then let the state persecute it. – Since the state can have no interest in the university other than seeing it raise useful and devoted citizens of the state, it should hesitate to place this usefulness and devotion in jeopardy by demanding that these young men should sit an examination in philosophy: it could well be, of course, that the dull and incompetent would be frightened off university study altogether by this spectre of a philosophy examination; but this gain could not compensate for the harm done to rash and restless youth by this enforced drudgery; they get to know books forbidden them, begin to criticize their teachers and finally even become aware of the objective of university philosophy and its examinations – not to speak of the misgivings which this circumstance can excite in young theologians and as a result of which they are beginning to die out in Germany, as the ibex is in the Tyrol. – I understand well enough the objections the state could have raised against this whole way of looking at things so long as the fair green shoots of Hegelianism were sprouting up in every field: but now that this harvest has come to nothing, all the expectations built upon it have proved vain and all the barns remained empty – one prefers no longer to raise objections but to turn away from philosophy altogether. One now possesses power: formerly, in Hegel's time, one wanted to possess it – that is a vast distinction. Philosophy has become superfluous to the state because the state no longer needs its sanction. If the state no longer maintains its professors or, as I foresee in the near future, appears to maintain them but in fact neglects them, it derives advantage from doing so – yet it appears to me of more importance that the universities should see

that it is to their benefit too. At least I would think that an institution for the real sciences must see it is good for it no longer to have to keep company with a semi-science. The universities enjoy so little regard, moreover, they must on principle desire the exclusion of disciplines which academics themselves hold in low esteem. For non-academics have good reason for a certain general disrespect for universities; they reproach them with being cowardly, since the small ones fear the big ones and the big ones fear public opinion; with failing to take the lead in questions of higher culture but limping slowly and tardily in the rear, with ceasing to maintain the respected sciences on their true course. Linguistic studies, for example, are pursued more zealously than ever, but no one considers it necessary to educate himself in correct writing and speaking. Indian antiquity is opening its gates, yet the relationship of those who study it to the imperishable works of the Indians, to their philosophies, hardly differs from that of an animal to a lyre: even though Schopenhauer considered its acquaintance with Indian philosophy the greatest advantage our century possessed over all others. Classical antiquity has become a take-it-or-leave-it antiquity and has ceased to produce a classic and exemplary effect; a fact demonstrated by its disciples, who are truly not exemplary. Whither has the spirit of Friedrich August Wolf departed, of which Franz Passow could say it appeared a genuinely patriotic, genuinely human spirit which, if it needed to, possessed the force to set a continent on fire and in ferment – where has this spirit gone? On the other hand, the spirit of the journalist is penetrating the universities more and more, and not seldom under the name of philosophy; a smooth, highly coloured mode of address, Faust and Nathan the Wise constantly invoked, the language and views of our nauseating literary journals, lately even chattering about our sacred German music and the demand for chairs for the study of Goethe and Schiller – all signs that the spirit of the university is beginning to confuse itself with the *Zeitgeist*. It thus seems to me of the first importance that there should be created outside the universities a higher tribunal whose function would be to supervise and judge these institutions in regard to the education they are promoting; and as soon as philosophy departs from the universities, and therewith purifies itself of all unworthy considerations and prejudices, it must constitute precisely such a tribunal: devoid of official authority, without salaries or honours, it will know how to perform its duty free of the *Zeitgeist* and free from fear of it – in short, as Schopenhauer lived, as the judge of the so-called culture

around him. In this way the philosopher, if instead of amalgamating with it he supervises it from a dignified distance, is able to be of use to the university.

Finally, however – of what concern to us is the existence of the state, the promotion of universities, when what matters above all is the existence of philosophy on earth! or – to leave absolutely no doubt as to what I think – if it is so unspeakably more vital that a philosopher should appear on earth than that a state or a university should continue to exist. The dignity of philosophy can increase in the measure that servitude to public opinion and the danger to freedom increases; it was at its greatest during the earthquake attending the fall of the Roman republic and during the imperial era, when its name and that of history became *ingrata principibus nomina*.^{*} Brutus demonstrates more for its dignity than does Plato; he belonged to an age in which ethics ceased to be platitudinous. If philosophy is little regarded at present, one ought only to ask why it is that no great general or statesman at present has anything to do with it – the answer is simply that at the time he sought it he encountered a feeble phantom bearing the name of philosophy, a scholarly lecture-hall wisdom and lecture-hall cautiousness; in short, it is because in his early years philosophy became to him something ludicrous. What it ought to be to him, however, is something fearsome, and men called to the search for power ought to know what a source of the heroic wells within it. Let an American tell them what a great thinker who arrives on this earth signifies as a new centre of tremendous forces. ‘Beware’, says Emerson, ‘when the great God lets loose a thinker on this planet. Then all things are at risk. It is as when a conflagration has broken out in a great city, and no man knows what is safe, or where it will end. There is not a piece of science but its flank may be turned tomorrow; there is not any literary reputation, not the so-called eternal names of fame, that may not be revised and condemned; the things which are dear to men at this hour are so on account of the ideas which have emerged on their mental horizon, and which cause the present order of things, as a tree bears its apples. *A new degree of culture would instantly revolutionize the entire system of human pursuits.*’[†] Now, if such thinkers are dangerous, it is of course clear why our academic thinkers are not dangerous; for their thoughts grow as peacefully out of tradition as

^{*}*ingrata principibus nomina*: names displeasing to princes

[†]Quoted from Emerson’s essay entitled ‘Circles’.

any tree ever bore its apples: they cause no alarm, they remove nothing from its hinges; and of all their art and aims there could be said what Diogenes said when someone praised a philosopher in his presence: 'How can he be considered great, since he has been a philosopher for so long and has never yet *disturbed* anybody?' That, indeed, ought to be the epitaph of university philosophy: 'it disturbed nobody'. But this, of course, is praise of an old woman rather than of the goddess of truth, and it is not to be wondered at if those who know that goddess only as an old woman are themselves very unmanly and thus, as might be expected, completely ignored by the men of power.

But if this is how things stand in our time, then the dignity of philosophy is trampled into the dust; it has even become something ludicrous, it would seem, or a matter of complete indifference to anyone: so that it is the duty of all its true friends to bear witness against this confusion, and at the least to show that it is only its false and unworthy servants who are ludicrous or a matter of indifference. It would be better still if they demonstrated by their deeds that love of truth is something fearsome and mighty.

Schopenhauer demonstrated both these things – and will demonstrate them more and more as day succeeds day.