Space for Notes

Untimely Meditations
Third Part
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Schopenhauer as Educator*

(Selected Text)

I

A traveler who had seen many countries, peoples and several of the earth's continents was asked what attribute he had found in men everywhere. He said: "They have a propensity for laziness." To others, it seems that he should have said: "They are all fearful. 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 there will be no second chance for his oneness to coalesce from the strangely variegated assortment that he is: he knows it but hides it like a bad conscience—why? From fear of his neighbor, who demands conformity and cloaks himself with it. But what is it that forces the individual to fear his neighbor, to think and act like a member of a herd, and to have no joy in himself? Modesty, perhaps, in a few rare cases. For the majority it is idleness, inertia, in short that propensity for laziness of which the traveler spoke. He is right: men are even lazier than they are fearful, and fear most of all the burdensome nuisance of absolute honesty and nakedness. Artists alone hate this lax procession in borrowed manners 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, to himself unique in each movement of his muscles, even more, that by being strictly consistent in uniqueness, he is beautiful, and worth regarding, as a work of nature, and never boring. When the great thinker despises human beings, he despises their laziness: for it is on account of their laziness that men seem like manufactured goods, unimportant, and unworthy to be associated with or instructed. Human beings who do not want to belong to the mass need only to stop being comfortable; follow their conscience, which cries out: "Be yourself! All that you are now doing, thinking, and desiring is not really yourself."

Every youthful soul hears this call day and night and trembles throughout; because, thinking of its liberation, it suspects that its measure of happiness is determined from all eternity: a happiness it can never achieve so long as it lies in the chains of fear and convention. And how bleak and senseless life can be without this liberation! There is no more unpleasant and barren a creature in this world than the man who has evaded his genius and who now looks askance left and right, squinting behind him and all about. In the end, one cannot grasp such a man, since he is completely exterior, without core, a tattered, painted sack of clothes, a ragtag ghost that cannot provoke even fear and certainly not sympathy. And if it is true to say of the lazy that they kill time, then it follows that an era which sees its welfare in public opinion, that is to say private laziness, is a time that really will be killed: I mean that it will be erased from the history of the true liberation of life. How adverse later generations will be to deal with the inheritance of an era ruled, not by living men, but by pseudo-men governed by public opinion; why perhaps our age may be to some distant posterity the darkest and least known—because least human—period of history. I go along the new streets of our cities and think how, of all these horrific houses which the generation of public opinion has built, not one will be standing in a century, and how the opinions of these house-builders will no

doubt by then likewise have collapsed. How hopeful are all who do not feel themselves to be citizens of this time; since they are so, it would be useless to serve to kill their time—their desire is rather to arouse their time to life in order to live on themselves in this life.

In addition, if the future gave us no hope for anything—our own existence now must encourage us most strongly to live according to our own laws and standards: it is an inexplicable fact that we live precisely today, and had an infinite time to develop—nevertheless, we possess only a short-lived today to show why and to what end we evolved. We have only ourselves to answer for our existence; consequently we want to be the real helmsman of this existence and not permit our existence to be a thoughtless accident. One must take it somewhat boldly and dangerously: especially, in any case, since one will always lose it. Why cling to this clod of earth, this way of life, why pay attention to what your neighbor says? It is so provincial to oblige oneself to opinions which, just a couple of hundred miles away, are no longer binding. Orient and Occident are chalklines drawn before us to fool our timidity. I want to make an attempt to reach freedom, the youthful soul says to itself; and it will be prevented by the fact that, coincidentally, two nations hate and fight one another, or that two continents are separated by an ocean, or that all around it a religion is taught which, nevertheless, did not exist a few thousand years ago. All that is not you, it says to itself. Nobody can build the bridge for you to walk across the river of life, no one but you yourself alone. There are, to be sure, countless paths and bridges and demi-gods which would carry you across this river; but only at the cost of yourself; you would pawn yourself and lose. There is in the world only one way, on which nobody can go, except you: where does it lead? Do not ask, go along with it. Who was it who said: "a man never rises higher than when he does not know where his way can still lead him"? [Oliver Cromwell]

But how can we find ourselves again? How can man know himself? He is a dark and veiled thing; and if the hare has seven skins, man can shed seventy times seven and still not be able to say: "this is really you, this is no longer slough." In addition, it is a painful and dangerous mission to tunnel into oneself and make a forced descent into the shaft of one's being by the nearest path. Doing so can easily cause damage that no physician can heal. And besides: what need should there be for it, when given all the evidence of our nature, our friendships and enmities, our glance and the clasp of our hand, our memory and that which we forget, our books and our handwriting. This, however, is the means to plan the most important inquiry. Let the youthful soul look back on life with the question: what have you truly loved up to now, what has elevated your soul, what has mastered it and at the same time delighted it? Place these venerated objects before you in a row, and perhaps they will yield for you, through their nature and their sequence, a law, the fundamental law of your true self. Compare these objects, see how one complements, expands, surpasses, transfigures another, how they form a stepladder upon which you have climbed up to yourself as you are now; for your true nature lies, not hidden deep within you, but immeasurably high above you, or at least above that which you normally take to be yourself. Your true educators and formative teachers reveal to you what the real raw material of your being is, something quite uneducable, yet in any case accessible only with difficulty, bound, paralyzed: your educators can be only your liberators. And that is the secret of all education: it does not lend artificial limbs, wax noses or spectacled eyes—rather, what can give these things is only the afterimage of education. But liberation is: the clearing away of all weeds, debris, vermin—that want to infringe upon the tender buds of the plant—an effusion of light and warmth,

the gentle, quiet rustling of nocturnal rain, it is imitation and worship of nature, where nature is disposed to being motherly and merciful, it is the perfecting of nature when it prevents her cruel and merciless attacks and turns them to good, when it draws a veil over the expressions of nature's stepmotherly disposition and her sad lack of understanding.

Certainly, there may be other means of finding oneself, of coming around to oneself out of the daze in which one usually strays as in a gloomy cloud, but I know of none better than to reflect upon one's true educators and formative teachers. 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.

II

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 sometime 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 the maxim advocating a harmonious development should be applied only to more mediocre natures in which, though there may reside a categories 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 center? And so perhaps these two maxims are not opposites at all? Perhaps the one simply says that man should have a center 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 mold 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 designating 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 crookbacked 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, Christianity 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 Christian morality 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-humor 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 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 that 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 discovered 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, good-natured 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 well-being ourselves. We feel that here we shall always find a bracing air; here there is a certain inimitable unaffectedness and naturalness such 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 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. [...]
Schopenhauer has a second quality in common with Montaigne, as well as honesty: a cheerfulness that really cheers. *Aliis laetus, sibi sapiens* [cheerful for others, wise for himself]. 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, tear-filled 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 created—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' 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 when 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 the semi-thinker and semi-artist has exhaled over it the vapor 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!" [Goethe: *Italienische Reise*, Oct. 9, 1786.]

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 analyze 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 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 ["Tragelaphen-Menschheit" meaning "spiral horned beast"] 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.

III

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 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 visible 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 sovereignty—which is at bottom creative sovereignty over oneself—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 professional philosophy. Schopenhauer had little patience with the scholarly caste, 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 highest 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 knowledge." Thus what I was trying to say is that the philosopher in Germany has more and more to unlearn how to be "pure knowledge": and it is to precisely that end that Schopenhauer as a human being can serve as an example.
[...]
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 presupposed to harbor countless opinions simply because these are the ruling opinions of the time; every gesture which is not clearly a denial counts as an 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; 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. [...] Yet there will always be demi-gods who can endure to live, and to 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 skepticism 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 endeavor 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." [Letter to Wilhelmine von Zenge, Mar. 22, 1801.] When indeed will men 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 heights of skeptical 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. [...] the challenge of every great philosophy [...] always says this: 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 the hieroglyphics of universal life. And this is how Schopenhauer's philosophy should 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 honors 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 harbors 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. [...] 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.

[....]
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, honor—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, 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 knowledge"; 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!" [From Goethe's Faust, Part 1 Scene 1.] The third danger is that of petrifaction, 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 petrifaction: 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 loved, 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 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 incompatible, 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 bound in his age appears as a disfiguring illness, as thin and pale, as 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 surmounted, 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.

IV

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 vapor of the brain, they ought to return to smoke and vapor. 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* [dark age], 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 [i.e., with the founding of the Reich in 1871] and that those who persist in harboring 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 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 honorable 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 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

destroy 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, 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, or 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?" [In Wagner's *Tannhäuser*, Act II.] 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 colorless, 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 colors in the picture of modern life, the other side of the picture is in no way more gratifying but only more disturbing. There are certain 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 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 almost 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 snake and currish 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 skeptical 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-traveler. 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 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 theater 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 Catilinist. 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." [In *Wilhelm Meister Lehrjahre* (1795-6), Book 8.]

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 willfulness and to prepare that complete overturning and conversion of his being, which it is the real meaning of life to lead up to. The utterance or 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

anyone 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" [In *Faust*, Part I Scene 3]; 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-humored 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 is a heroic one. He leads it who, in whatever shape or form, struggles against great difficulties for something that is to the benefit 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 labor, ill success and the world's ingratitude, is extinguished in Nirvana." [From Schopenhauer's *Parerga und Paralipomena: "Nachträge zur Lehre von der Bejahung und Verneinung des Willens zum Leben."*] 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, 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 do 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 theater of politics, or how they strut about in a hundred masquerades, as youths, men, graybeards, fathers, citizens, priests, officials, merchants, mindful solely of their comedy and 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 unworthy 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 his 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.

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