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Five Prefaces to Five Unwritten Books

Friedrich Nietzsche

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Friedrich Nietzsche

Modern English edition

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Five Prefaces to Five Unwritten Books

For Mrs. Cosima Wagner

With warm respect and admiration, and as an answer to questions she asked in person and in letters. Written down in a happy mood during the Christmas days of 1872.

Titles of the books:

1.

On the Passion for Truth.

2.

On the Future of Our Schools and Universities.

3.

The Greek State.

4.

On How Schopenhauer's Philosophy Relates to a German Culture.

5.

Homer's Contest.

1. On the Passion for Truth

Preface.

Is fame really nothing more than the tastiest treat for our vanity? Yet the longing for fame is tied to the rarest people. And even in them, it is tied to their rarest moments. These are the moments of sudden flash of insight. In such moments a person stretches out his arm as if giving a command, as if he were creating a world. He draws light out of himself and pours it out all around him. Then he is filled with a happy certainty: what lifted him so high and carried him so far away, that is, the peak of this one single feeling, must never be kept from the people who come after him. He sees that all future people will always need these rarest flashes of insight, and in that need he sees why his fame is necessary. Humanity, for all time to come, needs him. That moment of insight is the essence and the summary of his truest self. So he believes that, as the person of that moment, he will live forever. Everything else about himself he throws away and leaves to decay: it is just waste, rot, vanity, animal nature, or simply something extra that is not needed.

We watch everything that disappears and dies with displeasure. Often we are even amazed, as if we were seeing something that should really be impossible. When a tall tree crashes down, it upsets us, and a collapsing mountain torments us. Every New Year's Eve makes us feel the mystery of the clash between being and change. But what offends a moral person most of all is the idea that a moment when the world reached its highest perfection could vanish like a passing flash of light, with no one after it, no heirs. Instead, his command to himself says this: whatever once existed to carry forward the idea of "human being" in a more beautiful way must also exist forever. That

the great moments form a chain; that, like a range of mountain peaks, they link humanity together across thousands of years; that what was greatest in a past age is still great for me; and that the hopeful, half-sensed faith of the longing for fame will come true: that is the basic idea of culture.

The demand that greatness should last forever sets off the terrible struggle of culture. For everything else that is still alive shouts "No!" The ordinary, the small, the common fills every corner of the world. It is like the heavy air of the earth that we are all forced to breathe. It hangs around greatness like smoke. It throws itself in the way that greatness must travel to live forever, and it blocks, muffles, chokes, clouds and deceives. That road runs through human brains! Through the brains of miserable, short-lived creatures who are handed over to their narrow needs. They keep coming up again and again to face the same hardships, and with great effort they keep ruin away from themselves for a little while. They want to live, to live a little, at any price. Who among them would even suspect that difficult relay race with a torch through which greatness alone keeps living? And yet, again and again, a few people wake up who feel so blessed when they look at that greatness that it seems to them as if human life were a wonderful thing. To them, the finest fruit of this bitter plant is to know that once someone walked proudly and calmly through this existence, another walked through it with deep thought, a third with compassion. But all of them left behind one single lesson: the one who lives life most beautifully is the one who does not care much about it. While the common person takes this short stretch of being so gloomily and seriously, those others, on their journey toward living forever, managed to laugh at it like the gods on Olympus, or at least to mock it with noble scorn. Often they went down into their graves with irony, for what was there in them to bury?

The boldest knights among these people hungry for fame, the ones who believe they will find their coat of arms hanging on a constellation in the sky, are to be found among the philosophers. Their work does not point them toward an "audience," toward stirring up the crowds or the cheering applause of the people of their own time. Walking the road alone is part of who they are. Their gift is the rarest in nature and, in a certain sense, the most unnatural. On top of that, it shuts out even others with the same gift and is hostile to them. The wall of their self-sufficiency has to be made of diamond if it is not going to be smashed and broken, because everything, both people and nature, is moving against them. Their journey toward living forever is harder and more blocked than any other. And yet no one can believe more firmly than the philosopher that he will reach the goal. This is because he has no idea where else he could stand, except on the widely spread wings of all the ages. Looking down on the present and on the passing moment is simply part of the philosophical way of seeing things. He has the truth. Let the wheel of time roll wherever it wants; it will never be able to escape the truth.

It is important to learn from such people that they really once lived. You could never just imagine, as an idle possibility, the pride of the wise Heraclitus, whom we can take as our example. In itself, every effort to know things seems, by its very nature, to be unsatisfied and unsatisfying. So no one, unless history has taught him otherwise, would be willing to believe in such kingly self-respect, in such limitless conviction of being the only lucky suitor whom truth has accepted. Such people live in their own solar system, and that is where you have to look for them. Pythagoras and Empedocles also treated themselves with a superhuman respect, even with an almost religious awe. But the bond of pity, linked to their great belief that souls pass from body to body and that all living things are one, led them back to other people, to save them. As for the feeling of loneliness that filled the

hermit of the temple of Artemis at Ephesus, you can only get a hint of it if you are freezing in the wildest, emptiest mountain wasteland. No overwhelming feeling of pity, no wish to help and to save, flows out from him. He is like a star with no atmosphere around it. His eye burns, but it is turned inward; when it looks outward, it looks dead and icy, as if only for show. All around him, the waves of madness and foolishness beat right against the fortress of his pride, and he turns away from them in disgust. But people with feeling hearts also shy away from such a tragic mask. Such a being might seem easier to understand in some remote shrine, among statues of gods, next to cold and grand buildings. Among people, Heraclitus, as a human being, was unbelievable. And if he was ever seen watching noisy children at play, then he was surely thinking about something no mortal had ever thought about at such a moment: the game of Zeus, the child playing with the world, and the eternal joke of a world being smashed and a world being born. He did not need people, not even for his knowing. Everything one might find out by asking them, everything the other wise men before him had worked hard to find out by asking, meant nothing to him. "I searched for myself and explored myself," he said, using a word that people used for seeking out the meaning of an oracle. It was as if he, and no one else, were the one who truly fulfilled and completed that saying from Delphi: "Know yourself."

But whatever he heard from this oracle inside himself, he took to be wisdom that would never die and would always be worth explaining, in the same way that the prophecies of the Sibyl were said to be undying. It is enough for people in the most distant future. Let them simply interpret it the way they interpret the sayings of an oracle, sayings which, like the god at Delphi himself, "neither tell nor hide." Heraclitus announces it "without laughter, without decoration or the smell of perfume," and more as if "foaming at the mouth." Even so, it *must* reach across the thousands of years still to come. Because the

world will always need the truth, it will always need Heraclitus, even though he does not need the world. What does *he* care about his fame! "Fame among mortals who keep flowing away!" he cries out mockingly. Fame is something for singers and poets. It is also for the men who were known as "wise" before him. Let them swallow that tastiest treat for their vanity. For him, that kind of food is too cheap and common. His fame matters to people, not to him. His self-love is really a love of truth. And it is exactly this truth that tells him: humanity needs to live forever through him, not the man Heraclitus who needs to live forever.

The truth! The wild, dreamy madness of a god! What do human beings care about the truth!

And what was this "truth" of Heraclitus, anyway!

And where has it gone? It is a dream that has faded away, wiped off the faces of humanity along with other dreams! And it was not the first one to go!

Perhaps a demon with no feelings at all would have nothing more to say about everything we proudly call, using grand images, "world history" and "truth" and "fame" than these words:

"In some faraway corner of the universe, which is poured out and twinkling across countless solar systems, there was once a star where clever animals invented *knowing*. It was the most arrogant and most dishonest minute in the history of the world, but still only a minute. After nature had taken just a few breaths, the star froze over, and the clever animals had to die. And it was about time. Although they had bragged that they knew a great deal, in the end they found out, to their great annoyance, that they had known everything wrongly. They died, and as they died they cursed the truth. That was the way of these desperate animals who had invented knowing."

This would be the fate of human beings if they were nothing more than animals that know. The truth would drive them to despair and destruction: the truth that they are forever doomed to live in untruth. What suits human beings, and only this, is to believe that truth can be reached, to believe in an illusion that comes toward them in a friendly, trusting way. Doesn't a person actually live *by* being fooled again and again, all the time? Doesn't nature keep almost everything secret from him, even the things closest to him, for example his own body, of which he has only a tricky, magician-like "awareness"? He is locked inside this awareness, and nature threw away the key. Oh, how dangerous is the curiosity of the philosopher who wants, just once, to peek through a crack, out of the room of awareness and down below! Then perhaps he senses what human beings are resting on: on something greedy, never satisfied, disgusting, merciless and murderous. And people rest on it calmly, because they know nothing about it, as if they were hanging in their dreams on the back of a tiger.

"Let him hang there," cries *art*. "Wake him up," cries the philosopher, full of passion for truth. But while the philosopher thinks he is shaking the sleeper awake, he himself sinks into an even deeper, magical sleep. Maybe then he dreams about "Ideas" or about living forever. Art is more powerful than knowledge, because *art* wants life, while knowledge, in the end, reaches only one final goal: destruction.

2. Thoughts on the Future of Our Schools and Universities

Preface

The reader I hope for must have three qualities. He must be calm and read without hurrying. He must not keep pushing himself and his own "education" into the way. And finally, he must not expect, at the end, some kind of result in the form of new charts and tables. I do not promise tables or new timetables for high schools and other schools. In fact, I admire the enormously strong nature of those people who can travel the whole road: starting deep down in plain experience, climbing all the way up to the heights of the real problems of culture, and then coming back down again into the lowlands of the driest rules and the neatest, most fussy tables. I, on the other hand, am happy if I manage, out of breath, to climb a fairly big mountain and can enjoy a wider, freer view from the top. So in this book I will never be able to satisfy the people who love tables. I can certainly see a time coming when serious people, working together in the service of a completely renewed and purified education, will once again become the lawmakers of everyday schooling, meaning the schooling that leads to that very education. Then they will probably have to make tables again. But how far away that time is! And how much will have happened by then! Perhaps between that time and today lies the destruction of the high school, perhaps even the destruction of the university, or at least such a total reshaping of these schools and universities that their old tables will look to later eyes like leftovers from the Stone Age, when people lived in huts built on stilts over lakes.

This book is meant for calm readers. It is for people who have not yet been dragged into the dizzy rush of our speeding age, which rolls

along like a great wheeled machine. It is for people who do not yet feel a kind of worshipful pleasure in throwing themselves under its wheels, the way people once threw themselves before an idol. In other words, it is for people who have not yet gotten used to judging the value of everything by how much time it saves or wastes. That means it is for very few people. But these people "still have time." Without blushing in shame before themselves, they may gather together the most fruitful and powerful moments of their day to think about the future of our education. They may even believe that they are spending their day in a truly useful and worthy way until evening comes, namely in thinking about the generation to come. Such a person has not yet forgotten how to think while he reads. He still understands the secret of reading between the lines. In fact, he is so wasteful by nature that he even goes on thinking about what he has read, perhaps long after he has put the book down. And he does this not to write a review or yet another book, but simply in order to think! You careless spendthrift! You are my reader. For you will be calm enough to set out with the author on a long road. The author cannot see where this road ends, but he must honestly believe in its goal, so that a later generation, perhaps a distant one, may see with their own eyes what we, blind and led only by instinct, are feeling our way toward. But if the reader thinks that all it takes is one quick leap, one cheerful act, and if he believes that everything important has been achieved with some new "organization" brought in by the state, then we must fear that he has understood neither the author nor the real problem.

Finally, the third and most important demand on the reader is this: he must under no circumstances do what modern people do, and constantly push himself and his own "education" into the way, as if it were a measuring stick, as if it gave him a standard for judging all things. We wish that he were educated enough to think very little of his own education, even to look down on it. Then he could trust him-

self most fully to the guidance of the author. For the author dared to speak to him only from a place of not knowing, and of knowing that he does not know. The author claims nothing for himself above other people except one thing: a strongly stirred feeling for what is special about our present-day barbarism, for whatever marks us, the barbarians of the nineteenth century, as different from other barbarians. Now, with this book in his hand, he is searching for people who are driven back and forth by a similar feeling. Let yourselves be found, you lonely few, whose existence I believe in! You selfless ones, who suffer in your own selves the pain of the decay of the German spirit! You thoughtful watchers, whose eyes are unable to slide hastily from one surface to the next! You high-minded ones, whom Aristotle praised for going through life hesitant and inactive, except when a great honor and a great task call for you! I call on you. Just this once, do not crawl back into the cave of your solitude and your distrust. Imagine that this book is meant to be your herald, the messenger who announces your coming. And once you yourselves appear on the battlefield, in your own armor, who would still feel like looking back at the herald who called you? —

3. The Greek State

Preface.

We modern people have two ideas that the Greeks did not have. They were given to us, you could say, as a comfort for a world that behaves completely like slaves, yet is nervously afraid of the word "slave." We talk about "human dignity" and about the "dignity of work." Everyone struggles and suffers just to keep a miserable life going in a miserable way. This terrible hardship forces people into work that wears them out and eats them up. And now and then the human being, led astray by the Will — or, to say it more exactly, the human mind — stares at this work in wonder, as if it were something full of dignity. But for work to deserve such honorable titles, one thing would be needed first of all: existence itself, for which work is only a painful tool, would have to have more dignity and value than serious philosophies and religions have so far seen in it. What else can we find in the hard labor of all those millions than the drive to exist at any price? It is the same all-powerful drive that makes stunted plants push their roots into bare rock where there is no soil!

Out of this horrible fight to survive, only a few single individuals can rise to the surface. And right away they are kept busy by the noble dream-pictures of artistic culture, so that they do not fall into practical pessimism — into actually giving up on life — which Nature hates as the truly unnatural thing. Look at the modern world. Compared with the Greek world, it mostly produces freaks and centaurs, creatures made of parts that do not belong together. In it, the single person is pieced together from colorful scraps, like that imaginary creature described at the start of Horace's book on the art of poetry. In this modern world, the same person often shows two hungers at

once: the greed of the fight to survive and the need for art. Out of this unnatural blending came a pressing need: to excuse the first hunger in front of the need for art, and even to make it seem holy. That is why people believe in "human dignity" and the "dignity of work."

The Greeks do not need such made-up ideas, such hallucinations dressed up as concepts. Among them it is said with frightening openness that work is a shame. And a more hidden wisdom, one that speaks more rarely but is alive everywhere, added that the human being, too, is a shameful and pitiful nothing, "the dream of a shadow." Work is a shame because existence has no value in itself. But even when this same existence shines in the tempting jewelry of artistic illusions, and now really seems to have value in itself, the statement still holds: work is a shame. It holds because people feel it is impossible for someone who is fighting just to stay alive to be an *artist*. In modern times, it is not the person who needs art but the slave who decides what everyone thinks. By his very nature, the slave has to give all his circumstances false, flattering names just to be able to live. Ghosts like human dignity and the dignity of work are the poor products of slavery hiding from itself. What an unhappy time, when the slave needs such ideas, when he is stirred up to think about himself and beyond himself! What unhappy tempters, who destroyed the slave's innocence by giving him the fruit from the tree of knowledge! Now the slave has to keep himself going from one day to the next with see-through lies like these. Anyone who looks more deeply can recognize them in the so-called "equal rights for all," or in the so-called "basic rights of man," of man simply as man, or in the dignity of work. The slave must not be allowed to understand at what level and at what height one can even begin to speak of "dignity." That is only where the individual goes completely beyond himself, and no longer has to have children and work just to keep his own life going.

And even at this height of "work," the Greeks are sometimes overcome by a feeling that looks like a sense of shame. Plutarch, with an ancient Greek instinct, once says this: no young man of noble birth, on seeing the statue of Zeus at Pisa, would wish to become a Phidias himself, the sculptor who made it. Nor, on seeing the statue of Hera at Argos, would he wish to become a Polyclitus, who made that one. And just as little would he wish to be the poets Anacreon, Philetas, or Archilochus, however much he enjoyed their poems. For the Greek, making art falls under the same unworthy idea of work as any common manual trade. But when the forceful power of the artistic drive works inside him, then he *must* create, and he must give himself over to that hardship of work. Think of a father who admires the beauty and talents of his child, but thinks about the act that made the child with an embarrassed dislike. It was the same for the Greek. His joyful wonder at beauty did not blind him to how that beauty came into being. To him, this change looked like all change in nature: a huge hardship, a pushing and squeezing to get into existence. People see the act of making children as something to hide out of a sense of shame, even though in that act a person serves a higher goal than just keeping himself alive. That same feeling also put a veil over the birth of great works of art, even though they open the way to a higher form of existence, just as that act opens the way to a new generation. So the sense of shame seems to show up wherever a person is only a tool of forces of the Will that are endlessly greater than he himself, as a single individual, is allowed to count for.

Now we have the general idea under which we can sort the feelings the Greeks had about work and slavery. They saw both as a necessary shame, something you feel a sense of shame about: a shame and a necessity at the same time. Hidden in this sense of shame is an unconscious knowing: that the real goal *needs* these conditions. But in that very *need* lies the horrible, predator-like side of Nature, like a

Sphinx, which in the glorious picture of a free, artistic cultural life so beautifully holds out the body of a young woman. Education, which is mainly a true need for art, rests on a frightening foundation. And that foundation shows itself in the dim, half-aware feeling of a sense of shame. For there to be a wide, deep, and fertile soil in which art can grow, the huge majority must be slavishly bound to the hardship of life, serving a minority — working *beyond* what they themselves need. At their expense, through their extra work, that privileged class is to be lifted out of the fight to survive, so that it can create and satisfy a whole new world of needs.

So we have to bring ourselves to state a truth that sounds cruel: *slavery belongs to the very nature of a culture*. It is a truth, of course, that leaves no doubt about what existence is really worth in itself. *This truth* is the vulture that gnaws at the liver of the one who, like Prometheus, works to bring culture forward. Prometheus brought fire to humans and was punished with a vulture eating his liver, and this truth torments the friend of culture in the same way. The misery of people who already live hard lives must be made even worse, so that a small number of people, living like gods on Mount Olympus, can create the world of art. This is the source of the fury that communists and socialists, and also their paler offspring, the 'white race' of the 'liberals', have always fed against the arts, and also against the classical world of ancient Greece and Rome. Suppose culture really depended on what a people chose to want. Suppose there were no inescapable powers at work here, powers that set the law and the limits for each person. Then the contempt for culture, the praise of poverty of mind, the smashing of art's claims the way people once smashed holy images, would be *more* than a rebellion of the oppressed masses against a few individuals who live like drones, the bees that do no work. It would be the cry of pity tearing down the walls of culture. The drive for justice, for everyone to suffer an equal share, would

flood over every other idea. And in fact, an overflowing amount of pity has, for short periods and in a few places, broken through all the dams that hold up the life of culture. A rainbow of loving pity and of peace appeared when Christianity first began to shine, and under that rainbow its most beautiful fruit was born: the Gospel of John. But there are also examples of powerful religions that, for long periods, turn a certain level of culture to stone, and with a merciless sickle cut off everything that still wants to keep growing strongly. Because one thing must not be forgotten: the same cruelty we found at the heart of every culture also lies at the heart of every powerful religion, and in the nature of *power* in general, which is always evil. So we will understand just as well when a culture, crying out for freedom, or at least for justice, breaks down a fortress of religious claims that has been piled up too high. Whatever wants to live in this terrible arrangement of things, which means whatever has to live, is at its core a copy of the original pain and the original contradiction. So to our eyes, which are organs made to fit this world and this earth, it must appear as an endless greed for existence, and as something forever contradicting itself in the form of time, that is, as *change*. Every moment eats up the moment before it. Every birth is the death of countless beings. Creating life and killing are one and the same. That is why we may compare glorious culture to a conqueror dripping with blood, who, in his victory parade, drags along the defeated as slaves, chained to his chariot. A kindly power has blinded the eyes of these slaves, so that, while they are almost crushed under the chariot's wheels, they still shout: 'Dignity of work!' 'Human dignity!' Culture, like Cleopatra, the luxury-loving queen, keeps throwing the most priceless pearls into her golden cup, just as Cleopatra once dissolved a pearl in her wine. These pearls are the tears of pity for the slave and for the slave's misery. The huge social hardships of our time were born from how soft and pampered modern people have become, not from true and deep compassion for that misery. And if it should be true that the

Greeks were destroyed by their slavery, then something else is far more certain: that we will be destroyed by the *lack* of slavery. Neither early Christianity nor the old Germanic peoples found slavery offensive in any way, let alone something to condemn. How uplifting it is for us to think about the serf of the Middle Ages! He had a relationship of rights and customs with the lord above him that was strong on the inside and also tender, and his narrow life was protected and fenced in with deep meaning. How uplifting — and how much of a reproach to us!

Some people cannot think about the way society is put together without feeling sad. They have learned to see it as the constant, painful birth of those special, set-apart people of culture, in whose service everything else must use itself up. Such a person will no longer be fooled by the false shine that modern thinkers have spread over where the state comes from and what it means. For what can the state mean to us, except as the tool that gets the social process I just described moving, and makes sure it keeps going without being stopped? However strong the urge to live together may be in individual people, it is only the iron clamp of the state that squeezes the larger masses together so tightly that society *must* now split apart, like a chemical separation, and build itself into a new pyramid shape. But where does this sudden power of the state come from, when its goal lies far beyond what any single person can understand, and far beyond any single person's selfishness? How did the slave *come into being*, the blind mole of culture who digs in the dark? The Greeks let us in on the secret through their instinct about the rules between peoples. Even when their civilization and humanity were at their ripest and fullest, this instinct never stopped calling out, as if from a mouth made of bronze, words like these: 'The defeated belong to the winner, with wife and child, property and life. Force gives the first *right*, and

there is no right that is not, at its foundation, arrogance, theft of power, and violence.'

Here we see once again how pitilessly and rigidly nature, in order to arrive at society, forges for itself the cruel tool of the state. That tool is the *conqueror* with the iron hand, who is nothing more than that instinct taking on a visible, living form. When someone looks at the greatness and power of such conquerors, which cannot be put into words, they sense that these conquerors are only the means of a purpose. That purpose shows itself through them, and yet stays hidden from them. It is as if a magic will flowed out from them. The weaker forces join them so mysteriously fast. And as that avalanche of force suddenly swells, those weaker forces are wonderfully changed, under the spell of that creative core, into a bond of belonging together that did not exist before.

We see how little the conquered soon care about the horrifying way the state began. In fact, history tells us less well about no kind of event than about how those sudden, violent, bloody grabs for power came about, grabs that cannot be explained, at least on *one* point. We see, instead, that people's hearts swell without their meaning to toward the magic of the state as it takes shape, sensing an invisible, deep purpose, where calculating reason can only see forces added together. We even see the state now being looked upon with burning devotion as the goal and the peak of every individual's sacrifices and duties. All of this tells us how enormously necessary the state is. Without it, nature could not manage, by way of society, to reach its salvation in appearance, in the mirror of the genius. What kind of knowledge is not overpowered by this instinctive delight in the state! You would think that anyone who looks closely at how the state came about would, from then on, look for their happiness only by keeping a shuddering distance from it. And where can you not see the monuments of its birth: ravaged countries, destroyed cities, people turned

savage, and hatred between nations that eats everything up! The state was born in shame. For most people it is a source of toil that never stops flowing. Again and again, over and over in history, it is the devouring torch that burns up the human race. And yet it is a sound that makes us forget ourselves, a battle cry that has inspired countless truly heroic deeds. It is perhaps the highest and most respected thing of all for the blind and selfish masses, who only in the huge moments of the state's life have that strange look of greatness on their faces!

But the Greeks, when we look at the unique, sun-bright peak of their art, are people we have to picture from the very start as the 'purely political human beings'. And truly, history knows no second example of such a terrible unleashing of the political urge, of such a total sacrifice of every other interest in the service of this instinct for the state. At most, for similar reasons, one might give the same title, by comparison, to the people of the Renaissance in Italy. In the Greeks this urge is so overloaded that it keeps starting to rage against itself, sinking its teeth into its own flesh. Think of the bloody jealousy of city against city and party against party, the murderous greed of those small wars, the tiger-like triumph over the corpse of a slain enemy. In short, think of the endless repeating of those Trojan scenes of battle and horror, which Homer, a true Greek, stands before us gazing at, lost in pleasure. What does this innocent, childlike barbarism of the Greek state point to? Where does it find its excuse before the judge's seat of eternal justice? Proud and calm, the state steps up before that judge. And by the hand it leads a gloriously blooming woman: Greek society. It was for this Helen that the state fought those wars. What gray-bearded judge would dare to condemn it here?

We sense a mysterious link here between the state and art, between political greed and artistic creation, between the battlefield and the work of art. In speaking of this link, as I have said, by 'state' we mean only the iron clamp that forces society to come into being. Without

the state, in the natural war of all against all, society cannot put down roots on any large scale, beyond the circle of the family. Now that states have formed everywhere, that urge for the war of all against all gathers from time to time into terrible war clouds between nations. It breaks loose, so to speak, in rarer but all the more powerful thunderclaps and lightning strikes. But in the pauses between them, society is given time to sprout and grow green everywhere, under the pressure of that war, which is now turned inward and squeezed together. Then, as soon as a few warmer days come along, society can let the shining blossoms of genius burst out.

Looking at the political world of the Greeks, I will not hide which things in our own time I believe to be dangerous withering of political life, harmful to art and society alike. Suppose there are people who, by birth, stand outside the instincts of nation and state, so to speak. Such people only accept the state as far as they see it serving their own interests. These people will necessarily imagine that the final goal of the state is for large political communities to live side by side as undisturbed as possible. In such a world, they above all would be allowed to pursue their own aims without any limits. With this idea in their heads, they will push for the kind of politics that gives these aims the greatest security. It is unthinkable that they would sacrifice themselves to the purpose of the state against their own aims, led perhaps by some unconscious instinct. It is unthinkable because they simply lack that instinct. All the other citizens of the state are in the dark about what nature intends through their instinct for the state, and they follow blindly. Only those who stand outside this instinct know what they want from the state and what the state should give them. That is why it is almost unavoidable that such people gain great influence over the state. They can treat the state as a tool, while everyone else, under the power of the state's unconscious aims, is just a tool for the state's own purpose. Now, to get the most out of the

state for their selfish goals, it is necessary above all that the state be completely freed from those terribly unpredictable fits of war, so that it can be used in a rational, calculated way. And so they work, as consciously as possible, toward a situation in which war is impossible. To do this, they first have to trim back and weaken separate political urges as much as they can. They try to create large states of equal weight that guarantee each other's safety, so that an attack would hardly ever succeed, and war in general becomes extremely unlikely. On the other hand, they try to take the question of war and peace out of the hands of individual rulers, so that they can instead appeal to the selfishness of the masses or their representatives. For this, in turn, they need to slowly dissolve the nations' instinct for monarchy. They serve this purpose by spreading as widely as possible the liberal and optimistic view of the world. This view has its roots in the teachings of the French Enlightenment and Revolution, that is, in a philosophy that is completely un-Germanic, truly Latin, shallow and without any deeper meaning. I cannot help seeing, in the nationalist movement now ruling the day and in the spread of the right to vote for everyone, above all the effects of fear of war. Indeed, in the background of these movements I see the ones who are really afraid: those truly international, homeless money-hermits. Since they naturally lack the instinct for the state, they have learned to misuse politics as a tool of the stock exchange, and to misuse state and society as machines for making themselves rich. Against the danger that the purpose of the state will be turned aside into a purpose of money, the only remedy is war, and again war. In the excitement of war, at least this much becomes clear: the state is not founded on fear of the demon of war, as a protective shelter for selfish individuals. Instead, out of love of the fatherland and love of the prince, it produces a moral uplift from within itself, which points to a far higher purpose. So I call it a dangerous feature of today's politics that the ideas of the Revolution are being used in the service of a selfish rich money elite

with no loyalty to any state. I also see the huge spread of liberal optimism as a result of the modern money economy having fallen into strange hands. And I see all the evils of social conditions, together with the unavoidable decline of the arts, as either sprouting from that root or grown together with it. If all this is so, people will have to forgive me for now and then singing a hymn of praise to war. His silver bow rings out terribly. And though he comes like the night, he is still Apollo, the true god who makes the state holy and pure. But first, as it says at the beginning of the Iliad, he shoots his arrows at the mules and the dogs. Then he strikes the people themselves, and everywhere the piles of wood with corpses on them burn. So let it be said openly: war is just as necessary for the state as the slave is for society. And who could escape these insights, if he honestly asks himself why Greek art reached a perfection that has never been matched?

Think about war, and about the form war takes when it wears a uniform: the *soldier class*. Look at them in light of what we have said so far about what the state really is. Then you have to see that war and the soldier class show us a copy of the state, or maybe even the *original pattern of the state*. Here we see the most general effect of the drive toward war. It instantly splits and divides the chaotic mass of people into *military castes*, rigid ranks. Out of these ranks the building of the "warrior society" rises up like a pyramid, standing on a very broad bottom layer that lives almost like slaves. The hidden purpose of the whole movement forces every single person under its yoke. Even in people who are completely different from each other, it causes a kind of chemical change in their qualities, until they are drawn toward that purpose and fit with it. In the higher castes, people sense a little more clearly what this inner process is really about. It is about producing the *military genius*, the one we have already come to know as the first founder of states. In some states, for example in the laws that Lycur-

gus gave to Sparta, you can clearly see the stamp of this basic idea of the state: producing the military genius. Now let us picture the original military state at its most active, doing its real "work." Let us picture the whole technique of war. Then we cannot help correcting the ideas we have soaked up from everywhere about "human dignity" and the "dignity of work." We have to ask a question. Take the work whose goal is to destroy "dignified" human beings. Take the person who is given that "dignified work." Does the idea of dignity really fit that work, or that person? Or, in the state's task of war, do these ideas contradict each other and cancel each other out? My own view is this. The warrior is a *tool* of the military genius, and his work, in turn, is only a tool of that same genius. He does have a certain amount of dignity. But it does not belong to him as a human being in himself, who is not a genius. It belongs to him only as a tool of the genius, and the genius may even choose to use his death as part of the work of art that is war. His dignity is this: *being found worthy to serve as the genius's tool*. What we have shown here with one example holds true in the widest sense. Every human being, with everything he does, has only as much dignity as he is a tool of the genius, whether he knows it or not. From this we can draw the moral conclusion right away: the "human being in himself," the human being taken on his own, has no dignity, no rights, and no duties. A human being can only excuse his existence as a creature that is completely shaped by forces outside him and that serves purposes he is not aware of.

After these thoughts, *Plato's perfect state* is surely something even greater than even its most passionate admirers believe. And that is not even to mention the smiling, superior look with which our people "trained in history" know how to brush aside such a fruit of the ancient world. Plato found the real goal of the state through a poet's intuition, and he painted it boldly and roughly. That goal is a godlike, Olympian existence, and the constant fresh birth and preparation of

the genius. Compared to the genius, everything else is only a tool, a helper, a means of making it possible. Plato looked through the terribly damaged statue that the political life of his time had become. It was like one of those old Greek pillar-statues of a god, smashed and defaced. And yet he still saw something divine inside it. He *believed* that this image of a god could be taken out, and that the fierce, barbaric, twisted outside did not belong to the true nature of the state. All the burning passion and greatness of his political feeling threw itself into that belief, into that wish. And in that fire he burned himself up. In his perfect state he did not put the genius in general at the top. He put only the genius of wisdom and knowledge there, and he shut out the brilliant artists from his state altogether. This was a rigid result of Socrates' judgment against art, a judgment Plato had made his own while struggling against himself. This gap is more on the surface and almost accidental. It must not stop us from seeing the whole design of Plato's state as a wonderfully great hieroglyph, a coded picture-sign. It stands for a deep *secret teaching about the link between the state and the genius*, a teaching that will need to be interpreted forever. What we thought we could guess from this secret writing, we have said in this Preface.

4. How Schopenhauer's Philosophy Relates to a German Culture

Preface.

In dear, rotten Germany, education now lies run-down and decaying in the streets. Jealous resentment of everything great rules shamelessly. And the general uproar of the people chasing 'happiness' is so deafening that you need a very strong faith to still hope here for a culture that is just coming into being. It is almost faith in the sense of the Latin saying 'I believe it because it is absurd.' You need that faith above all to work for this culture, by teaching in public, as opposed to the press, which only hands out 'public opinion'. Those who truly care, with an undying concern, about the people must forcibly free themselves from the impressions that storm in on them from whatever is current and accepted right now. They must give the appearance that they count all this among unimportant things. They must seem this way because they want to think. A disgusting sight and a confused noise, perhaps even mixed with the trumpet blasts of military glory, disturbs their thinking. But above all, they must seem this way because they want to believe in what is German, and if they lost this belief, they would lose their strength along with it. Do not blame these believers if they look at the land of their promises from very far away and from high above! They shy away from the experiences that a well-meaning foreigner exposes himself to when he lives among Germans nowadays. Such a foreigner has to be amazed at how little German life matches those great individuals, works and deeds that he, in his goodwill, has learned to honor as what is truly German. Where the German cannot rise to greatness, he makes a less than average impression. Take even the famous German science and scholar-

ship. In it, a number of the most useful household and family virtues, like loyalty, self-restraint, hard work, modesty and cleanliness, seem to be moved into a freer air and made to shine. But it is by no means the result of these virtues. Looked at up close, the motive that drives people in Germany toward unlimited knowing looks much more like a lack, a defect, a gap, than like an overflow of strength. It looks almost like the result of a poor, shapeless, lifeless life. It even looks like an escape from the moral pettiness and nastiness that the German falls into when he has no such outlet. And this pettiness and nastiness often break out anyway, despite science, and even inside science. When it comes to narrowness, in how they live, know and judge, the Germans are true virtuosos, real experts of the narrow-minded philistine style. If anyone tries to carry them beyond it, up to something lofty, they make themselves heavy as lead. And like lead weights they hang on to their truly great people, to drag them down out of the high heavens to their own level and their own poor neediness. Perhaps this cozy smugness of the narrow-minded philistine is only a decayed form of a genuine German virtue: a deep, heartfelt absorption in the single thing, the small thing, the nearby thing, and in the mysteries of the individual person. But this moldy virtue is now worse than the most obvious vice. This is especially true since people have become gladly and heartily aware of this quality in themselves, to the point of praising themselves for it in their books. Now the 'educated people', among the Germans, who are, as everyone knows, so cultured, and the 'narrow-minded philistines', among the Germans, who are, as everyone knows, so uncultured, publicly shake hands. They make an agreement with each other about how, from now on, one must write, compose poetry, paint, make music, and even do philosophy, and yes, even govern. The aim is to stand not too far from the 'education' of the one group, and not to offend the 'cozy smugness' of the other. This is now called 'the German culture of the present day'. The only thing left to ask is this: by what sign can that 'educated person' be

recognized? After all, we already know that his foster brother, raised at the same breast, the German narrow-minded philistine, now shows himself openly to the whole world as exactly what he is, without any shyness, as if he had lost his innocence.

The educated person today is above all trained in history. Through his historical awareness he saves himself from anything lofty and great. The narrow-minded philistine manages the same thing through his 'cozy smugness'. Goethe could still believe that history stirs up enthusiasm. But that is no longer the goal. Instead, the goal of these admirers of 'nil admirari', the Latin motto meaning 'be amazed at nothing', is exactly the dulling of all enthusiasm, when they try to understand everything historically. But someone should shout at them: 'You are the fools of all the centuries! History will only confess to you the things that you deserve! In every age the world has been full of trivial and empty things, and it is exactly these, and only these, that history uncovers to your historical craving. You can fall upon an era by the thousands, and afterwards you will be just as hungry as before. Then you may boast about your kind of starved health. As an old Roman book, the Dialogue on Orators, chapter 25, says in Latin: "They get the very health they brag about not from strength but from going hungry." History did not want to tell you anything essential. Instead it stood beside you, mocking and invisible. Into the hand of one of you it pressed a political event, into another's an ambassador's report, into another's a date, or the origin of a word, or a practical-minded cobweb of causes and effects. Do you really believe you can add up history like a sum in arithmetic? Do you think your ordinary common sense and your mathematical training are good enough for that? How annoyed you must be to hear that other people tell of things, from the very best-known times, that you will never, ever understand!'

Now think of this education, which calls itself historical and has no enthusiasm at all. Think of the narrow-minded philistine attitude, which is hostile to everything great and foams at the mouth against it. And then add a third group, brutal and agitated: those who are chasing 'happiness'. All together, this makes such a confused shouting and such a limb-twisting crush that the thinker flees, with plugged ears and blindfolded eyes, into the loneliest wilderness. He flees to where he may see what those others will never see, and where he must hear what sounds to him from all the depths of nature and from the stars. Here he talks with the great problems that float toward him. Their voices, to be sure, sound frightening and far from cozy, and eternal and beyond history. The soft, comfort-loving person shrinks back from their cold breath, and the calculating person runs right through them without feeling them at all. But the worst is how it goes with the 'educated person', who sometimes, in his own way, takes serious trouble over these problems. For him these ghosts turn into webs of concepts and hollow patterns of sound. He grabs at them and imagines that he now has philosophy. He goes looking for them by climbing around on the so-called history of philosophy. And when at last he has gathered and piled up a whole cloud of such abstractions and ready-made patterns, it may happen that a true thinker steps into his path and simply blows them away. What a hopeless nuisance it is to deal with philosophy as an 'educated person'! From time to time it does seem to him as if the impossible union has become possible: the union of philosophy with what now shows off as 'German culture'. Some sort of hybrid creature flirts and toys around between the two worlds and confuses people's imagination on both sides. For the time being, though, the Germans can be given one piece of advice, if they do not want to be confused. With everything they now call 'education', they should ask themselves: Is this the culture we hoped for? Is it so serious and creative, so freeing for the German spirit, so cleans-

ing for the German virtues, that their only philosopher in this century, Arthur Schopenhauer, would have to stand up for it as his own?

Here you have the philosopher. Now go and look for the culture that belongs with him! And if you can sense what kind of culture it would have to be to match such a philosopher, well then, in that very sense you have already passed judgment, on all your education and on yourselves! —

5. Homer's Contest

Preface.

When people talk about "humanity," they have an idea in the back of their minds. The idea is that humanity is whatever *separates* human beings from nature and makes them stand out above it. But in reality there is no such separation. The so-called "natural" qualities and the ones we call truly "human" have grown together so tightly that you cannot pull them apart. Even in their highest and noblest powers, human beings are completely part of nature, and they carry nature's eerie double character, both good and terrible, inside them. Their frightening abilities, the ones people think of as inhuman, may even be the rich soil from which, and only from which, all humanity can grow, whether in feelings, in deeds or in works.

That is how the Greeks, the most humane people of the ancient world, came to have a streak of cruelty in them, a tiger-like lust for destruction. You can see this streak very clearly in Alexander the Great, who was like a mirror image of the Greek, blown up until it looked grotesque. But this streak runs through their whole history and their mythology too, and it is bound to frighten us, because we come to the Greeks with our soft, weak modern idea of humanity. Alexander had the feet of Batis, the brave defender of the city of Gaza, pierced through. Then he had Batis tied to his chariot while still alive and dragged him around while his soldiers jeered. This was a disgusting cartoon-like copy of Achilles, who abused the dead body of Hector at night by dragging it around in a similar way. But even what Achilles did strikes us as offensive and fills us with horror. Here we are looking down into the deep pits of hatred. We have the same feeling when we look at the bloody, never-satisfied way two Greek parties

tore each other apart, for example in the revolution on the island of Corcyra. When cities went to war, the winner, by the *law* of war, would execute every man in the defeated city and sell all the women and children into slavery. The fact that such a law was accepted shows us that the Greek considered it a serious necessity to let his hatred pour out completely. In such moments, the feeling that had been pressed together and swollen up inside him found relief. The tiger leapt out, and a cruelty full of pleasure looked out from its terrible eye. Why did the Greek sculptor have to show war and fighting again and again, in countless repeats? Why did he carve stretched-out human bodies whose muscles are tight with hatred or with the wild pride of victory, wounded men twisting in pain, dying men gasping their last breath? Why did the whole Greek world cheer at the battle scenes of the Iliad? I am afraid that we do not understand these things in a "Greek" enough way. In fact, I fear that we would shudder if we ever did understand them the way the Greeks did.

But what lies *behind* the world of Homer, as the womb from which everything Greek was born? In Homer's world itself, we are already lifted above the raw, crude mixing of things. This happens because of the amazing artistic clearness, calm and purity of its lines. Its colors seem brighter, softer and warmer, thanks to an artistic trick. And its people, in this warm, colorful light, seem better and more likeable. But where do we end up looking when Homer's hand no longer guides and protects us, and we step backward into the world from before Homer? We look only into night and horror, into the creations of an imagination that had grown used to the hideous. What kind of life on earth do these disgusting and terrifying legends about the birth of the gods reflect? They reflect a life ruled only by the *children of Night*: strife, lust, deceit, old age and death. Let us imagine the air of Hesiod's poem, which is already hard to breathe, made even thicker and darker. Let us imagine it without any of the softening and cleans-

ing influences that flowed out over Greece from Delphi and from the many homes of the gods. Then let us mix this thick air of Boeotia, Hesiod's homeland, with the dark lustfulness of the Etruscans. If we did that, such a reality would *force* out of us a world of myths in which Uranus, Cronus and Zeus, and the wars of the Titans, would feel like a relief. In this heavy, brooding atmosphere, fighting is salvation and rescue, and the cruelty of victory is the highest point of the joy of living. In fact, the Greek idea of law grew out of *murder* and the making up for murder. In the same way, the nobler culture also takes its first victory wreath from the altar where murder was atoned for. Like a furrow left by a wave, the trail of that bloody age runs deep into Greek history. The names of Orpheus and Musaeus, and the religious cults linked to them, show where people were pushed by constantly looking at a world of fighting and cruelty. They were pushed to disgust with existence, to seeing existence as a punishment that has to be paid off, and to believing that to exist and to be guilty are one and the same thing. But these conclusions are exactly what is not typically Greek. In them, Greece touches India and the East in general. The Greek genius had another answer ready to the question, "What is a life of fighting and winning for?" And it gives this answer across the whole length and breadth of Greek history.

To understand that answer, we have to start from this point: the Greek genius accepted this drive, which was there in such a terrifying form, and considered it *justified*. The Orphic turn, by contrast, contained the thought that a life with such a drive at its root was not worth living. The Greeks acknowledged fighting and the joy of victory. And nothing separates the Greek world from ours so much as the *coloring* this gave to certain moral ideas, for example Eris, goddess of strife, and envy.

The traveler Pausanias, on his journey through Greece, visited Mount Helicon. There he was shown a very ancient copy of the first teaching

poem of the Greeks, Hesiod's "Works and Days." It was written on sheets of lead and badly damaged by time and weather. Still, he could make out this much: unlike the usual copies, it did *not* have that short hymn to Zeus at the beginning. Instead, it started right away with the statement, "There are *two* goddesses of strife named Eris on earth." This is one of the most remarkable Greek thoughts. It deserves to be pressed into the mind of anyone who comes along, right at the entrance gate of Greek morality. Hesiod goes on: "If you have any sense, you would praise the one Eris, goddess of strife, just as much as you would blame the other. For these two goddesses have completely different natures. The one, the cruel one, stirs up evil war and quarreling! No human being can stand her. But under the yoke of hardship, people pay honor to this heavy, burdensome Eris, because the immortal gods have decided it so. Black Night gave birth to this one first, as the older of the two. But the other one, Zeus who rules on high placed on the roots of the earth and among human beings, as a far better one. She drives even the clumsy, lazy man to work. When someone who has no property looks at someone else who is rich, he hurries in the same way to sow and to plant and to keep his house in good order. Neighbor competes with neighbor, each one striving to get ahead and become well off. This Eris is good for human beings. The potter also holds a grudge against the potter, and the carpenter against the carpenter. The beggar feels envy toward the beggar, and the singer toward the singer."

Our scholars cannot understand why the last two lines are here, the ones about the potter's grudge, the so-called "odium figulinum." In their judgment, words like "grudge" and "envy" only fit the nature of the bad Eris, goddess of strife. So they have no problem calling these lines fake, or saying they ended up in this spot by accident. But to think that, they must have been quietly guided by a different set of morals than the Greek one. After all, Aristotle sees nothing wrong

with linking these lines to the good Eris, goddess of strife. And not only Aristotle: the whole ancient Greek world thinks differently about grudges and envy than we do. It judges the way Hesiod does. Hesiod calls one Eris, goddess of strife, evil: the one that leads people into hostile fights to destroy each other. Then he praises another Eris, goddess of strife, as good: the one that, as jealousy, grudge and envy, pushes people to act. But it does not push them toward a fight to destroy each other. It pushes them toward a *contest*. The Greek is *envious*, and he does not feel this quality as a flaw. He feels it as the work of a *kindly* god. What a huge gap in moral judgment lies between us and him! Because he is envious himself, he also feels, whenever he has too much honor, wealth, splendor and luck, that the envious eye of a god is resting on him. And he fears this envy. In that case it reminds him that every human fate passes away. He is frightened of his own good luck, and he gives up the best part of it as a sacrifice, bowing before the envy of the gods. This idea does not push him away from his gods. On the contrary, it sums up what the gods mean to him: they are the ones with whom a human may *never* dare to hold a contest, even though his soul burns with jealousy against every other living being. In the contest of Thamyris against the Muses, of Marsyas against Apollo, and in the heartbreaking fate of Niobe, people saw the terrible clash of the two powers that must never fight each other: human and god.

But the greater and nobler a Greek person is, the more brightly the flame of ambition bursts out of him, burning up everyone who runs on the same track. Aristotle once made a list of such hostile rivals on a grand scale. The most striking example on it shows that even a dead man can stir a living man to a burning, all-consuming jealousy. That is how Aristotle describes the relationship between Xenophanes of Colophon and Homer. We do not understand how fierce this attack on the national hero of poetry really was unless we picture what lay at its

root. And the same goes later for Plato. The root was a huge craving to take the place of the overthrown poet yourself and to inherit his fame. Every great Greek passes on the torch of the contest, like in a relay race with a torch. Every great achievement lights the fire of a new greatness. The young Themistocles could not sleep because he kept thinking about the laurel crowns of victory that Miltiades had won. But his drive, woken so early, was only fully set free during his long rivalry with Aristides. It grew into that one-of-a-kind, purely instinctive brilliance in his political actions that Thucydides describes to us. How revealing is this question and answer: a well-known opponent of Pericles was asked whether he or Pericles was the best wrestler in the city. He answered: "Even when I throw him to the ground, he denies that he fell, gets what he wants, and talks the people who saw him fall into believing him."

Suppose you want to see this feeling plainly, in its simple and open forms: the feeling that the contest is necessary if the state is to stay healthy. Then think about the original meaning of ostracism, voting someone out of the city. The people of Ephesus, for example, put it into words when they banished Hermodorus: "Among us, no one shall be the best. But if someone is, let him be somewhere else, among other people." Why should no one be the best? Because then the contest would dry up, and the lasting foundation of the Greek state would be in danger. Later, ostracism, voting someone out of the city, came to play a different role in the contest. It was used when there was clear danger that one of the great rival politicians and party leaders, in the heat of the struggle, might be tempted to use harmful and destructive methods, or to try a risky overthrow of the government. But the original meaning of this strange custom was not a safety valve to let off pressure. It was a stimulant, something to spark energy. You remove the one person who towers over everyone else, so that the competition of forces wakes up again. This idea goes against

the modern belief that a genius stands alone and is one of a kind. Instead, it assumes that in the natural order of things there are always *several* geniuses. They spur each other on to action, and they also keep each other within proper limits. That is the core of the Greek idea of the contest: it hates the rule of one person alone and fears its dangers. As a *protection* against a genius, it wants a second genius.

Every talent must grow through struggle: that is what the Greek way of raising the people demands. Modern educators, on the other hand, fear nothing so much as setting loose what they call ambition. Here, selfishness is feared as "evil itself." The exception is the Jesuits, who think like the ancients on this point, and that may be why they are perhaps the most effective educators of our time. They seem to believe that selfishness, meaning the individual self, is simply the strongest driving force. Whether it is "good" or "evil" depends mainly on the goals it reaches toward. For the ancients, though, the goal of education through competition was the well-being of the whole, of society as a state. Every Athenian, for example, was supposed to develop himself in the contest as far as it was most useful to Athens and did it the least harm. It was not an ambition without limits or measure, the way modern ambition usually is. When a young man raced, or threw, or sang in competition, he was thinking of the good of his home city. He wanted to add to its fame through his own. He dedicated to his city's gods the wreaths that the judges placed on his head in his honor. From childhood, every Greek felt a burning wish to be a tool for the good of his city in the contest between cities. That is where his selfishness was set on fire, and that is also where it was reined in and kept within bounds. That is why individuals in the ancient world were freer: their goals were closer and easier to grasp. Modern people, on the other hand, keep running into endlessness everywhere, like swift-footed Achilles in the puzzle told by Zeno of

Elea. The endlessness holds him back, and he cannot even catch up with the tortoise.

And just as the young people being educated were trained by competing with one another, their teachers were also competing among themselves. The great masters of music and poetry, Pindar and Simonides, stood side by side, full of suspicion and jealousy. One Sophist, the advanced teacher of ancient times, met another Sophist as a rival. Even the most common way of teaching the people, through drama, was only given to them in the form of a huge struggle between the great artists of music and theater. How amazing! As the old saying goes, "Even the artist resents the artist!" Modern people fear nothing more in an artist than the urge to fight on a personal level. The Greek, on the other hand, knows the artist *only in personal struggle*. Where modern people sniff out a weakness in a work of art, the Greek looks for the source of its greatest strength! Take Plato, for example. What gives his dialogues their special artistic value is mostly the result of a contest with the art of the speakers, the Sophists, and the playwrights of his time. He created it so that in the end he could say: "Look, I can do what my great rivals can do. In fact, I can do it better than they can. No Protagoras ever made up such beautiful myths as I did. No playwright ever created such a lively and gripping whole as my Symposium. No speaker ever wrote a speech like the one I set out in my Gorgias. And now I throw all of it away together, and I condemn every kind of art that copies! Only the contest made me a poet, a Sophist, a speaker!" What a problem opens up before us when we ask how the contest is connected to the way a work of art is first imagined! —

But if we take the contest away from Greek life, we immediately look down into that pit from before Homer, a pit of horrible, wild hatred and a hunger to destroy. Sadly, this happens again and again when a great person, through one huge and brilliant deed, is suddenly lifted out of the contest. Then he is "hors de concours", which means bey-

ond all competition, in his own judgment and in the judgment of his fellow citizens. The result is almost always terrible. People usually conclude from these results that the Greek could not handle fame and good fortune. But to be more exact, we should say that he could not handle fame without further contest, or good fortune at the end of the contest. There is no clearer example than how Miltiades' life ended. His unmatched victory at Marathon set him on a lonely mountain peak and raised him far above everyone who had fought beside him. Then he feels a low, revenge-hungry desire waking up inside him, against a citizen of the island of Paros with whom he had an old feud. To satisfy this desire, he misuses his good name, the state's money, and his honor as a citizen, and he disgraces himself. When he feels that he is failing, he turns to shameful schemes. He makes a secret and ungodly deal with Timo, a priestess of the goddess Demeter. At night he enters the holy temple, where no man was ever allowed. After he has jumped over the wall and is getting closer and closer to the goddess's sacred shrine, he is suddenly struck by the terrible horror of a wild panic. Almost collapsing and out of his senses, he feels himself driven back. As he jumps back over the wall, he crashes to the ground, unable to move and badly hurt. The siege has to be called off, the people's court is waiting for him, and a shameful death stamps its seal on a glorious hero's career, darkening it for all the generations to come. After the battle of Marathon, the envy of the gods in heaven took hold of him. And this envy of the gods catches fire when it sees a human being without any rival, with no opponent, standing alone on a high peak of fame. Now he has only the gods beside him, and that is why he has them against him. They lead him into a deed of arrogant pride, and he collapses under it.

Let us notice carefully: just as Miltiades falls, the noblest Greek states fall too, once they had made it, through their own merit and good luck, from the racetrack to the temple of Nike, the goddess of victory.

Athens destroyed the independence of its allies and harshly punished the uprisings of the peoples it had conquered. Sparta, after the battle of Aegospotami, forced its power over Greece in an even harder and crueler way. Both of them, following the example of Miltiades, brought about their own downfall through deeds of arrogant pride. This proves that without envy, jealousy, and competitive ambition, the Greek state goes bad, just like the Greek person does. He becomes evil and cruel, he becomes vengeful and ungodly; in short, he becomes like the people from before Homer. And then all it takes is one wild panic to bring him down and smash him to pieces. Sparta and Athens hand themselves over to Persia, just as Themistocles and Alcibiades did. They betray what it means to be Greek, after they have given up the noblest basic Greek idea, the contest. And then Alexander, who is a cruder copy and a shortened version of Greek history, invents the everyday, one-size-fits-all Greek and the so-called "Hellenism." —

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