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Friedrich Nietzsche

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Thoughts out of Season, Part II

Friedrich Nietzsche

Plain modern English

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THOUGHTS

AGAINST THE TIMES

PART II

THE USE AND MISUSE OF HISTORY

SCHOPENHAUER AS TEACHER

By

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

TRANSLATED BY

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[Picture]

The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche

The First Complete and Approved English Translation

Edited by Dr Oscar Levy

Volume Five

T.N. FOULIS

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TO L. P., FROM THE TRANSLATOR. WITH GRATITUDE.

Introduction

The two essays translated in this book are the second and third parts of a work by Nietzsche whose German title is "Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen", which means "Thoughts Against the Times." He finished the essay on history in January 1874, and the essay on Schopenhauer in August of the same year. He wrote both of them in a few months of intense, almost feverish work, in whatever time he could spare from his job as a Professor of Ancient Greek and Latin in the Swiss city of Basel.

In 1871 Nietzsche had served with a medical team that cared for the wounded, so he had seen something of the war between France and Germany. To him, what had won that war was plain "honest German bravery." But most of his fellow Germans saw it as a victory for German culture as well. They admitted there were still a few elegant touches and polished manners that could be laid over the new culture like a thin coat of paint. In that one area, they thought, the defeated French could be allowed the old privilege of winning over their winners. Nietzsche answered bluntly: "The German does not yet know the meaning of the word culture." In the essay on history he set out to show that this so-called culture was really a swamp. The German had been led into it by a kind of sixth sense he had developed during the nineteenth century, which was his obsession with history. His spiritual teachers had brought him to believe that he was the "crown," the high point, of the grand march of world history, and that his highest duty was to give himself up to it completely.

For Nietzsche, the obsession with history became "a sickness that people suffer from." The grand march of world history was a false dream, and theories about evolution were a clever excuse for doing

nothing. History is for the few, not the many. It is for the grown man, not the young. It is for the great, not the small, because the small are crushed and confused by it. History teaches us to remember, and few people are strong enough to carry that lesson. History has no meaning unless it serves life and action, and most of us can only act if we forget. That is the main message of the first essay. Then he turns from history to the people who write history. He condemns the "noisy little fellows" who judge the reasons behind what great men of the past did by their own small reasons, and who use the past to make their own present look right.

But who are the people who can use history in the right way, the people for whom it helps life instead of getting in its way? They are the great people of action and thought, the "lonely giants among the dwarfs." Only for them can the story of their great ancestors be a comfort as well as a lesson. In the world of thought, they are like the ideal thinker described in the second essay. For Nietzsche, the only hope of the human race lies in "producing the genius": the person who can carry the weight of the future without being drowned by the past. For the time being, he found a living example of such a person in Schopenhauer.

In this essay Schopenhauer stands, as a strong self, for everything in philosophy that gives life, against the dullness and standstill of philosophers who do it only as a job. The last part of the essay is a fierce attack on philosophy paid for by the state, and on the official position of the professors. These professors made up, and still make up, the intellectual upper class of Germany, and everything they declare is treated as if it came with the authority of the Church.

But, as Dr. Kögel says, "there has never been a speech of praise for a philosopher that had so little to say about his philosophy." The essay on Schopenhauer is valuable exactly because it has nothing to do with

Schopenhauer. We do not need to be bothered by the fact that Nietzsche later turned away from him. Nietzsche himself rightly saw that Schopenhauer was only a name he used here for himself. As he wrote in his book "Ecce Homo": "The question is not Schopenhauer as teacher, but his opposite, Nietzsche as teacher." Later on he could see Schopenhauer as a siren, one of those creatures in the old stories whose singing lures people to their death. He put him among the great artists who lead people downward, who are worse than the bad artists who lead nowhere at all. In his book "Twilight of the Idols" he says: "We must take the logic of pessimism further than denying the will to live; we must deny Schopenhauer." Schopenhauer's pessimism, his turning away from the will to live, and his empty despair in the face of suffering were the hidden rocks on which Nietzsche's deep respect for him finally broke apart like a ship. These things could not hold up against what Nietzsche called the Dionysian outlook, named after the Greek god of wine and wild joy. That outlook had its own kind of pessimism, but it came from strength, not weakness, and in it the joy of wanting and of being alive can even welcome suffering. In this essay we hear very little about pessimism, except as the imperfect and "all-too-human" side of Schopenhauer, a side that actually brings us closer to him. Later, Nietzsche could separate the man from his work, and call Schopenhauer's way of seeing things the "evil eye." But at this point he is still a young man who has kept his hopeful dreams. Like Ogniben, a character in a play by Robert Browning, he judges people by what they could become.

Later, he also judged himself in these essays by "what he could become." In "Ecce Homo" he said: "To me they are promises. I do not know what they mean to other people."

These essays are translated here "for other people" because of the same belief that they are promises. The "Thoughts Against the Times" are the first announcement of the complicated ideas that later fill his

book "Thus Spoke Zarathustra." They are the best possible introduction to Nietzsche's way of thinking. Nietzsche is already like a wandering knight of philosophy, riding out in search of adventure; but his adventure is only just beginning.

A. C.

The Use and Abuse of History

Preface

"I hate everything that only teaches me something without adding to my activity or directly bringing it to life." These are the words of Goethe. Like a heartfelt motto that someone repeats again and again, they could well stand at the top of my thoughts about what history is worth, and what it is not worth. In these thoughts I will show why teaching that does not bring us to life, and knowledge that loosens our grip on action, must be seriously "hated," as Goethe put it. In fact, I will show why history itself must be hated when it becomes an expensive and unnecessary luxury of the mind. We still lack the basic things we need to live, and the unnecessary is an enemy of the necessary. We do need history, but in a very different way from the tired, idle people who wander about in the garden of knowledge, no matter how proudly they look down on our rough and plain needs. In other words, we need history for living and acting. We do not need it as an easy way to avoid living and acting, or as an excuse for a selfish life and for cowardly or low actions. We want to serve history only as far as it serves life. But if we value the study of history beyond a certain point, it cripples life and drags it down. Certain clear signs of our time make it necessary, however painful it may be, to test this fact against real experience.

I have tried to describe a feeling that has often troubled me. I get my revenge on it by making it public. This may lead someone to tell me that he has had the same feeling too, but that I do not feel it in a pure and basic enough way, and that I cannot express it with the mature certainty that comes from experience. A few people may say that. But most people will tell me that this feeling is twisted, unnatural, hor-

rible, and completely wrong to have. They will say that I am showing myself unworthy of the great movement of historical study, which has been especially strong among the German people for the last two generations.

Whatever it costs, I am going to risk describing my feelings. This will actually be very proper and polite of me, because it will give people plenty of chances to praise such a "movement." And I will gain something for myself that matters more to me than being proper: through my critics, I will reach a correct view of our age.

These thoughts are "against the times." That is because I am trying to show something our age is rightly proud of, its historical culture, as a fault and a weakness of our time. I believe that we are all suffering from a dangerous historical fever, and that we should at least admit it. But even if this historical culture is a virtue, Goethe may be right when he says that we cannot help growing our faults at the same time as our virtues. And clearly, too much virtue can ruin a nation, just as too much vice can. In any case, I should be allowed to have my say. But first I want to ease my mind with a confession. The experiences that gave me these troubling feelings came mostly from myself, and from other people only for the sake of comparison. And I have only been able to have such experiences, which go "against the times," because I am in a way raised by older ages, like that of the Greeks, and am less a child of this age. I must admit this much because of my job as a scholar of the ancient Greek and Roman world. For I do not know what meaning the study of the ancient world could have for our time, except by being "against the times": that is, by going against our time, and yet still having an effect on it, which will, we may hope, be for the good of some future time.

I.

Look at the herds of cattle grazing over there. They don't know what yesterday or today means. They eat and chew their food, they move about or lie down, from morning to night and from one day to the next. They are caught up in their small likes and dislikes, tied to whatever is happening right now, and they feel neither sadness nor boredom. A human being can't watch them without a pang, because even while he is proud of being human, he looks with envy at how happy the animal is. All he wants is to live like the animal, without boredom and without pain. But it does no good, because he would never actually agree to trade places with it. He might ask the animal, "Why do you just look at me and not tell me about your happiness?" The animal wants to answer, "Because I always forget what I was going to say." But then it forgets this answer too, and says nothing. And the man is left wondering.

He also wonders about himself: why he can't learn to forget, but stays stuck to the past. However far or fast he runs, that chain runs right along with him. It really is strange. A moment comes and goes; it was nothing before and is nothing after. And yet it comes back like a ghost to disturb the calm of some later moment. It is as if pages keep falling out of the book of time and drifting away, and then one suddenly drifts back and lands in the man's lap. Then he says, "I remember...", and he envies the animal, which forgets right away and sees each moment truly die, sink into darkness and fog, and go out forever. The animal lives in a way that is able to forget the past. It fits completely into the present, like a number that divides evenly and leaves nothing odd left over. It can't pretend, and it hides nothing. At every moment it looks exactly like what it is, so it can't be anything but honest. But a human being is always pushing back against the huge and ever-growing weight of the past. It presses him down and bends his shoulders.

He carries a dark, invisible load. He can easily act as if it isn't there, and he is only too happy to do that when he talks with other people, so that they will envy him. That is why it hurts him, like remembering a lost Paradise, to see a herd grazing, or, even closer to home, to see a child. The child has no past yet to deny, and it plays in a happy kind of blindness between the walls of the past and the future. But its play has to be interrupted, and all too soon it will be called out of its little kingdom of forgetting. Then it learns to understand the words "once upon a time." Those words are like the magic "open sesame" that opens the door and lets in fighting, suffering and tiredness on humanity. They remind people what their life really is: something like a past tense that never gets finished and never becomes a present. And when death finally brings the forgetting people longed for, it wipes out life and existence together. It seals the lesson that "being" is really just a never-ending "has been", something that stays alive only by denying, destroying and contradicting itself.

If it is happiness, and the hunt for new happiness, that keeps people wanting to live, then maybe no philosophy is more true than the cynic's. The cynic says that simple, natural contentment is what matters, and the animal's happiness, like the happiness of the perfect cynic, is living proof that cynicism is right. The smallest pleasure, as long as it lasts and makes you happy, is a far greater happiness than a stronger pleasure that comes only now and then, as a wild outburst, a crazy break between boredom, longing and going without. But in both the smallest and the greatest happiness, there is always one thing that makes it happiness. That thing is the power to forget, or, to put it in more scholarly words, the ability to feel in a way that is able to forget the past for as long as the happiness lasts. Someone who can't leave himself behind at the doorway of the present moment and forget the past, someone who can't stand balanced on one single point, like a statue of the goddess of victory, without fear or dizziness, will never

know what happiness is. Even worse, he will never do anything to make other people happy. Picture the most extreme case: a man with no power at all to forget, who is doomed to see endless change everywhere. Such a man no longer believes in himself or in his own existence. He sees everything rushing past in a never-ending flow, and he loses himself in that stream of endless change. In the end, like a follower of the old Greek thinker Heraclitus, who taught that everything flows, taking that idea all the way, he will hardly dare to lift a finger. Forgetting is part of every action, just as every living thing needs not only light but also darkness. Someone who wanted to feel everything through history would be like a man forcing himself never to sleep, or an animal that had to live by chewing the same food over and over without end. So a happy life is possible even without memory, as the animal shows. But real life is completely impossible without forgetting. Or, to say my conclusion more clearly: there is a level of sleeplessness, of chewing things over, of obsession with history, that harms a living thing and finally destroys it, whether that living thing is a person, a nation, or a whole culture.

How much should we remember of the past, and where should we stop, so that memory does not end up burying the present? To set that limit, we must see clearly how great the "power to heal and grow" is in a person, a community, or a culture. By this I mean the power to grow in your own way out of yourself. It is the power to take the past and the unfamiliar and make them one body with what is close and present. It is the power to heal wounds, to replace what has been lost, and to rebuild molds that have broken. Some people have so little of this power that one sharp experience, one pain, often even a small injustice, will tear their souls like a scratch from a poisoned knife. Others are hurt so little by the worst disasters, and even by their own spiteful actions, that they feel fairly comfortable in the middle of them, with a reasonably quiet conscience, or at least they feel that

way soon afterwards. The deeper the roots of a person's inner nature, the better that person can take the past into themselves. The greatest and most powerful nature would be recognized by this: there would be no point at which the obsession with history could grow over it like a weed and do it harm. Such a nature would take in the past and digest it, however foreign it was, and turn it into living sap, the way a plant turns food into its own life juice. Such a nature can forget whatever it cannot master. Its limited outlook has no gaps in it, and nothing reminds it that there are still other people, passions, theories and goals on the far side. This is a law for everything. A living thing can only be healthy, strong and productive inside a certain limited outlook. If it cannot draw such a circle around itself, or if it is too selfish to let its own view be absorbed into someone else's, it will die before its time. Cheerfulness, a clear conscience, faith in the future, and the joy of doing things, all of these depend, for a single person as well as for a nation, on there being a line that separates what is visible and clear from what is vague and shadowy. We must know the right time to forget as well as the right time to remember. And we must sense by instinct when we need to feel with an eye on history, and when we need to be able to forget the past. This is the point I ask the reader to think about: being able to forget the past and keeping the past in mind are equally necessary for the health of a person, a community, and a culture.

Everyone has noticed this. A person's knowledge of history and range of feeling may be very small. His limited outlook may be as narrow as a valley in the Alps. His judgments may be wrong, and he may wrongly believe his experiences are original. And yet, in spite of all these mistakes and false beliefs, he may stand out with unbeatable health and energy, delighting everyone who sees him. Meanwhile, another person with much better judgment and much more learning will fall short by comparison. That is because the lines of his limited

outlook keep changing and shifting, and he cannot break free from the fine web of his own truth and sense of right in order to act boldly out of simple will or desire. We saw that the animal, which is completely able to forget the past and has the narrowest outlook of all, still has a kind of happiness, and at least lives without pretending and without boredom. So we may consider the ability to feel, to a certain degree, without thinking of the past to be the more important and more basic ability. It is the foundation of all sound, real growth, and of everything that is truly great and human. Being able to forget the past is like the air around us: only that air can create life, and if it is destroyed, life itself disappears. It is true that a human being can only become truly human by first holding back this forgetting in his thoughts, comparisons, distinctions and conclusions. He has to let a sudden clear light break through these misty clouds, by using his power to put the past to work for the present. But too much history makes him weak and tired again, while without the cover of forgetting he would never have the courage to start anything. What deeds could people ever have done if they had not been wrapped in this dust-cloud of forgetting? Or, to drop the images and give a real example, picture a man pushed and driven by a strong passion, whether it is for a woman or for an idea. His whole world is changed. He is blind to everything behind him. New sounds are muffled and mean nothing to him. And yet he has never felt the things he notices so closely, in all their color, light and music, and he seems to grasp them with all five senses at once. All his judgments of what matters have changed for the worse. There is much he can no longer value, because he can hardly feel it. He is amazed that for so long he was the plaything of strange words and opinions, and that his memories kept going around in the same tireless circle, and yet were too weak and tired to take even one step out of it. His whole state cannot be defended at all. It is narrow, ungrateful to the past, blind to danger, deaf to warnings. It is a small living whirlpool in a dead sea of night and forgetting. And yet this state,

which forgets the past and even fights against it from start to finish, is the birthplace not only of unfair actions, but of every fair and justified action in the world. No artist will paint his picture, no general will win his victory, no nation will win its freedom, without first having struggled and longed for it under exactly these conditions of forgetting the past. Goethe said that the man of action has no conscience. In the same way, he also has no knowledge. He forgets most things in order to do one thing. He is unfair to what lies behind him, and he recognizes only one law: the law of what is about to come. So he loves his work far more than it deserves to be loved. And the best works are created in such an overwhelming rush of love that they can never be worthy of that love, however great their worth may be in other ways.

Suppose someone could clear away the fog of forgetting in which every great event happens, and still breathe afterwards. That person might be able to rise to a way of seeing things that is "above history." The historian Niebuhr described this as a possible result of studying history. "History," he says, "is useful for one thing, if you study it closely. It lets people know something that even the greatest and best minds of our time do not know. It shows them that the forms through which they see the world are only accidents of their time. And yet they see through these forms and insist that others see through them too. I say 'insist' because they feel these forms so very strongly. Anyone who has not understood this idea in its different uses will fall under the spell of some more powerful mind, one who reads deeper feeling into the same form." We could call this way of seeing "above history." A person who saw things this way would feel no push from history to go on living or working. He would have understood that every doer acts with blindness and unfairness in his soul, and that this is needed for every deed to happen at all. From then on he would be cured of taking history too seriously. He would have learned how to answer the question of how and why life should be lived, and his

answer would fit all people and all situations, whether Greeks or Turks, whether the first century or the nineteenth. Try asking your friends whether they would want to live the last ten or twenty years over again. You will easily see which of them is made for the view "above history." They will all say no, but they will give different reasons. Some will say they are comforted by the hope that the next twenty years will be better. These are the people David Hume was mocking when he wrote:

"And they hope to get from the leftover dregs of life what the fresh, lively first pouring could not give them."

We will call them "people who hope in progress." Looking at the past turns their eyes toward the future. It encourages them to keep going with life. It lights up the hope that fairness will still arrive, and that happiness lies just behind the mountain they are climbing. They believe that the meaning of life will become clearer and clearer as things develop over time. They only look back at how things have gone so that they can understand the present and feed their longing for the future. They do not realize how much their thoughts and actions are able to forget the past, in spite of all their history. Nor do they realize that their interest in history really serves life, not just knowledge for its own sake.

But the question that got that first answer can get another one. It is also a "no," but for different reasons. It is the "no" of the person who stands above history. He sees no rescue in progress or development. For him, the world is already complete, and it reaches its goal in every single moment. How could the next ten years teach him anything that the last ten could not?

These people above history do not agree on what the lesson of life is. Some say it is happiness, some say giving up, some say goodness, some say paying for your sins. But against every merely historical way

of looking at the past, they all hold the same view. They believe the past and the present are one and the same. In spite of all their variety, they are basically alike. Together they make up a picture of lasting types that are always present and never die, with a value and meaning that never change. Think of the hundreds of different languages in the world. They all answer the same basic, unchanging needs of human beings. Someone who understood those needs could learn nothing new from the languages. In the same way, the philosopher who stands above history sees the whole history of nations and people from the inside. It is as if he had a godlike understanding of what ancient picture-writing originally meant, and he even grows tired of the letters that keep being unrolled in front of him. How could the endless rush of events not leave him full, stuffed, and sick of it all? And so even the boldest among us may finally be ready to say from the heart, along with the poet Giacomo Leopardi: "Nothing alive is worth your effort, and the earth does not deserve a single sigh. Our life is pain and tiredness, and the world is mud, nothing more. Be calm."

But we will leave the people above history to their disgust and their wisdom. Today we would rather be happy in our lack of wisdom and enjoy life as active people who move forward and respect the way the world goes. Maybe the value we place on history is just a Western prejudice. If so, let us at least move forward inside this prejudice and not stand still. If only we could learn to study history better, as a tool for living! We would happily let the people above history keep their higher wisdom, as long as we are sure we have more life in us than they do. Because then our lack of wisdom would have a bigger future ahead of it than their wisdom. To make clear how I am setting life against wisdom, I will take the usual path and give a short summary.

Take any event from history. Once it is completely understood and turned into a piece of knowledge, it is dead for the person who knows it. That is because he has discovered its madness, its unfairness, its

blind passion, and above all the narrow, earthly, clouded limited outlook that gave it its power in history. For the person who has seen through this power, it has lost its force. But maybe not yet for the person who is still living inside it.

If history were treated as pure knowledge and allowed to rule our minds, it would mean the final closing of life's account book, like adding up the totals at the very end. Studying history only helps the future if it follows some powerful force that gives life, such as a new kind of culture. In other words, it is only useful if a higher force guides and controls it, and if history itself does not do the guiding and controlling.

As far as history serves life, it serves a power that is able to forget the past. So it will never become a pure science like mathematics. How much life needs this kind of service is one of the most serious questions there is for the well-being of a person, a people, and a culture. Because too much history cripples life and makes it decay, and after that, history itself decays as well.

II.

We must understand clearly that life does need the help of history, just as clearly as we understand that too much history harms it. This will be proved later. History is needed by the living person in three ways: for his action and struggle, for his wish to keep and honour things, and for his suffering and his longing to be set free. These three needs match the three kinds of history, as far as they can be told apart: the history of great examples, the history that preserves and honours the old, and the history that judges the past.

Above all, history is needed by the person of action and power, someone who is fighting a great fight and needs examples, teachers and comforters. He cannot find them among the people living around

him. Schiller needed history in this way. As Goethe says, our time is so bad that a poet meets no one among the living whose nature will do him any good. Polybius has the active person in mind when he calls political history the real training for running a state. He says it is the great teacher that shows us how to stand firm when luck turns against us, by reminding us of what others have suffered. Anyone who has learned to see this meaning in history must hate to see nosy tourists and fussy beetle-collectors climbing up the great pyramids of the ancient world. He does not want to bump into the idle person who rushes through the picture galleries of the past looking for some new distraction or thrill, while he himself is looking there for an example and for courage. To avoid being bothered by the weak and hopeless idlers, and by people whose busy-looking activity is really just nervous restlessness, he looks back behind him, pausing on his way to his goal so he can catch his breath. His goal is happiness. Perhaps not his own happiness, but often the happiness of his nation, or of humanity as a whole. He refuses to sit back and passively accept things, and he uses history as a weapon against that kind of giving up. For the most part he hopes for no reward except fame. And fame means hoping for a place of his own in the temple of history, where he in turn can comfort and advise the people who come after him. Because the rule he lives by is this: whatever has once been able to widen the idea of what a "human being" is, and fill it with something finer, must always remain alive to do that same job again. The great moments in each person's struggle link together into a chain, like a high road running through the ages for humanity to travel. The highest points of those moments, even though they are long gone, are still great and alive for people today. This is the basic idea behind the belief in humanity, and it speaks out in the call for a history of great examples.

But the fiercest battle is fought over the demand that greatness should last forever. Every other living thing shouts no. "Away with the monuments!" is their battle cry. Dull habit fills every room in the world with its pettiness. It rises like a thick fog around anything great, blocking its path to lasting forever, blinding it and choking it. And the path to lasting forever has to pass through human brains, which die! It has to pass through the brains of sick, short-lived animals that keep coming up for air, struggling painfully to hold off death for a little while. Because all they want is one thing: to stay alive, whatever the cost. Who would ever imagine a history of great examples among creatures like that? That history is like a hard relay race with a torch, passed from hand to hand, and it is the only thing that keeps greatness alive. And yet there are always people waking up who are made stronger and happier by looking at the greatness of the past. To them, it is as if human life were a noble, splendid thing. It is as if the finest fruit of this bitter tree of life were simply knowing that there was once a person who walked through this world sternly and proudly, another who showed pity and kindness, another who lived a life of deep thought. And all of them left one truth behind: the finest life belongs to the person who thinks least about life. The ordinary person grabs greedily at his short time on earth, with tragic seriousness. But these great ones, on their way into the history of great examples and into lasting fame, knew how to greet life with the laughter of the gods on Mount Olympus, or at least with a proud scorn. They went to their graves with a mocking smile. After all, what did they have to bury? Only the things they had always treated as junk, rubbish and empty show. Those things now fall back where they really belong, into forgetfulness, after being the target of their contempt for so long. One thing will live on: the personal signature of who they truly were deep inside, the rare flash of light, the deed, the creation. It lives on because the people who come later cannot do without it. In this spiritual form, fame is more than just, as Schopen-

hauer put it, the tastiest treat for our selfishness. It is the belief that great people in every age are joined together as one, in an unbroken line. And it is a protest against the way generations change and decay.

So what good does this way of looking at the past, through its great examples, do for the modern person? What good is this focus on the rare and the classic? It gives him the knowledge that great things once existed, and so they were possible, and so they may be possible again. It cheers him on along his way. In weaker moments he may doubt whether he is wishing for something impossible, but this knowledge knocks that doubt aside. Suppose someone believes that it would take no more than a hundred people, raised in the new spirit, capable and productive, to finish off the current fashion in education in Germany. He will gain strength from remembering that the culture of the Renaissance was built on the shoulders of another such group of a hundred people.

And yet, if we really want to learn something from an example, how vague and slippery the comparison turns out to be! If it is going to give us strength, we have to ignore many of the differences. We have to squeeze what was unique about the past into a general rule, and break off all its sharp corners so that it fits. In the end, of course, something that was once possible could only become possible a second time if the old theory of Pythagoras were true. That theory says that when the stars and planets return to the same positions, events on earth repeat themselves down to the smallest detail. So whenever the stars line up a certain way, a Stoic and an Epicurean will team up in a plot to murder Caesar, and when they line up another way, another Columbus will discover America. Imagine that the earth always started its play over again after the fifth act, and that it was certain the same mix of motives, the same sudden rescue from above, the same disaster would come back at regular intervals. Only then could the person of action dare to look for the whole, original truth in

the history of great examples, and see each fact fully laid out in its uniqueness. And that would probably not happen until astronomers went back to being astrologers. Until then, the history of great examples will never be able to hold the complete truth. It will always lump together things that do not really fit, and smooth them over so that they seem to fit. It will always blur the differences in motives and circumstances. Its aim is to show results while neglecting the causes. It shows them "monumentally," that is, as examples to copy. It turns away from reasons as much as it can. With much less exaggeration, you could call it a collection of "results in themselves" rather than a collection of events that will have an effect on every age. The events of war or religion that we love to celebrate in our public festivals are exactly these kinds of "results in themselves." It is these that keep ambition from sleeping, and that rest on bolder hearts like lucky charms. It is not the real historical chain of cause and effect that does this. Because that chain, if properly understood, would only prove that nothing quite the same could ever be thrown again from the dice cups of fate and the future.

As long as the main point of history is the strong push it gives to a powerful spirit, and as long as the past is used mostly as a model to copy, the past is always in danger of being changed a little and polished up, and pushed closer to fiction. Sometimes you can't tell a "monumental" past apart from a made-up legend at all, because you can draw the same reasons for action from either one. If this history of great examples takes over from the other kinds, the history that preserves and honours the old and the history that judges the past, then the past itself is treated unfairly. Huge stretches of it are forgotten and looked down on. They flow away like a dark, endless river, with only a few brightly coloured islands of fact sticking up out of it. The rare figures that do stand out seem more than natural, like the golden hips that the followers of Pythagoras claimed their master had. The

history of great examples lives on false comparisons. With its tempting comparisons it lures brave people into recklessness and eager people into fanaticism. Picture this kind of history in the hands, and in the head, of a talented selfish person or an inspired villain. Kingdoms will be toppled, rulers murdered, war and revolution set loose, and there will be more and more "effects in themselves", which means effects that have no proper cause behind them. That is enough about the harm the history of great examples does to powerful people of action, whether good or bad. But what happens if the weak and the idle make it their servant, or even their master!

Take the simplest and most common case: people with no artistic gift, or only half a gift, who use the history of great examples as a sword and shield. They will turn these weapons against their natural enemies, the truly great artistic spirits. Only those great spirits can learn the one real lesson from that history, which is how to live, and only they can turn what they learn into noble action. But their path is blocked, and the fresh air they need is darkened, by the crowd dancing around a half-understood monument of the great past, worshipping it like an idol, and doing so with a clear conscience. We almost hear them say: "Look, that is true, real art! What good are these little strivers of today?" This dancing crowd seems to own all "good taste." That is because the creator is always at a disadvantage next to the mere spectator, who never lifted a finger to do the work. In the same way, the armchair politician has always seemed wiser and more far-seeing than the real statesman. Now suppose we brought the habit of voting and counting majorities into the world of art, and made the artist defend himself before a court of amateur art lovers. You could swear he would be found guilty. This would happen even though, or really because, his judges had solemnly declared the rules of "monumental art," which is, by their official definition, the art that has "had an effect on all ages." In their eyes, there is no need, no desire, and no

backing from history for art that is not yet "monumental" simply because it belongs to the present. Their instinct tells them that art can be killed by art. The monumental will never be made again, they say, and they call on the weight of its authority from the past to make sure of it. They are art experts mainly because they want to kill art. They pretend to be doctors, when what they really want is to play with poisons. They train their tastes until they become twisted, so that they always have a reason to turn away all the healthy artistic food that is offered to them. They do not want anything great to appear. Their trick is to say, "Look, the great thing is already here!" In truth they care just as little about the great thing that is already here as about the one that is about to appear. The way they live proves that. The history of great examples is the costume under which their hatred of present-day power and greatness disguises itself as a huge admiration for the past. The real meaning of this way of looking at history is dressed up as its opposite. Whether they mean to or not, they act as if their motto were: "Let the dead bury the living."

Each of the three kinds of history will only grow well in one kind of soil and climate. Anywhere else it turns into a harmful weed. If a person who is going to create something great needs the past, he takes control of it through the history of great examples. A person who is happy with what is traditional and respected uses the past as a historian who preserves and honours the old. And only someone whose heart is crushed by an urgent need, and who wants to throw off that burden at any cost, feels the need for history that judges the past, the kind of history that puts the past on trial and condemns it. Much harm is done by planting these things wrongly and without thought. The critic who has no real need, the collector of old things who has no love or respect for them, and the person who knows about a great deed but could never do one himself: these are plants

that have turned into weeds. They have been torn out of the soil they belong in, and so they go bad.

III.

Second, history is needed by the person who likes to keep things as they are and who has a respectful nature. This kind of person looks back at where he came from with love and trust, and through history he gives thanks for being alive. He carefully looks after whatever has survived from long ago, and he wants to pass on the same conditions he grew up in to the people who come after him. In this way he does life a service. Owning his ancestors' furniture comes to mean something different in his heart: it is not so much that he owns the furniture, but that the furniture owns him. Everything small and narrow, everything moldy and out of date, gains its own value and becomes something no one may touch, because this careful, respectful soul moves into it and builds a secret nest there. This is the person who practices history that preserves and honours the old. The history of his town becomes his own history. He looks at the town walls, the gate with its towers, the town council, the market fair, and sees them like a picture diary of his childhood. He sees himself in all of it: his strength, his hard work, his wishes, his good sense, his faults and his foolish moments. "People could live here," he says, "just as they can live here now, and as they will go on living here. We are tough people, and nobody is going to pull us up by the roots overnight." And so, saying "we," he looks over the amazing lives of people in the past and feels at one with the spirit of the house, the family and the city. Across the dark and troubled centuries, he greets the soul of his people from far away as if it were his own. His talents and good qualities lie in this power to feel and to sense things. He can pick up the scent of a trail that has almost disappeared. He has a natural knack for reading the scrawled writing of the past correctly, and he instantly

understands old pages that have been written over again and again, layer upon layer. Goethe had thoughts like these when he stood in front of the great cathedral built by Erwin von Steinbach. The storm of his feelings tore apart the cloud of history that hung between him and the building, and for the first time he saw this German work as something "coming from the stern, rough German soul." This was the same road the Italians of the Renaissance travelled. It was the same spirit that woke up the ancient Italian genius in their poets again, so that it became, as the historian Jacob Burckhardt puts it, "a wonderful echo of the ancient lyre." But the greatest value of this respectful, preserving spirit is the simple pleasure and contentment it gives to the dull, hard, and even painful conditions of a nation's life or a person's life. The historian Niebuhr admits that he could live happily on a bare moor among free farmers who had a history, and that he would never miss art at all. How could history serve life better than this? It anchors the less gifted races and peoples to the homes and customs of their ancestors, and it stops them from wandering far away looking for something better, only to find fighting and competition. The force that ties people down to the same companions and the same surroundings, to the same daily work, to their bare mountainside, may look selfish and unreasonable. But it is a healthy kind of unreason, and it benefits the whole community. Anyone knows this who has clearly seen the terrible results of a pure craving to move away and seek adventure, sometimes even in whole peoples. Anyone knows it who watches what happens to a nation that has lost faith in its own earlier days and has given itself over to a restless, rootless love of everything foreign and an endless hunger for new things. A tree's feeling of clinging to its roots; the happiness of knowing that your growth is not just random or accidental, but is an inheritance, the fruit and flower of a past that does not just excuse the present but crowns it with honour: this is what people today like to call the real obsession with history.

These are not the best conditions for turning the past into pure science. And here too, just as we saw with the history of great examples, we see that the past itself suffers when history serves life and is steered by life's goals. To change the image a little: a tree can feel its roots better than it can see them. How strong that feeling is gets measured by how big and strong the branches are that you can see. The tree may be mistaken about this. And it will be far more mistaken about the whole forest around it, because it only knows and feels the forest in so far as the forest blocks it or helps it, and in no other way! The sense of preserving and honouring the old, whether in a person, a city or a nation, always covers a very narrow field. Many things are not noticed at all. Other things are seen cut off from everything else, as if through a microscope. There is no sense of proportion: everything is treated as equally important, and so each single thing is given too much importance. The things of the past are never seen in their true proportions, and they never get their fair value. Instead, their value and proportions change depending on which person or which nation is looking back at its past.

There is always a danger here. Everything old may be seen as equally worthy of respect, and anything that lacks this respect for old things, such as a new spirit, may be rejected as an enemy. The Greeks themselves allowed the old, stiff style of sculpture to stand next to the freer and greater style. And later on, they did not just put up with the pointed nose and the cold, stiff mouth of those old statues; they even made them a rule for good taste. Suppose a people's judgment hardens like this, so that history's service to past life ends up undermining a further and higher life. Suppose the obsession with history no longer keeps life alive, but turns it into a mummy. Then the tree dies in an unnatural way, from the top downward, and in the end even the roots dry up. History that preserves and honours the old goes bad from the moment it stops giving soul and inspiration to the fresh life

of the present. The spring of loving respect has dried up, but the scholarly habit carries on without it and keeps spinning smugly around itself. Then we see the horrible sight of the crazed collector raking through all the rubbish heaps of the past. He breathes in moldy air. This habit of hoarding old things can drag down a person with real talent and a real hunger of the spirit, turning it into a mere endless curiosity about anything old. He often sinks so low that he is happy with any food at all, and he greedily gobbles up every scrap that falls from the table of old books and catalogues.

But suppose this decay doesn't happen. Suppose the ground stays healthy, the only ground where the history that preserves and honours the old can take root and do life any good. Even then there are plenty of dangers, if this kind of history grows too strong and pushes into the space that belongs to the other ways of looking at the past. It only knows how to protect life, not how to make new life. So it always looks down on whatever is newly growing in the present, because, unlike the history of great examples, it has no sure feeling for it. In this way it holds back the strong urge to do something new, and it freezes the person who wants to act. After all, anyone who acts will always be stepping on some sacred old thing or other. Anything that has grown old brings with it a demand to live forever. When you think about the whole life story of such an old thing, and how much respect people have paid to it for generations, whether it is a custom, a religious belief, or a political rule, it starts to seem arrogant, even wicked, to swap it for something new. It seems wrong to replace that old gathering of sacred feelings with a new sacred feeling.

Here we can see clearly why people need a third way of looking at the past, alongside the other two. This is the "critical" way, the history that judges the past, and it also works for the sake of life. To live, a person must have the strength to smash the past, and to use that strength from time to time. He must drag the past into court, ques-

tion it without mercy, and in the end find it guilty. Every past deserves to be found guilty. That is simply the rule in human affairs, because they always contain a great deal of human strength and human weakness. The judge sitting here is not true fairness, and the one who announces the verdict is not mercy. The judge is only life itself: that dark, pushing force that can never get enough, and that wants only itself. Its sentence is always harsh and always unfair, because it never comes from a clean source of knowledge. And yet, most of the time, the verdict would be the same even if true fairness herself handed it down. As the old saying in Goethe's play goes: "Everything that is born deserves to be destroyed, so it would be better if nothing were ever born." It takes great strength to go on living while forgetting how closely life and unfairness are tied together. Luther himself once said that the world only came into being because God wasn't paying attention; if God had ever imagined heavy cannons, he would never have made it. The same life that needs to forget also sometimes needs to destroy. If the unfairness of something ever becomes plain to see, for example a monopoly, a ruling class, or a royal family, then that thing deserves to fall. Its past is examined with a critical eye, the knife is put to its roots, and all the "sacred" feelings around it are grimly trampled underfoot. This process is always dangerous, even for life itself. And the people or the eras that serve life in this way, by judging and wiping out the past, are always a danger to themselves and to others. Because we are simply the result of earlier generations, we are also the result of their mistakes, their passions, and their crimes. It is impossible to throw off that chain. Even if we condemn those mistakes and believe we have escaped them, we can't escape the fact that we come from them. At best, there is a fight between the nature we were born with and inherited, and what we know, between a strict new discipline and an old tradition. We plant a new way of living, a new instinct, learned habits, that dry up and kill the first nature. It is an attempt to give ourselves, after the fact, a past we would like to

have come from, in place of the one we really do come from. This is always a risky attempt, because it is hard to know where to stop when you start rejecting the past, and learned habits are usually weaker than the nature we are born with. Too often we stop at knowing what is good without doing it, because we also know what would be better but cannot do it. Still, here and there the battle is won. And that gives a strange comfort to the fighters, to those who use the history that judges the past for the sake of life. The comfort is knowing that this "first nature" was once a second nature itself, and that every learned habit that wins out eventually becomes a first nature.

IV.

This is how history can serve life. Every person and every nation needs a certain amount of knowledge about the past. It might come through the history of great examples, through the history that preserves and honours the old, or through the history that judges the past, depending on their goals, their strengths, and their needs. This need is not the need of pure thinkers who only watch life from the side, or of the few who want knowledge and are satisfied only by knowledge. Instead, it always points toward the purpose of life, and it is completely ruled and guided by life. This is the natural relationship that an era, a culture, and a people should have with history. Hunger is where it comes from, need sets its rules, and the inner power to heal and grow decides its limits. People should want to know about the past only to serve the future and the present, not to weaken the present or eat away at a living future. All of this is as simple as truth itself, and it is completely convincing to anyone who isn't tangled up in the trap of "historical reasoning."

And now let's take a quick look at our own time! We jump back in shock. The clear, natural, clean connection between life and history is gone. And what a maze of exaggeration and contradiction the problem

has turned into! Is it our fault for seeing it this way? Or have life and history really changed how they stand toward each other, as if an unlucky star had risen between them? Others may show that we have seen things wrongly; I am only saying what we believe we see. There is such a star, a bright and proud star, and the relationship really has changed. It was changed by science, and by the demand that history must become a science. Life is no longer in charge, and knowledge of the past is no longer its servant. The fences have been knocked down, and everything is bursting out of its limits. We can no longer see events in their proper proportion, and this blurring stretches across their whole endless course. No generation has ever seen such a huge, sweeping comedy as the one put on by history, the "science of universal evolution." And it puts on this show with the reckless boldness of its motto, which in Latin means: "Let truth be done, even if life dies."

Let me paint a picture of what goes on inside the mind of the modern person. Knowledge about history pours into him from sources that never run dry. Strange things that don't fit together get thrown in side by side. His memory opens all its doors, and still they are never open wide enough. His nature works hard to welcome all these foreign guests, to treat them with respect, and to find each one a place. But the guests fight with each other. Harsh steps seem necessary just so he himself is not destroyed. Little by little, getting used to this messy, stormy life at home becomes one of his learned habits. But these learned habits are clearly weaker, more restless, and more deeply unhealthy than his original nature. The modern person carries inside him a huge pile of knowledge he cannot digest, like stones. Now and then these stones rattle against each other inside his body, just as in the fairy tale. And that rattling shows the most striking feature of modern people: there is something inside them that matches nothing on the outside, and something on the outside that matches nothing inside. The ancient peoples knew nothing of this split. When know-

ledge is swallowed in huge amounts without any hunger for it, even against one's own wishes, it no longer changes the way a person actually lives. Instead it stays hidden in a confused inner world, which the modern person is strangely proud to call his "real strong self." He says he has the inside already and only lacks the outside. But in a living thing, splitting outside and inside like this makes no sense at all. That is exactly why our modern culture is not alive: you cannot even understand it without this split. In other words, it is not a real culture. It is only a kind of knowledge about culture, a jumble of different thoughts and feelings about it, and no decision about which way to go can ever come out of that jumble. The real force that actually shows up in what people do is often nothing more than habit, a poor copy, or even a shameless cartoon of the real thing. The modern person probably feels like a snake that has swallowed a whole rabbit and now lies still in the sun, avoiding every movement it doesn't absolutely need to make. The "inner life" is now the only thing education cares about, and everyone who sees this hopes that education won't fail by being too hard to digest. Imagine an ancient Greek coming across all this. He would notice that for modern people, "education" and "historical education" seem to mean exactly the same thing, except that the second phrase is longer. And if he explained his own belief, that a person can be very well educated without any history at all, people would shake their heads and think they had misheard him. The Greeks, that famous people from a past still close to us, were strongly able to forget the past during the time of their greatest power. If a typical child of our age were carried by some magic spell into the Greek world, he would probably find the Greeks very "uneducated." And that discovery would give away the carefully hidden secret of modern culture, and the whole world would laugh. Because we moderns have nothing of our own. We only become worth noticing by stuffing ourselves until we overflow with foreign customs, arts, philosophies, religions and sciences. An ancient Greek who wandered into

our time would probably call us walking encyclopedias. But the only value of an encyclopedia is what's inside it, its contents, not what's written on the outside, on the binding or the cover. In the same way, all of modern culture is basically on the inside. It's as if the bookbinder had printed on the cover something like: "Handbook of inner culture for barbarians on the outside." This split between inside and outside makes the outside even more crude and uncivilized. That is only natural, the same way it happens when a rough, primitive people grows on the outside only to serve its basic inner needs. After all, what way does nature have to hold back too much overgrowth pressing in from outside? Only one way: to be touched by it as little as possible, to push it aside, and to stamp it out at the first chance. And so we fall into the habit of no longer taking real things seriously. We end up without a strong self, as weak people on whom what is real and lasting leaves hardly any mark. In the end, people become more careless and easygoing about outward things, and the already wide gap between outside and inside grows even wider. Finally they no longer even notice crudeness and barbarism, as long as their memories are kept constantly tickled, and as long as there is a steady stream of new facts to learn, facts that can be neatly packed away in the cupboards of their memory. Against this barbarism, I think the culture of a people can be described, in true fairness, as "a single shared artistic style that runs through every outward part of a people's life." This must not be misunderstood, as if it were simply a matter of crudeness versus "elegant style." A people that can truly be called cultured must really be one living whole, and not be sadly split apart into outside and inside. If someone wants to help a people's culture grow, let him first try to build this higher unity. Let him work to tear down the modern system of education, for the sake of a true education. Let him be brave enough to think about how a people whose health has been ruined by history can be made well again, and how it can win back both its natural instincts and its sense of honour.

I am speaking directly only about the Germans of today. They have suffered more than other peoples from having no strong self and from the split between outside and inside. For us, "form," the outside of things, usually suggests some empty custom, a disguise, or hypocrisy. If we don't hate it, we certainly don't love it. We are unusually afraid both of the word "convention" and of the thing itself. This fear drove the German away from the French school of manners. He wanted to be more natural, and therefore, he thought, more German. But that "therefore" seems to have led him to the wrong conclusion. First he ran away from the school of manners and went whichever way he pleased. In the end, he has come to copy, by his own choice and in a sloppy way, the very things he used to copy with great effort and often with success. So now this lazy fellow lives by French customs that he gets wrong. You can see it in the way he walks, the way he talks and dresses, and his whole way of living. He believed he was going back to Nature, but really he was just following his whims and his comfort, using as little self-control as possible. Walk through any German town. You will see customs that are nothing more than the leftovers, the weak reverse side, of the national character of foreign countries. Everything is dull, worn out, cheap and badly copied. Everyone does just as he pleases. But his will is not strong or serious; it follows rules set by the general rush and everyone's wish for comfort. A piece of clothing that took no effort to design and no time to make, borrowed from foreign styles and copied badly, is treated as an important addition to German fashion. People mockingly deny having any feeling for form, for the outside of things, because they say they have a "feeling for the inside." They are famous for worshipping their "inner life."

But their "inner life" also carries a well-known danger. What is inside cannot be seen from the outside. So one day it might quietly vanish, and nobody would notice it was gone, just as nobody noticed it was there before. You might think the German people are very far from

this danger. Even so, a foreigner would have some reason to complain that our inner life is too weak and too badly organised to give itself a shape and show itself outwardly. In rare cases it may show itself as wonderfully sensitive, serious and powerful, maybe richer than the inner life of other peoples. But taken as a whole, it stays weak, because all its fine threads are never tied together into one strong knot. What you can see a German do is not his inner life showing itself. It is only a weak, clumsy attempt by one single thread to pretend it stands for the whole. That is why you cannot judge a German by any one action: after it, the person may be just as much a mystery as before. Clearly he has to be measured by his thoughts and feelings, which these days come out in his books. If only those books did not, more than ever, make us wonder whether this famous inner life is really still sitting in its hidden, sacred place. One day it might vanish and leave only the outer life behind, with its crude pride and empty bowing and scraping, as the mark of a German. A frightening thought! Just as frightening as the idea that the inner life is still there, but painted, wearing makeup, in disguise, turned into an actress or something worse. That, it seems, is what his experience of the theatre taught Grillparzer, a quiet observer who stood apart from the crowd. He says: "We feel by theory. We hardly know anymore how people today show their feelings. We make them use gestures that nobody could use nowadays. Shakespeare has spoilt us modern people."

This is just one example, and maybe I have been too quick to assume it applies to everyone. But how terrible it would be if that broad claim turned out to be true right in front of us! Then there would be a note of despair in the phrase, "We Germans feel by theory, we are all spoilt by history." That phrase would cut through the roots of any hope for a future national culture. For every hope of that kind grows out of the belief that German feeling is genuine and direct, the belief in an unspoiled inner life. Where is our hope or belief when its source is

muddied? Where is it when the inner life has learned to strike poses, to dance, and to wear makeup, has learned to express itself "with proper reflection in abstract terms," and is slowly losing itself? And how could a great creative spirit exist in a nation that is not sure of its own inner unity? A nation split into educated people, whose inner life has been led off the true path of education, and uneducated people, whose inner life no one can reach at all? How could it exist, I ask, when the people has lost its shared feeling, and knows that the feeling of the part that calls itself educated, and claims the right to control the nation's artistic spirit, is false and two-faced? Here and there, a few individuals may have better and finer judgment and taste than the rest, but that makes up for nothing. It is torture for a man to be able to speak only to one section of society and to feel no longer connected with his people. He would rather bury his treasure now, sickened by the crude, condescending support of one class, even though his heart is full of tenderness for everyone. The instinct of the people can no longer come halfway to meet him. It is no use for them to stretch out their arms to him in longing. What is left for him but to turn his sharpened hatred against this ban, to strike at the wall put up by so-called culture, and to condemn, as a judge, the thing that blighted and dragged him down as a living man and a source of life? He gives up the godlike wish to create and to help, and in exchange he gets a deep understanding of fate. He ends his days as a lonely thinker, wise only in his disappointment. It is the most painful of comedies. Anyone who sees it will feel a sacred duty and will say to himself: "Help must come. The higher unity in the nature and soul of a people must be brought back. The split between inside and outside must disappear again under the hammer of necessity." But what means can he turn to? What does he have left except his knowledge? He hopes to plant a sense of need by speaking out of the fullness of that knowledge, giving it away freely with both hands. From a strong need, a strong action may one day arise. And so that there is no doubt

about which need and which knowledge I mean, let me state it clearly: the goal of our efforts is German unity in its highest sense, far more than political union. It is the unity of the German spirit and German life, once the conflict between outside and inside, between inner life and social habit, has been wiped out.

V.

Too much history seems to be an enemy of the life of an age, and it is dangerous in five ways. First, it sharpens the split between what is inside us and what we show on the outside, and it weakens the strong self. Second, the age starts to imagine that it has the rarest of all virtues, true fairness, more than any other age ever had. Third, the natural instincts of a nation are blocked, and people are kept from growing up, both each person on their own and the nation as a whole. Fourth, we come to believe in humanity growing old. That belief is always harmful: it tells us we are leftovers from earlier times, mere late-comers. Last, an age falls into a dangerous state of mocking self-doubt about itself, and then into the even more dangerous state of cynicism. In that state, a sly and selfish way of thinking about how to act grows to full strength, and it cripples and finally destroys the strength to live.

Let me go back to the first point: modern people suffer from a weakened strong self. In the days of the Empire, the Roman stopped being a true Roman because he spent his time gazing at the world that lay conquered at his feet. He lost himself among the crowds of foreigners who poured into Rome, and he went downhill in the middle of a worldwide carnival of every kind of art, religion and moral code. The same thing happens to modern people. Their history writers, like showmen, keep unrolling a giant picture of the whole world in front of their eyes. So they turn into restless spectators who dabble in everything and master nothing. In the end, even great wars

and revolutions move them only for a moment. A war has hardly ended before it has already been turned into thousands of printed pages, and soon it will be served up as the newest treat to tickle the tired taste of history lovers, like a dish for bored food snobs. It seems impossible to make a strong, full chord ring on, however hard you strike the strings: the next moment it fades away into the soft, weak echo of history. To put it in terms of how we live: no one ever manages to stay up on a high point. Your actions are sudden crashes, not a long, rolling thunder. You might complete the greatest and most wonderful thing, yet it will still sink down to the world of the dead without honour and without anyone singing about it. Art flies away when you cover your actions with a sunshade made of history. Some people want to understand everything in an instant, when they should be struggling for a long time to take in what cannot be understood as something grand and awe-inspiring. Such a person can only be called clever in the mocking sense of Schiller's short poem about the "reason of reasonable men." There is something the child sees that he does not see, something the child hears that he does not hear, and this something is the most important thing of all. Because he does not understand it, his understanding is more childish than a child's and simpler than simplicity itself. That is true even though his old, dried-up face is full of clever wrinkles, and his fingers are skilled at untying knots. He has lost or killed his instinct. When his reasoning fails him and his road leads through the desert, he can no longer trust the "divine animal" inside him and let the reins hang loose. His individual self is shaken and has no firm belief in itself left. It sinks down into its own inner life, and here that only means the messy jumble of everything it has learned. This jumble will never show itself on the outside, because it is just a set of rules and beliefs that cannot turn into living. Looking further, we see how history, by driving out instinct, has turned people into ghosts and empty ideas. No one dares

to show a strong self. Instead, each person hides behind a mask: the cultured man, the scholar, the poet or the politician.

Suppose someone grabs hold of these masks, believing he is dealing with something serious and not just a puppet show, since they all look serious. He will find nothing in his hands but rags and coloured ribbons. He must stop fooling himself and shout out loud, "Take off your costumes, or be what you pretend to be!" A person who truly belongs to the noble family of the serious must no longer act like Don Quixote, the knight who charged at windmills, because he has better things to do than to attack such fake realities. But he must always keep a sharp watch around him, call out "Halt! Who goes there?" to all the hooded figures, and rip the masks off their faces. And look at what comes of it! You might have thought that history, more than anything, would push people to be honest, even if only to be honest fools. That used to be its effect, but not anymore. Education in history and the citizen's standard-issue frock coat now rule side by side. There has never been so much loud chatter about the "free strong self," and yet strong selves can no longer be seen at all, let alone free ones. All you see are men in uniform, nervously pulling their coats up over their ears. The individual self has gone into hiding in its secret corners. It can no longer be seen from the outside, and this makes you wonder whether there can be causes that have no effects. Or will it turn out that a race of eunuchs is needed to guard the world's harem of history? We can understand very well why they keep their distance. Doesn't it look as if their job were to watch over history and make sure that nothing comes out of it except more history books, and never a deed that could itself become history? Isn't their job to stop people from becoming "free," which means honest with themselves and with others, in both word and action? Only through this honesty will the inner need and suffering of modern people be brought into the light. Only then can art and religion come as true helpers, in place

of the sad pretending of social rules and costume parties. Then they could plant a shared culture that meets real needs. Such a culture would not teach what today's "liberal education" teaches: to tell lies about these needs, and so to become a walking lie yourself.

In an age like this, which suffers from its so-called "liberal education," think how unnatural, fake and shameful the conditions must be for the most honest of all fields of knowledge. That field is Philosophy, the holy, naked goddess. In a world like this, full of pressure and of fitting in on the outside, what becomes of her? She becomes the subject of deep talks a lonely wanderer has with himself, or the lucky catch of any hunter who happens upon her. She becomes a dark secret kept in a private room, or the everyday chatter of old men and children at the university. No one dares to live out the rules of philosophy in his own life. No one lives like a philosopher, with the simple, wholehearted, manly faith of the people of ancient times. Back then, if a man had once sworn loyalty to the Stoic school, that faith forced him to act like a Stoic wherever he was and whatever he did. All philosophy today is political or official. Our modern governments, churches, universities, moral codes and cowardly habits have tied it down, so that it is nothing more than a ghostly show of learning. It lives by sighing "if only..." and by knowing that "once upon a time, this happened..." In an education built on history, philosophy has no place if it wants to be more than knowledge that stays indoors and never shows itself in action. If modern man were ever brave and determined, and not just an indoor creature even in what he hates, he would throw philosophy out completely. For now, he is happy just to cover up her nakedness politely. Yes, people think, write, print, speak and teach in a philosophical way: that much they are allowed to do. It is only different when it comes to action, to "life." There, only one thing is allowed, and everything else is completely impossible. Those are the orders that come from historical education. One might well ask:

"Are these human beings, or only machines for thinking, writing and speaking?"

Goethe says about Shakespeare: "No one cared less than he did about getting the costumes historically right. He knows too well the inner costume that all people wear the same. People tell you he describes Romans wonderfully. I don't think so. They are real, flesh-and-blood Englishmen. But at least they are human beings from head to toe, and the Roman toga looks good on them." I wonder: could we show our present-day writers, national heroes, officials and politicians as Romans? I am sure we could not. That is because they are not real people. They are walking summaries, abstract ideas given a body. If they have a character of their own, it is buried so deep that it can never come up into the daylight. If they are human, they are human only to a doctor studying their bodies. To everyone else they are something different. They are not people, and not "beasts or gods" either. They are history-book pictures of the march of civilisation, and nothing but pictures and civilisation. They are all outside and no inside that anyone can find. And sadly, the outside is ugly, and they all look the same. This is how my main claim should be understood and thought about: "Only people with a strong self can bear the weight of history; the weak are snuffed out by it." History throws people's feelings into confusion when those feelings are not strong enough to judge the past on their own terms. Think of a man who no longer dares to trust himself, but who, without really wanting to, asks history for advice on "how he ought to feel right now." Little by little, without noticing, his timidity turns him into an actor. He plays a role, or usually many roles, and so he plays them badly and shallowly. Slowly, every real connection breaks between the man and the historical subjects he studies. We see noisy little fellows comparing themselves with the Romans as if they were their equals. They dig around in what is left of the Greek poets as if those poems were dead bodies

laid out for them to cut up, and as worthless as their own well-educated bodies might be. Suppose a man is working on the Greek thinker Democritus. The question is always on the tip of my tongue: why Democritus, of all people? Why not Heraclitus, or Philo, or Bacon, or Descartes? And then, why a philosopher at all? Why not a poet or a speaker? And why a Greek in particular? Why not an Englishman or a Turk? Isn't the past big enough for you to find some spot where you can play around without looking ridiculous? But as I said, these people are a race of eunuchs, men who have lost their manhood. And to a eunuch, one woman is the same as any other: just a woman, "woman as such," forever out of reach. So it makes no difference to them what they study, as long as history itself always stays nicely "objective" for them. That is how it is for men who could never make history themselves. Goethe wrote that the Eternal Feminine "draws us upward." But since it could never draw you upward, you drag it down to your level instead. And because you yourselves are neither male nor female, you see history as neither one nor the other too. But I don't want anyone to take this comparison between history and the Eternal Feminine too seriously. So I will say right away that, on the contrary, I believe history is the Eternal Masculine. I will only add that for people who are "historically trained" through and through, it can make no difference which one it is. They themselves are neither man nor woman, not even both at once. They are simply neuters, or, to put it in more philosophical language, the Eternal Objective.

Once a person's self has been emptied of everything personal, and has reached what people call an "objective" state, nothing can affect it anymore. Someone may do something good and true, in action, in poetry or in music. But the empty culture of our time will look past the work itself and ask about the history of the person who made it. If the creator has already made other things, our historian will lay out clearly how that person has developed in the past and is likely to

develop in the future. He will place the creator next to others and compare them. He will pick apart, piece by piece, the creator's choice of material and the way he handled it. He will wisely sum the creator up and give him general advice for the road ahead. The most amazing works may be made, but the swarm of history-minded neuters will always be in position, ready to examine the creators through their long telescopes. The response comes right away, but always in the form of "criticism," even though the critic, a moment earlier, never dreamed such a work was possible. The work never gets to have a real effect, only a criticism. And the criticism itself has no effect either; it only produces another criticism. So we end up treating a large number of critics as a sign that a work has had an effect, and a small number or none at all as a sign that it failed. In fact, everything stays exactly as it was, even with this so-called "effect." People talk for a little while about one new thing, and then about some other new thing, and meanwhile they keep doing what they have always done. The historical training of our critics stops them from having an effect in the true sense, meaning an effect on life and action. They press their blotting paper onto the darkest, boldest writing, and drag their thick brushes over the most graceful drawings. They call this "making corrections," and that is all they do. Their critical pens never stop flying, because they have lost control over them. Their pens drive them, instead of them driving their pens. The weakness of the modern self shows itself clearly in this endless flood of criticism, in the lack of self-control, and in what the Romans called "impotentia," meaning powerlessness and a lack of self-restraint.

VI.

But let's leave these weaklings behind. Let's turn instead to a strength that modern people are famous for. We have to ask a painful question. Because of his historical "so-called neutrality," does the modern

person have the right to call himself stronger and fairer than people of other ages? Is it true that this so-called neutrality comes from a deeper feeling that true fairness is needed? Or does it really come from quite different causes, so that it only looks like it comes from fairness, while in fact it leads to an unhealthy bias in favour of the modern person? Socrates thought it was close to madness to believe you had a good quality when you didn't really have it. This kind of false belief is surely more dangerous than the opposite madness of having an open, real fault. Because for a real fault there is still a cure. But the false belief makes a person, or a whole age, worse every day, and so more and more unfair.

No one deserves our deep respect more than the person who has both the feeling and the strength for true fairness. That's because the highest and rarest good qualities all come together in it and disappear into it, the way a bottomless sea swallows the rivers that flow into it from every side. When the truly fair person is called to be a judge, his hand no longer shakes as it holds the scales. He keeps piling the weights against his own side, without mercy to himself. His eyes don't blur as the scales go up and down. And when he announces the verdict, his voice is neither harsh nor cracking. If he were a heartless knowledge machine, he would spread an icy air of terrible, inhuman grandeur around him, and we would fear him, not respect him. But he is a human being. He has struggled to climb up from careless doubt to firm certainty, from easygoing tolerance to the stern command "you must." He has climbed from the rare quality of generosity to the rarest quality of all, true fairness. He has become like that heartless machine, even though he started out as nothing more than a poor mortal. Above all, he has to pay a price to himself for being human, and he tragically breaks his own nature against the rock of a quality that is almost impossible to reach. All this sets him on a lonely peak, as the most respected example of humankind. Because truth is his goal. But

not truth as cold book knowledge. It is the truth of a judge who punishes according to the law. It is not something one person owns for himself. It is a holy authority that tears down the fences around everything people selfishly own. In short, it is truth as the court that judges the whole world, not as a prize that one lone hunter happens to catch. People often praise the search for truth without thinking. But that search only has any greatness in it if the seeker truly and completely wants true fairness. Its roots lie in true fairness alone. But a whole crowd of other motives can join in the search for truth, motives that have nothing to do with truth at all. For example: curiosity, fear of boredom, envy, vanity, or just fun. So the world seems full of people who "serve truth." And yet the quality of true fairness is rarely there, even more rarely recognised, and almost always hated to the death. Meanwhile, in every age, a crowd of fake good qualities has marched in with great show and honour.

In fact, only a few really serve truth, just as only a few have a pure wish for true fairness. And of those few, very few have the strength to actually be fair. Wanting it is not enough. The urge to be fair, without the ability to judge well, has caused people the greatest suffering. So nothing would be better for everyone than to spread the seed of this ability as widely as possible. Then people could tell the difference between the fanatic and the real judge, between blind desire and conscious strength. But there is no way to plant the ability to judge. And so, whenever someone speaks to people about truth and fairness, they will always be bothered by a doubt: is a fanatic speaking to them, or a judge? So we must forgive them for always being especially kind to the "so-called truth-seekers." These people have neither the will nor the ability to judge. They have set themselves the task of finding "pure knowledge, no matter what the results." In plain words, that means knowledge that leads to nothing. There are a great many truths that don't matter. There are problems that take no struggle to solve, let

alone any sacrifice. And in this safe land where nothing matters, a person can very easily turn into a "heartless knowledge machine." And yet, if we find whole armies of scholars being turned into such machines in some age that suits them especially well, then sadly it is always possible that this age lacks a great and strong sense of true fairness. And true fairness is the noblest source of what people call the urge for truth.

Think about the show-off historian of our own day. Is he the fairest man of his time? It's true that he has trained himself to be so delicate and sensitive that, as the old saying goes, "nothing human is foreign to him." Ages and people that lie very far apart are brought together in the harmonies he plays, as if on a harp. He has turned into a passive instrument, and his notes are picked up and echoed by other instruments just like him. In the end, the whole air of an age is full of these echoes, all humming together in one soft chord. But I think all we hear are the faint overtones of the original note of history. From these thin, shrill vibrations you can no longer guess how rough and powerful that first note really was. The original note sang of action, of need, and of terror. The overtone just lulls us into a soft, amateur's sleep. It is as if Beethoven's heroic symphony had been rewritten for two flutes, to be played for opium-smokers lost in their dreams. Now we can judge how these show-off historians measure up to modern man's claim that he has a higher and purer idea of true fairness. This virtue is never pleasant. It never charms anyone. It is harsh and grating. Next to it, generosity stands very low on the ladder of virtues. And yet even generosity is found in only a few rare historians! Most of them only get as far as tolerance. In other words, they leave alone whatever they can't explain away. They correct it and polish it up in a superior, condescending way. They quietly assume that a beginner will take it for true fairness if the past is told without harshness and without open signs of hatred. But only greater strength can truly

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judge. Weakness has to settle for tolerating, unless it pretends to be strength and turns true fairness into a mere actress playing a part. There is still one more dreadful kind of historian left. These are clever, strict and honest, but narrow-minded. They have the "good will" to be fair, and they believe, pitifully, in their own actual judgments, which are all wrong. They are wrong for almost the same reason that the verdicts of ordinary juries are wrong. How hard it is to find a real talent for history! First we have to leave out all the selfish people in disguise, and all the party supporters who only pretend to be impartial so they can play their own wicked game. Then we also have to leave out the thoughtless people who write history with the simple belief that true fairness is found in the popular opinion of their own day, and that writing in the spirit of the age means being fair. This belief is found in every religion, and inside religion it works very well. These simple people take the opinions and deeds of the past and measure them against the common opinions of the present, and they call this "so-called neutrality." To them, this is the rule for all truth. Their whole job is to bend the past to fit the shallow ideas of the present. And any history writing that does not treat these popular opinions as the final rule, they call "subjective," meaning just personal and biased.

Could there be an illusion hiding even in the highest meaning of the word "so-called neutrality"? By this word we mean a certain position the historian takes. He sees the chain of causes and results so clearly that it no longer affects his own strong self. We are thinking of something like what happens in art: the painter becomes so detached from all personal concerns that he sees only the picture and forgets himself, even in a stormy landscape, in the middle of thunder and lightning, or on a rough sea. And we demand that the historian have the same artistic way of seeing, the same complete absorption in his subject. But it is just a superstition to say that the picture which the subject

gives to such a man truly shows how things really are. Unless, of course, we expect that in those moments the subjects paint or photograph themselves, all by their own action, onto a completely passive surface!

But that would be a myth, and a bad one too. People forget that this moment is really the strong, spontaneous moment when the artist creates. It is "composition" in its highest form, and what comes out of it is a picture that is true as art, but not true as history. To think about history with so-called neutrality in this sense is the job of a playwright. It means thinking of one thing together with another and weaving all the pieces into one single whole. And it takes for granted that if the things themselves don't have a unified plan, one must be put into them. In this way a person covers up the past and tames it. He is showing his urge to make art, but not his urge for truth or true fairness. So-called neutrality and true fairness have nothing to do with each other. You could imagine a kind of history writing that did not contain a single drop of ordinary fact, and yet could claim to be neutral in the very highest degree. The writer Grillparzer even goes so far as to say this: "History is nothing but the way the human mind grasps facts that it does not understand. It links things together when only heaven knows how they are really connected. It swaps what makes no sense for something that does make sense. It pushes its own ideas of cause and effect onto the outside world, which can perhaps only be explained from the inside. And it assumes that chance is at work where thousands of small causes may really be operating. Every person has his own needs, so millions of drives are flowing together, some straight and some crooked, some side by side and some crossing, some going forward and some going back, some helping each other and some getting in each other's way. They all look like chance. And so, even leaving aside all the influences of nature, it is impossible to set out any general lines that past events must have

followed." But the whole point of this so-called "neutral" way of looking at things is that such a "must" should be made clear. That is an assumption, and it takes a strange shape when a historian adopts it as a fixed belief. The poet Schiller sees clearly that it really comes from the person looking, not from the facts. He says of the historian: "one event after another begins to pull away from blind chance and lawless freedom, and to take its place as part of a harmonious whole —which, of course, only appears that way in the way it is presented." But what are we to make of the innocent remark of a famous show-off historian, a remark that swings between saying the same thing twice and saying nonsense? He says: "It seems that all human actions and urges are subject to the workings of the material world, which go on unnoticed, powerfully and unstoppably." In a sentence like this, you no longer find hidden wisdom dressed up as obvious foolishness. That kind of thing you do find in the saying of Goethe's gardener, "Nature may be forced but not compelled," or in the sign outside a fairground show in a story by Swift: "The largest elephant in the world, except himself, to be seen here." But this sentence has no such hidden wisdom. After all, what contrast is there between human action and the workings of the world? It seems to me that historians like this stop teaching us anything as soon as they start making general statements. Their weakness shows in how unclear they are. In other sciences, the general statements are the most important things, because they hold the laws. But if general statements like these are supposed to count as laws, then the historian's work has been wasted. Because once you remove the unclear part that can't be solved, the bit of truth that is left over is nothing but the most ordinary knowledge. The smallest amount of life experience will teach it to you. Yet to pester whole nations for this purpose, and to spend many hard years of work on it, is like piling up one scientific experiment after another long after the law could have been worked out from the results you already had. And this ridiculous overdoing of experiments has been the curse of all

natural science ever since the scientist Zollner. If the whole value of a play lay only in its last scene, then the play itself would be a very long, twisting and tiring road to get there. And I hope that history will not think its whole meaning lies in general statements, or treat them as its flower and its fruit. On the contrary, its real value lies in coming up with clever variations on a theme that is probably quite ordinary. It lies in lifting a popular tune up until it becomes a symbol for everyone, and in showing how much depth, power and beauty there is inside it.

But to do this you need, above all, great artistic talent. You need a creative way of seeing things from above, a loving study of the facts of experience, and the freedom to work out and develop a given type. In fact, you need so-called neutrality—but this time as something good and real. So often, so-called neutrality is just an empty phrase. Instead of the calm gaze of the artist, which is lit by a fire inside him, we get a fake show of calm. In the same way, a cold distance can hide the fact that a person has no moral feeling. In some cases, shallow thinking—the everyday common sense that is too dull to seem anything but calm and uninvolved—is made to stand in for the artistic state of mind in which the personal side has completely disappeared from view. Anything that doesn't stir up feeling is preferred, and the driest phrase is taken to be the right one. People even go so far as to think that someone who is not moved at all by some particular moment in the past is the right person to describe it. That is usually how things stand between the ancient Greeks and the scholars of the classics. They have nothing to do with each other—and this is called "so-called neutrality"! This deliberate air of distance, put on just for show, this dull skill of the shallow hunter for motives, is most infuriating when the highest and rarest things are being discussed. And it is the historian's vanity that pushes him into this attitude of not caring. He ends up proving the saying that a man's vanity matches how little wit he

has. No—at least be honest! Don't pretend to have the artist's strength, which is the real so-called neutrality. Don't try to practise true fairness if you were not born for that frightening calling. As if every age had the task of being fair to everything that came before it! Ages and generations never have the right to be the judges of all earlier ages and generations. Only the rarest people among them can be given that difficult mission. Who is forcing you to judge? If you want to, then you must first prove that you are capable of true fairness. As judges, you have to stand higher than what is being judged. As things are, you have only arrived later. The guests who come last to the table should rightly take the last seats. And yet you want to take the first ones? Then do some great and mighty deed. Then perhaps a place will be got ready for you, even though you did arrive last.

You can only explain the past by using what is highest and best in the present. Only by pushing your finest qualities as far as they can go will you discover what is greatest in the past, and what is most worth knowing and keeping. Like is understood by like! If you don't do this, you will drag the past down to your own level. Do not trust any history that does not come from the mind of a rare and special person. You can tell what kind of mind it is by how it handles the moment when it has to say something general, or repeat something everyone already knows. A truly fine historian must be able to take what is already known and turn it into something that sounds brand new. He must be able to state a general truth so simply and so deeply that the simple disappears into the deep, and the deep into the simple. Nobody can be a great historian and artist and also an empty-headed fool at the same time. But we must not look down on the workers who sort and gather the raw material, just because they can never become great historians. Even less should we mix them up with the great historians. They are the bricklayers and apprentices that the master needs to have working for him. In the same way, the French

used to talk, more openly than a German would, about "the historians of Monsieur Thiers," meaning the helpers who worked for that famous historian. These workers should, over time, become extremely learned, but that does not mean they will ever become masters. Great learning and great shallowness can sit together very comfortably under the same hat.

So history should be written by a person of experience and strong character. Someone who has not lived through something greater and nobler than other people will not be able to explain anything great and noble in the past. The past always speaks in riddles, like an oracle. You will only understand it if you are builders of the future who also understand the present. The only way to explain why the oracle at Delphi had such a huge influence is that the Delphic priests knew the past in exact detail. In the same way, only the person who is building the future has the right to judge the past. If you keep a great goal in front of you, you will also keep in check the constant urge to pick everything apart. That urge turns the present into a desert for you, and makes all rest, all calm growth and all ripening impossible. Surround yourselves with a great hope that takes in everything, and keep pushing forward. Make yourselves into a mirror in which the future can see itself, and forget the false belief that you are latecomers. Thinking about the life of the future will give you plenty to think about and discover. But do not ask history to show you the tools and methods for getting there. If you place yourselves back into the lives of great people, you will find in them a strong command: grow up, become mature, and leave behind the damaging kind of education your time offers you. That education profits from keeping you from becoming mature, so that it can use you and control you while you are still not grown. And if you want to read life stories, don't look for ones titled "Mr. So-and-so and His Times." Look instead for one whose title page could say "A Fighter Against His Time." Fill your

souls with Plutarch's stories of great lives, and dare to believe in yourselves when you believe in his heroes. A hundred such people, raised against the fashions of today, made at home with the heroic, and grown to maturity, would be enough to silence forever the loud, fake education of our time.

VII.

When the obsession with history runs wild and is pushed as far as it can go, it tears the future out by the roots. It does this because it destroys illusions, and it strips living things of the only air they can breathe. So historical true fairness, even when someone practises it honestly and with a clean heart, is a terrible kind of virtue. It always eats away at the living thing and wrecks it. When it passes judgment, that judgment always means destruction. Suppose there is no urge to build behind the urge to study history. Suppose the rubbish is not being cleared away just to make room for a hopeful, living future to build its house. Suppose true fairness alone is in charge. Then the urge to create is drained and discouraged. Take a religion, for example. If the sheer power of true fairness turns it into a subject of historical knowledge, and it gets studied scientifically from top to bottom, then by the end of it all the religion is destroyed. That is because the historical inspection, like an audit of accounts, digs up so much that is false and ridiculous, violent and cruel, that the state of devoted, faithful illusion falls apart. And a thing can only live by means of such a faithful illusion. A human being can only create through love, and in the shade of love's illusions. He can only create through a total belief in perfection and in what is right. Anything that forces a person to stop loving without conditions cuts through the root of his strength. He is bound to wither and lose his dignity. Art works the opposite way from history. Perhaps only if history were transformed into a pure work of art could it keep our instincts alive or

wake them up. But that kind of history would go completely against the habits of our time, which loves to pick things apart and has no feeling for art. People would even call it false. Yet the kind of history that only tears down, with no urge to build anything, will in the end make the people who practise it tired of life. Such people destroy illusions, and, as the saying goes, "whoever destroys illusions in himself and in others is punished by Nature, the final tyrant." For a while a person can take up history like any other subject, and it will do no harm at all. Modern theology seems to have teamed up with history quite innocently. Even now it hardly notices that, without meaning to, it has signed on to Voltaire's battle cry against the Church: "Crush it!" Nobody should expect any new and powerful urge to build to come out of that. They might just as well have made the so-called Protestant Union the cradle of a new religion, and named the lawyer Holtzendorf, editor of the even more doubtfully named Protestant Bible, as its John the Baptist. This innocent state of mind may last a while longer thanks to Hegel's philosophy, which is still bubbling away in some older heads. With it, people can separate the "idea of Christianity" from its many imperfect "appearances" in real life. They can talk themselves into believing that it is the "Idea moving by itself" that keeps showing up in purer and purer forms. In the end, so they think, it reaches its purest, clearest form, so clear in fact that you can hardly see it at all, inside the brain of today's ordinary, everyday liberal theologian. But listen to this "pure" Christianity giving its opinion of the earlier, "impure" Christianity. An outsider would often get the feeling that the talk was not about Christianity at all, but about ... well, what are we supposed to think? The "greatest theologians of the century" describe Christianity as the religion that claims to "find itself in all real religions and in some other religions that are barely possible." And the "true church" is supposed to be something "that may turn into a liquid mass with no fixed shape, with no fixed place for its different parts, where everything is peacefully

melted together." When we hear that, I ask once more, what are we supposed to think?

Christianity has been robbed of its natural life by being treated historically, which at its most complete means being treated "fairly." It has been treated this way until it has dissolved into pure knowledge and been destroyed along the way. You can see the same thing happen to everything that is alive. Once a living thing has been completely cut apart and examined, it stops living. And from the moment the historical cutting begins, it lives in pain and suffering. Some people believe that German music has the power to save the German character and transform it completely. They protest angrily against a particular wrong being done to our culture. Great men like Mozart and Beethoven, they complain, are starting to get splashed with the learned mud of biographers. They are being forced to answer a thousand probing questions, as if stretched on the torture rack of historical criticism. Think of something whose living influence has not yet run out. Is it not an early death for it, or at least a crippling, when people turn their nosy eyes to the tiny details of life and art? When they hunt for knowledge problems in the very place where they should be learning to live and to forget problems? Put a couple of these modern biographers to work on the beginnings of Christianity or on Luther's Reformation. Their dry, practical research would be quite enough to make any spiritual influence reaching across distance and time impossible. It would be like the smallest animal stopping the mightiest oak from ever growing, just by eating the acorn. Every living thing needs an atmosphere around it, a kind of mysterious mist. If that veil is pulled away, and a religion, an art, or a genius is forced to spin like a star with no air around it, we should not be surprised when it turns hard and barren and soon withers. That is how it goes with all great things, "which never thrive without some illusion," as Hans Sachs says in Wagner's opera The Mastersingers.

Every people, and even every single person, who wants to become mature needs a protective dream like this, a cloud that shields them. But today people hate to become mature, because they value history more than life. They shout in triumph that "science is now starting to rule life." Maybe it could. But a life ruled that way is not worth much. It is not real *life* in the same way, and it promises far less for the future than the life people used to live, which was guided not by science but by instincts and by powerful dreams. But this is not meant to be the age of mature, alert and balanced people with a strong self. It is meant to be the age of work that is most useful to the community. People are to be shaped to fit what the times need, so that they can quickly take their place in the machine. They have to work in the factory of the "common good" before they are mature, or rather, to stop them from ever becoming mature. Being mature would be a luxury, and it would pull a lot of energy away from the "labour market." Some birds are blinded so that they will sing better. I do not think people sing any better today than their grandfathers did, but I am sure they are blinded early. And the shameful tool used to blind them is light: light that is too bright, too sudden and too dazzling. The young man is kicked along through all the centuries of the past. Boys who know nothing about war, dealings between nations, or trade are thought ready to be taught political history. We modern people also rush through art galleries and listen to concerts the same way the young man rushes through history. We can tell that one thing sounds different from another, and we give our opinion on the different "effects." And this ability to slowly lose every feeling of strangeness or wonder, until in the end we are pleased by anything at all, is what people call the obsession with history, or historical culture. So many influences pour into the young person's soul, and the lumps of crudeness and violence thrown at him are so strange and overwhelming, that pretending to be dull is his only place to hide. Where a person is more sensitive and more strongly aware of himself, we find another feeling

as well: disgust. The young man has lost his home. He doubts every idea and every moral rule. He knows that "things were different in every age, and what you are does not matter." In a heavy, numb indifference he lets one opinion after another go past him. He understands what the poet Hölderlin meant when he read Diogenes Laertius's book about the lives and teachings of the Greek philosophers and said: "Here too I have seen something that has often struck me: the way people's thoughts and systems change and go to waste is far more tragic than the fates that strike what people usually call the only real things." No, this kind of history study confuses and crushes a person. The ancient world shows that the young do not need it, and the modern world shows that it is extremely dangerous for them. Look at the history student, the heir of boredom, who shows up already in his boyhood. He has the "methods" for original research, the "correct ideas" and the airs of an expert all ready at his fingertips. He picks out one small, isolated stretch of the past to be sacrificed. He cleverly applies his method and produces something, or, to use the prouder word, he "creates" something. He becomes a "so-called truth-seeker" and a ruler in the great kingdom of history. If he was what they call mature as a boy, he is now over-ripe, like fruit gone soft. You only have to shake him and wisdom will rattle down into your lap. But the wisdom is rotten, and every apple has a worm in it. Believe me: if people work in the factory of science and have to make themselves useful before they are truly mature, science is ruined, just as slaves are ruined when they are put to work too young. I am sorry to use the usual language about slave-owners and slave-drivers for a situation that you might think had nothing to do with money. But words like "factory, labour market, auction, practical use," and all the other helpers of selfishness, come to my mouth without my wanting them when I describe the younger generation of scholars. Successful average-ness tends to become even more average, and science even more "useful." Our modern scholars are wise on only one subject. On

everything else they are, to put it mildly, different from the scholars of the old kind. Even so, they demand honour and money for themselves, as if the state and public opinion had to accept the new coins as worth just as much as the old ones. The cart-drivers have made a business deal among themselves. They have agreed that genius is unnecessary, because every carrier is being re-stamped as a genius. And a later age will probably see that their buildings were only piled together from loads dumped off carts, not truly built. To those who always have the modern battle cry and slogan of sacrifice on their lips, "Division of labour! Fall into line!", we can say plainly: "If you try to push science forward as fast as possible, you will end up destroying it as fast as possible, just as a hen gets worn out if you force her to lay too many eggs." Science has moved forward amazingly fast in the last ten years. But look at the scholars, those exhausted hens. They are certainly not balanced, "harmonious" people. They can only cackle more than before, because they lay eggs more often. But the eggs keep getting smaller, even though their books keep getting bigger. The natural result of all this is the much-loved "popularising" of science, or rather making it soft and childish. It is the nasty habit of cutting the cloth of science to fit the shape of the "general public." Goethe saw the harm in this, and he demanded that science should only affect the outside world by way of *a nobler ideal of action*, that is, by inspiring better deeds. The older generation of scholars had good reason to see this abuse as a heavy burden. The modern scholars have just as good a reason to welcome it, because apart from their own little corner of knowledge, they are part of the "general public" themselves, and its needs are their needs. They only have to take themselves a little less seriously to throw open their little kingdom to popular curiosity and do well out of it. This easy-going behaviour is called "the scholar humbly stepping down to the level of the people." But in reality he has only "stepped down" to himself, to the part of him that is not a scholar but a common man. You learned people, raise yourselves up

to a true idea of what a people is; you can never make that idea too noble or too high. If you thought highly of the people, you would feel compassion for them, and you would refuse to hand them your history, which is like burning acid, and call it a refreshing drink. But in truth you think very little of them, because you do not dare make any serious effort for their future. You act like practical pessimists, people who sense that a disaster is coming and so become careless and indifferent about their own lives and other people's. "If only the earth lasts as long as we do. And if it doesn't, it does not matter." And so they end up living a life of *mocking self-doubt*.

VIII.

It may sound like a contradiction, though it really isn't one, that I give a kind of "mocking self-doubt" to an age that is usually so honestly and so loudly proud of its historical training. It may also sound strange that I see a suspicion floating close to this age, a suspicion that there is really nothing to be proud of. And I see a fear that the time for celebrating historical knowledge may soon be over. Goethe pointed out a similar riddle in human nature, in his remarkable study of Newton. He found a "troubled feeling of his own error" at the bottom of Newton's being, or rather at its very top. It was as if Newton sometimes knew he had a deeper understanding of things, which then disappeared a moment later. This gave him a certain mocking self-doubt about his own nature. In the same way, the greater and more developed "people who hope in progress" are aware of all the superstition and foolishness in the belief that a people's education has to be as extremely historical as it is now. The mightiest nations, the ones most powerful in action and influence, have lived differently, and their young people were trained differently. Knowing this makes these thinkers doubtful and sceptical. "The foolishness and superstition," these doubters say, "fit people like us. We come as the last

dried-up shoots of a happier and stronger family tree. We fulfil the prophecy of the old Greek poet Hesiod, that one day people would be born with gray hair, and that the god Zeus would destroy that generation as soon as that sign appeared." Historical culture is really a kind of grayness that we inherit. Those who have carried its mark since childhood must believe, by instinct, in humanity growing old. Old age has its own old man's business: looking back, adding up the accounts of one's life, and searching for comfort in memories of the past, which means in historical culture. But the human race is tough and stubborn. It will not accept that a thousand years, or even a hundred thousand, give anyone the right to sum up its progress from past to future. In other words, it refuses to be looked at as a whole by that tiny speck, the single human being. What is there in a couple of thousand years, which is only thirty-four human lives of sixty years each, one after another, that lets us talk about youth at the beginning and "humanity growing old" at the end? Isn't this crippling belief in a humanity that is quickly fading really a misunderstood religious idea, handed down from the Middle Ages? That is the idea that the end of the world is coming and we are nervously waiting for the Last Judgment. Doesn't our growing demand to judge history give us that same idea in new clothes? It is as if our time were the very last time possible, and we were ordered to pass that final judgment on the whole past. Yet Christians never expected that judgment to come from a human being, but from "the Son of Man." The old saying "remember you must die," spoken to humanity as a whole as well as to each person, was a sting that never stopped hurting. It was the high point of medieval knowledge and awareness.

The opposite message of a later time, "remember to live," is spoken rather shyly, without really using the full strength of the lungs. There is something almost dishonest about it. For humanity still holds on to its "remember you must die," and it shows this through everyone's

need for history. Science may flap its wings as much as it likes, but it has never managed to fly up into the open air. A deep feeling of hopelessness has stayed with us. It has taken on a historical colour, and that colour has now darkened and weighed down all higher education. Think of a religion that, out of all the hours of a person's life, believes the last hour is the most important. It has predicted the end of life on earth and sentenced every creature to live in the fifth and final act of a tragedy. Such a religion may bring out the most delicate and noble powers in people, but it is an enemy of all new planting, of every bold attempt and every free hope. It is against every escape into the unknown, because it has no life or hope out there itself. It only puts up with a new bud pushing out, just so it can kill it when it chooses, saying, "it might lead life astray and give it a false value." In Florence, the monk Savonarola once stirred up the people with his sermons, and they made a famous bonfire of paintings, manuscripts, masks and mirrors. Christianity would like to do the same thing to every culture that tempts people to strive further and carries "remember to live" on its flag. And if it can't go about it directly, by brute force, it still gets what it wants by teaming up with historical culture, usually without historical culture even realizing it. Speaking through history's mouth, it turns away every new birth with a shrug of the shoulders. It makes us feel even more strongly that we are late-comers who arrived after the great times, that, in a word, we were born old. Once there was a deep and serious belief that everything done in the past was worthless and that the world was mature and ready for judgment. That belief has been shrunk down to a doubting attitude: it is good to know everything that has happened anyway, since it is too late to do anything better. The obsession with history makes the people who serve it passive and always looking backward. Only in moments of forgetting, when that obsession is asleep, does the person sick with this history fever ever act. Even then, he picks his action apart again once it is over, which stops it from having any further effects, and in the

end he lays it out on the dissecting table to be studied for history. In this sense we are still living in the Middle Ages, and history is still religion in disguise. In the same way, the respect that the ordinary uneducated person feels toward educated people has been handed down from the respect once given to priests. What people used to give to the Church, they now give to science, though in smaller amounts. But the very habit of giving at all comes from the Church, not from the modern spirit. Among its other good qualities, the modern spirit is a bit of a miser, and it is bad at the excellent virtue of generosity.

People may not like these words much. They may not like the way I trace our excess of history back to the medieval "remember you must die," or to the hopelessness that Christianity carries deep inside it toward every future age of life on earth. But you should always try to replace my unsure explanations with a better one. The origin of our historical culture, and of the way it is completely and deeply opposed to the spirit of a new age and a "modern mind," must itself be understood by looking at its history. History must solve the problem of history. Science must turn its sting against itself. These three "musts" are the commands of the "new spirit," if that spirit really holds something new, strong, alive and original. Or is it true that we Germans (leaving the French, Italians and Spanish aside) must always be mere "followers" in all the higher areas of culture, because that is all we are able to be? The words of Wilhelm Wackernagel are well worth thinking about. He said: "We Germans are a nation of 'followers.' With all our higher science, and even with our faith, we are only the heirs of the ancient world. Even those who are against it keep breathing in the undying spirit of classical culture together with the spirit of Christianity. And if anyone could pull these two things out of the living air around the human soul, there would not be much left for a spiritual life to live on." Suppose we were happy with our job of following the

ancient world. Suppose we even decided to do it seriously and with great effort, and to prove our special rank by that seriousness. Even then we would have to ask whether it is our fate forever to be pupils of an ancient world that is fading away. Someday we might be allowed to aim higher and further. First we might pat ourselves on the back for making that second-hand spirit of Alexandrian culture inside us so amazingly productive, through our "universal history." After that, we might set ourselves an even nobler prize: the higher task of reaching beyond and above this Alexandrian world. We might bravely look for our models in the ancient Greek world, where everything was great, natural and human. But it is exactly there that we find a real culture that was able to forget the past. And in spite of that, or maybe because of it, it was a culture rich and alive beyond words. If we Germans were nothing but followers, there could be nothing greater or prouder for us than to be the direct heirs and followers of a culture like that.

But this must be added. The thought of being late-comers is often a torture. Yet it can also become a source of hope for the future, both for a single person and for a whole people. That is true as long as we see ourselves as the heirs and followers of the amazing power of the classical world, and find in that both our honour and our push forward. But it is not true if we see ourselves as the late, bitter fruit of a once-strong family tree, giving that family a little more cold life, like collectors of old things and grave-diggers. Late-comers of that kind really live a life of mocking self-doubt. Destruction follows close behind as they creep on tiptoe through life. Even while they are celebrating the past, they shiver at the thought of their own end. They are living memories, yet their own memories mean nothing, because there is no one to inherit them. And so they are wrapped in the sad thought that their life is a wrong, and that no future life can ever put it right.

Now suppose these collectors of old things, these late arrivals, swapped their painful, self-mocking modesty for a kind of shamelessness. Suppose we heard them say out loud: "The human race is at its peak, because for the first time it has become aware of itself." Then we would have a comedy. In that comedy, the dark meaning of a certain very famous philosophy would play itself out, for the "benefit" of German culture. I believe that in this century there has been no dangerous turning point in the growth of German culture that was not made even more dangerous by the huge, and still living, influence of this philosophy of Hegel. Believing that you are a late-comer in the world is harmful and shameful in any case. But it becomes frightening and destructive when, with a clever twist, it turns our late-comer into a god. Then he is treated as the true meaning and goal of everything that was ever created before, and his self-aware misery is praised as the final perfection of world history. This way of seeing things has taught the Germans to talk about "the grand march of world history," and to defend their own time as its necessary result. And it has put history in place of the other spiritual powers, art and religion, and made it the only ruler. After all, history is said to be "the Idea making itself real," "the logic of the spirit of the nations," and "the court that judges the world."

People have mocked this Hegel-style view of history by calling it "God's visit to earth"—though in fact it was history itself that first invented this God. At any rate, inside the heads of Hegel's followers, this God became clear and easy to see through. He climbed through every step that logic allowed, all the way up to fully showing his true Self. So, for Hegel, the highest and final stage of the grand march of world history happened to land right in his own life in Berlin. He should have said that everything after him was just the closing tune at the end of history's great piece of music—or, better, simply not needed at all. He did not say it. And so he planted something in a

whole generation that was soaked through with his ideas: the worship of the "power of history." In practice, this turns every moment into nothing but staring open-mouthed at success. It becomes idol-worship of whatever happens to exist. We even have a typical phrase for it now: "adapting ourselves to circumstances." But once a man has learned to bend his knee and bow his head before the power of history, he ends up nodding "yes" to every power, like a bobble-headed Chinese doll. It does not matter if that power is a government, public opinion, or just the biggest number of votes. His arms and legs move exactly as the power pulls the strings, like a puppet. If every success came about through some "reasonable necessity," and every event proves that logic or "the Idea" has won, then—quick, get down on your knees, and bow to every step on the ladder of success! You say there are no living myths anymore? You say religions are on their last breath? Then look at this new religion, the worship of the power of history. Look at its priests, who serve the myth of "Ideas," with their knees worn raw from kneeling! Don't all the virtues come marching along behind this new faith? Shouldn't we call it unselfishness when the history-minded man lets himself be turned into a so-called neutral mirror of everything that exists? Isn't it generosity of spirit to give up every power in heaven and earth just so he can worship the bare fact of power? Isn't it true fairness to always hold a set of scales and watch which force is stronger and heavier? And what a fine school of good manners it is, to look at the past this way! Taking everything with so-called neutrality, getting angry at nothing, loving nothing, understanding everything—this makes a person soft and easy to bend. Even when a man raised in this school openly shows that he is offended, people are just as pleased. They know he only means it in the artistic way, "with anger and passion," as the old Latin phrase puts it—when in truth he feels it "without anger or passion" at all.

What old-fashioned thoughts I have about this mix of virtue and myth! But they have to be said, however much people may laugh at them. I would even say this: history always teaches "it once was," while morality teaches "it should not be, or should not have been." So history turns into a handbook of real-life wrongs. But how mistaken it would be to treat history as the judge of these real-life wrongs! Morality is hurt by the fact that someone like the painter Raphael had to die at thirty-six. Such a person should not have died. But if you rushed to defend history, like a lawyer for whatever actually happens, you would say: "He had already said everything he had in him to say. A longer life would only have let him make more of the same kind of beauty, not a new kind," and so on. In this way you become the devil's advocate, because you make success, the plain fact, into your idol. Yet the plain fact is always dull. At all times it is more like a golden calf than a god. Your excuses for history get help from your own ignorance. It is only because you do not know what a creative force of nature like Raphael really is that you do not burn up inside at the thought that he existed once and can never exist again. Someone recently tried to tell us that Goethe, at eighty-two, had lived too long and outlasted himself. And yet I would happily trade whole cartloads of fresh modern lives for just two of Goethe's "too long" years. Then we could have another set of talks like the ones he had with Eckermann, and be saved from all the "modern" chatter of these little lords of the passing moment. How few people alive today have any right to live, compared with those mighty dead! That the many go on living while those few are gone is simply a brutal truth. In other words, it is a piece of foolishness that cannot be changed—a blank wall of "it was once so" standing against the moral judgment "it should not have been." Yes, against the moral judgment! Talk about any virtue you like —true fairness, courage, generosity of spirit, wisdom, kindness to others. You will find that the good person always rises up against the blind force of facts, against the tyranny of whatever simply is. He

obeys laws that are not history's changeable laws. He always swims against the waves of history. He does this either by fighting his own passions, which are the closest brute facts of his life, or by training himself in honesty while lies spin shiny nets all around him. If history were nothing more than "one huge system of passion and mistakes," a person would have to read it the way Goethe wanted his novel "Werther" to be read—as if it were calling out, "Be a man, and do not follow me!" But luckily, history also keeps alive our memory of the great "fighters against history," meaning fighters against the blind power of what simply is. In doing so, history puts itself to shame in public. It does this by praising the truly historical nature of people who cared very little about "this is how it is," so that they could follow "this is how it must be" with more joy and more pride. Their goal was not to drag their own generation into the grave, but to start a new one. That is the reason that always drives them forward. And even if they are born late, there is a way of living that lets them forget it—and future generations will know them only as the first-comers.

IX.

Is our own time perhaps one of these "first-comers"? Its obsession with history is so strong, and shows itself so widely and so endlessly, that future ages may praise it as a first-comer, if only for that reason. That is, if there is any future at all, in the sense of a future culture. But here a serious doubt comes up. Right next to modern man's pride stands his mocking self-doubt. He knows he has to live in a historical, twilight kind of atmosphere, a dimming of the light, and he fears he cannot hold on to any of his young hopes and strengths. Here and there people go even further, into cynicism. They defend the course of history, and even the whole development of the world, as if it all simply led up to modern man. Their cynical rule goes like this: "What you see now had to happen. Man had to turn out this way and no oth-

er. No one can fight against this necessity." Whoever cannot settle down in mocking self-doubt runs for shelter into cynicism. The last ten years have given him one of their finest inventions, a full, smooth-sounding phrase for this cynicism. He calls his habit of living without thinking, just following the fashion of his time, "the full surrender of his strong self to the grand march of world history." The strong self and the grand march of world history! The grand march of world history and the strong self of the earthworm! If only we did not hear the word "world, world, world" over and over forever, that biggest exaggeration of all exaggerations, when in all decency we should only be talking about "man, man, man"! Heirs of the Greeks and Romans, heirs of Christianity? To the cynics all that seems like nothing. But "heirs of the grand march of world history"! The final goal of that grand march! The meaning and answer to every riddle of the universe! The most mature fruit on the tree of knowledge! Now that, I say, is a truly noble thought. By this sign you can recognize the first-comers of every age, even if they actually showed up last. The imagination of historians has never flown so far, not even in a dream. For now the history of mankind is just the continuation of the history of animals and plants. The historian of everything finds traces of himself even at the very bottom of the sea, in the living slime. He stands amazed at the enormous road that mankind has traveled. And his eyes tremble before an even greater wonder: modern man himself, who is able to look back over that whole road! He stands proudly on top of the pyramid of the grand march of world history. And as he lays the last stone of his knowledge, he seems to shout out to Nature, who is listening: "We are at the top! We are the top! We are the completion of Nature!"

Oh, you far too proud European of the nineteenth century, have you gone mad? Your knowledge does not complete Nature. It only kills your own nature! Measure how high your knowledge reaches against

how little you are actually able to do. You climb the sunbeams of knowledge up toward heaven, but you also climb them down into Chaos. The way you move is deadly to you. The ground slides out from under your feet into the unknown. Your life has nothing else to hold it up except spider webs, and every new blow of your knowledge rips them apart. But enough serious words about this, because there is a funnier side to it all.

The moral teacher, the artist, the saint and the statesman may well be worried. They see that every foundation is cracking apart in a wild ruin that no one notices, and dissolving into the ever-flowing stream of endless change. They see that modern man, like a huge spider sitting in the middle of the world's web, is tirelessly spinning everything that exists into webs of history. As for us, we can be glad, just this once, that we get to see it all in the shining magic mirror of a philosopher who writes parody. In his brain our age has become mockingly aware of itself, even to the point of wickedness, as Goethe put it. Hegel once said, "When the spirit makes a fresh start, we philosophers are there to help." Our age did make a fresh start, into mocking self-doubt. And look! Eduard von Hartmann was right there, with his famous book on the Unconscious, or, to put it more plainly, his philosophy of mocking self-doubt that doesn't know it is mocking. We have rarely read anything more cheerful, a bigger philosophical joke, than Hartmann's book. Anyone who is not completely enlightened by it about endless change, who is not swept clean and tidied up inside by it, is ready to become a relic of the past himself. Look at what it contains: the beginning and the end of the grand march of world history, from the very first flicker of awareness to its final leap into nothingness, with even the job of our own generation decided for us. All of it is drawn from that clever source of inspiration, the Unconscious. All of it glitters in the light of the end of the world. And all of it imitates honest seriousness so perfectly, as if it were real philo-

sophy and not a giant joke. A system like that shows that its creator is one of the greatest philosophical parodists of all time. So let us make an offering at his altar, and, as Schleiermacher put it, give a lock of our hair to the man who invented a true cure-all. For what medicine could be more healthy for fighting our overdose of historical culture than Hartmann's parody of world history?

Suppose we wanted to say, in as few words as possible, what Hartmann is really telling us. He speaks from his stinking prophet's seat, full of a mocking self-doubt he isn't even aware of. His message would be something like this: our time could only stay the way it is if people became completely sick of being alive. And I truly believe he is right. Our time has frozen into stone in a frightening way. You can hear the restless rattling of ghostly bones. David Strauss, without any sense of the problem, holds this up to us as the most beautiful fact of all. Hartmann defends this state of things in two ways. He defends it from the past, "from the causes that produced it." And he also defends it from the future, "from the goal it is heading toward." The rascal shone a light on our time from the Last Day, the end of the world, and saw that it was very good. That is, it was very good for someone who wants to feel, at full strength, how hard life is to swallow, and who can't wait for the Last Day to come. It's true that Hartmann calls the late stage of life that humanity is heading toward "humanity growing old." But to him, that is a happy state. In that state there is only successful mediocrity, where everything is just average. Art becomes "the evening entertainment of the Berlin banker." And "the age no longer needs geniuses, either because it would be like throwing pearls to pigs, or because the age has moved past the stage where geniuses appear, on to a more important one." He means a stage of social progress in which every worker "lives a comfortable life, with working hours that leave him enough free time to develop his mind." You rascal of all rascals, you put it well: that is exactly what people today

long for. But you also know what a ghost of disgust will rise up at the end of humanity growing old. It will be the result of a mental culture of dull, heavy mediocrity. It is very sad to watch now, but it will become even sadder. "The Antichrist is clearly stretching out his arms," Hartmann says. Yet, he says, it must be so, because after all we are on the right road—the road to disgust with all existence. "So forward, boldly, with the grand march of world history, as workers in the Lord's vineyard, because only the process itself can lead to salvation!"

The Lord's vineyard! The process! On to salvation! Anyone can see and hear what is happening here. Our historical culture, which only knows the word "endless change," is making fun of itself on purpose. Through its ridiculous mask, it says the most reckless things about itself. What does the rascal mean by calling out to the workers in the vineyard? What kind of "work" are they supposed to push boldly forward with? Or let me ask it another way. This person, educated in history, is a fanatic about the grand march of world history. He is swimming and drowning in the sea of endless change. What else must he do so that he can finally harvest the grape-crop of disgust, the precious grape of the vineyard? He has nothing to do but go on living as he always has. He must love what he has always loved, hate what he has always hated, and read the same newspapers he has always read. The only sin would be for him to live any differently. We are told how he has lived, with the clearness of a carved monument, on that famous page printed in large type. The whole crowd of our modern educated people threw themselves onto that page in blind delight. They believed they could read their own excuse there, glowing with a light like the end of the world. For this parodist, without knowing it, has demanded something from every one of them. He asked for "the complete surrender of one's strong self to the grand march of world history, for the sake of its goal, the salvation of the

world." Or, even more clearly: "Saying yes to the will to live is declared to be the first step on the right road. Only by giving yourself fully to life and its pain, and not by cowardly giving things up and running away, can anything be done for the grand march of world history.... Trying to deny your own individual will is as foolish as it is useless. It is even more foolish than suicide.... The thoughtful reader will understand, without more explanation, how a practical way of living can be built on these principles. Such a philosophy cannot put up with any split from life, but only the fullest peace with life."

"The thoughtful reader will understand!" So then it really is possible to misunderstand Hartmann! And what a wonderful joke it is that people should misunderstand him! Why should the Germans of today be especially sharp? A brave Englishman searches in vain for "delicacy of perception" among them. He even dares to say that "in the German mind there does seem to be something clumsy and spread out, something dull-edged, awkward and unlucky." Could the great German parodist argue against this? According to him, we are getting close to "that ideal state in which the human race makes its history with full awareness." But we are clearly far from another state, which may be even more ideal: the state in which people can read Hartmann's book with full awareness. If we ever get there, nobody will ever again say the words "the grand march of world history" without a smile. Because they will remember the time when people listened to Hartmann's fake gospel. They soaked it up, attacked it, worshipped it, built on it, and turned it into holy scripture. They did all this with the full honesty of the "German mind," with "the creepy seriousness of an owl," as Goethe puts it. But the world has to move forward. The ideal state can't be won by dreaming. It has to be fought and struggled for. And the only way to be saved is through joy—the way to be saved from that dull, owl-like seriousness. A time will come when we will wisely stay away from all big theories about the grand march of world

history, or even about the history of mankind. In that time we will no longer look at the masses, but at individuals. These individuals form a kind of bridge over the pale, gloomy river of endless change. Maybe they don't carry on any process. But they live outside of time, as if they all lived at the same moment. Thanks to history, which makes such a group possible, they live together as the company of great minds across time that Schopenhauer talks about. One giant calls out to another across the empty wastelands of time. Their high conversation of the spirit goes on, not disturbed by the rude, noisy dwarfs who crawl around among them. The job of history is to be the go-between that connects these great individuals. It should even give the reason and the strength to bring forth the great human being. In the end, the goal of humanity can only be found in its highest examples.

Our cheap comedian, Hartmann, has something to say about this too. He says it with his wonderful way of arguing, which is just as real as his fans are admirable. Here are his words: "The idea of evolution cannot fit with the belief that the grand march of world history has already gone on forever in the past. If it had, every possible kind of development would already have happened, and that is not the case." (Oh, you rascal!) "So we also cannot allow the process to go on forever in the future. Both of these would turn the idea of evolution into a mere ideal." (Rascal again!) "And they would make the grand march of world history like the leaky jar in the old Greek story, which could never be filled. The complete victory of the logical over the illogical" (Oh, you total rascal!) "must happen on the last day, when the grand march of world history comes to its end in time." No, you clear-headed, mocking spirit! As long as the illogical rules the way it does today, the last day is still far away. For example, as long as people can talk about the grand march of world history the way you do, and loud voices cheer you on, the end is not near. Because life on this earth is still too joyful. Many illusions still bloom here, like the

illusion your own generation has about you. We are not yet mature enough to be thrown into your nothingness. We believe we will have an even more wonderful time once people finally begin to understand you, you misunderstood, unconscious one! But suppose that, in spite of all this, disgust does come and sits on the throne in power, just as you have predicted to your readers. Suppose your picture of the present and the future turns out to be right. After all, no one has looked down on them with as much loathing as you have. In that case, I am ready to shout along with the majority, in the exact words you have laid down, that next Saturday night, on the dot at twelve o'clock, your world will fall to pieces. And our official announcement will end like this: from tomorrow on, time will no longer exist, and the newspaper called the Times will no longer be printed. Maybe it will all be useless, and our announcement will change nothing. Still, we have time for a nice little experiment. Take a set of scales. Put Hartmann's "Unconscious" on one side and his "World-process" on the other. Some people believe the two weigh exactly the same. That is because each side holds a nasty word, and a good joke.

Once people really understand them, no one will take Hartmann's words about the grand march of world history as anything but a joke. In fact, it is high time to charge forward with a whole army of mockery and sharp wit against the excesses of the "obsession with history." We should attack this reckless love of the grand march of world history, which costs us life and real existence, and this blind mixing-up of every sense of proportion. And the philosopher of the Unconscious deserves credit for this: he was the first to see how funny the grand march of world history is. Because he presented it so extremely seriously, he made other people see the joke even more clearly. For quite a while, we don't need to worry about whether the "world" and "humanity" exist, except as a source of a good joke. After all, the arrogance of a tiny earthworm is the most hilarious thing on the face of the

earth. Ask yourself why you are here, as one single person. And if no one can tell you, then try to give your life a meaning afterwards, by setting yourself a high and noble goal. Then let yourself be wrecked on that rock! I know no better aim for a life than to be broken on something great and impossible, like a great soul that spends itself freely, as the Latin poet put it: "animæ magnæ prodigus." But think of the ideas being pushed on people now: that endless change is the final truth; that all ideas, types and species are always flowing and shifting; that there is no deep difference between humans and animals. I think that last idea is true, but deadly. If these ideas are forced on the people in the usual crazy way for one more generation, no one should be surprised if that people drowns on its small, miserable sandbanks of selfishness, and turns to stone in its self-interest. First it will fall apart and stop being a real people at all. In its place, perhaps, the stage of the future will be filled with systems where everyone looks out only for himself, secret societies set up to wipe out everyone who isn't a member, and other similar creations built only for usefulness. Should we keep working toward these things? Should we keep writing history from the point of view of the masses, searching it for laws that come from the needs of the masses, as if we were studying how the lowest layers of mud and clay in society move? It seems to me the masses are worth noticing in only three ways. First, as copies of great men, badly printed on cheap paper from worn-out printing plates. Second, as a contrast to great men. And third, as the tools great men use. As for the rest, the devil and statistics can carry them off! How could statistics prove that history has laws? Laws? Yes, statistics may show how ordinary and horribly alike the masses are. But should we call the results of heavy, dull stupidity, copying, love and hunger "laws"? Fine, we might grant that. But we are sure of this too: as far as history has laws, those laws are worthless, and so is that history. And the most worthless kind of history of all is the kind that treats the big popular movements as the most important events of the past, and

sees great men only as the clearest sign of those movements, like the bubbles you can see on the surface of a stream. In this view, the masses are supposed to produce the great man, and chaos is supposed to give birth to order. And in the end, of course, all the songs of praise are sung to the swarming chaos. Anything that has stirred up the masses for a long time is called "great," and becomes, as people say, a "historical power." But isn't this really a deliberate mix-up of quantity with quality? When the crude mob finds some idea that satisfies it, a religious idea for example, and has defended it through thick and thin for centuries, then, and only then, will it decide that the person who came up with it was a great man. The highest and noblest things do not touch the masses at all. The historical effects of Christianity, its "historical power," its toughness and how long it has lasted, prove nothing about the greatness of its founder, luckily. If anything, they would be evidence against him. Because between him and the historical success of Christianity there lies a dark, heavy mass of passion and mistakes, hunger for power and honour, and the crushing weight of the Roman Empire. That is where Christianity got its earthly flavour, and its earthly foundations too, which made it possible for it to survive in this world. Greatness should not depend on success. The Greek speaker Demosthenes was great without success. The purest and noblest followers of Christianity have always doubted and held back its influence in the world, its so-called "historical power," rather than helping it. They were used to standing outside the "world," and they cared little about the "progress of the Christian Idea." That is why most of them have stayed unknown to history, and even their names are lost. In Christian language, the devil is the prince of this world, and the master of progress and results. He is the power behind every "historical power," and that will stay true, however badly it may sound today to ears that are used to treating such power and results as holy. The world has become skilled at giving things new names, and has even baptized the devil. This really is a time of great danger.

People seem close to discovering that selfishness, whether of individuals, groups or masses, has always been the lever that moved the "historical movements." And yet this discovery doesn't bother them at all. Instead they announce: "Selfishness shall be our god." With this new faith in their hearts, they start, quite on purpose, to build future history on selfishness. But it has to be a clever selfishness, one that accepts some limits so that it can stand more firmly. It is a selfishness that studies history in order to recognise the foolish kind of selfishness. Their studies have taught them that the state has a special job in all future systems built on selfishness: it will be the protector of all the clever kinds of selfishness, guarding them with all the force of its army and police against the dangerous outbursts of the other kind. The same idea is behind bringing history, both natural history and human history, to the working classes, whose foolishness makes them dangerous. Because people know very well that a little bit of historical education can break down rough, blind instincts and desires, or turn them to serve a clever selfishness. In fact, they are starting to think, like Edward von Hartmann, about "settling themselves down in their earthly home with an eye to the future, and making themselves comfortable there." Hartmann calls this stage of life the "manhood of humanity," mocking what people today call "manhood," as if it only included our sober models of selfishness. In the same way, he predicts an age of gray-bearded old men that will follow this stage, which is clearly another mocking look at our old people who bend to whatever is in fashion. Because he talks about the mature wisdom with which "they look back on all the stormy passions of their past life and understand how empty were the goals they seemed to have struggled for." No. A manhood of sly selfishness, educated in history, goes together with an old age that clings to life with no dignity, only a horrible stubbornness, where the

As Shakespeare puts it: "The last scene of all, which ends this strange and eventful story, is a second childhood and simply forgetting everything. No teeth, no eyes, no taste, no anything."

The dangers to our life and our culture may come from these dull, toothless old men. Or they may come from the so-called "men" that Hartmann talks about. Either way, we have the right to defend our young people with tooth and claw against both of them. We must never get tired of saving the future from these false prophets. But in this fight we will find out an unpleasant truth. People are doing it on purpose. They help, encourage and make use of the worst wrong turns of the obsession with history that our own time is suffering from.

But they use it against the young. They want to turn the young into that mature "selfishness of manhood" they long for so much. They use the dazzling, almost magical shine of history to break down the natural resistance of the young. History opens their eyes, but at the same time it takes away their strength and spirit. Yes, we know all too well how much power history can gain over people. It can pull up by the roots the strongest instincts of the young: their passion, their courage, their unselfishness and their love. It can cool down their feeling for true fairness. The young naturally want to grow and become mature slowly. History can crush or hold back that wish, and replace it with the opposite wish: to be productive, finished and useful as soon as possible. And it can throw a sick doubt over every honest, straightforward feeling. It can even trick the young out of their finest gift. That gift is the power to plant a great thought with complete confidence, and then let it grow on its own into an even greater thought. Too much history can do all of this, as we have seen. It does it by no longer letting a person feel and act in a way that is able to forget the past. History keeps shifting a person's limited outlook, and keeps taking away the protective air around him. Faced with an endless out-

look, he pulls back into himself, into a small, selfish circle, where he is bound to dry up and wither. He may perhaps become clever, but he will never become wise. He lets others talk him into things. He is always calculating, and always bargaining with the facts. He is never enthusiastic. Instead he just blinks, and knows how to find his own advantage, or his party's advantage, in someone else's gain or loss. Bit by bit he forgets all his "useless" modesty, and slowly turns into Hartmann's "man" or Hartmann's "graybeard." And that is exactly what they want him to become. That is what lies behind today's cynical demand for the "complete surrender of the strong self to the grand march of world history." And this is supposed to be for the sake of its goal, the saving of the world, as that rascal E. von Hartmann tells us. But saving the world can hardly be what these people really have in mind. The world would be much better saved if it were saved from these "men" and "graybeards." Because then the rule of the young would begin.

X.

And in this kingdom of the young, I can shout, "Land! Land!" We have had enough, more than enough, of this wild voyage over dark and strange seas, of searching forever and being let down forever! At last the coast is in sight. Whatever kind of place it is, we have to land there. Even the worst harbour is better than being thrown about again on the hopeless waves of a doubt that never ends. Let us hold on tight to the land. We will find the good harbours later, and make the voyage easier for the people who come after us.

The voyage was dangerous and exciting. Even now, how far we are from the calm, thoughtful mood we were in when we first watched our ship set out! While we were tracking down the dangers of history, we found that we ourselves were especially open to them. We carry the marks of the sorrow that too much history brings to people of

modern times. And I will not try to deny that this essay itself shows the modern sign of a weak strong self. You can see it in how harsh and uncontrolled its criticism is, in how immature its human feeling is, and in how often it jumps from mocking self-doubt to cynicism, and from arrogance to doubting everything. And yet I trust the inspiring power that steers my ship in place of genius. I trust in the young. It was the young that put me on the right road, by forcing out of me a protest against modern historical education. It made me demand that a person must, above all, learn to live, and must use history only to serve the life he has learned to live. You have to be young to understand this protest. And since today's young people turn gray so early, you can hardly be young enough if you also want to understand the reason for it. An example will help me here. In Germany, no more than a hundred years ago, a natural feeling for what we call "poetry" woke up in some young men. Should we believe that the generations before them had never talked about this art, however strange and unnatural it may really have been to them? We know the opposite is true. They had thought, written and argued about it with all their strength, in "words, words, words." Bringing those words to life did not kill off the people who made the words. In a way, they are still alive. As the historian Gibbon says, nothing but time, though a long time, is needed for a world to die. In the same way, nothing but time, though even more time, is needed to destroy a false idea in Germany, the "Land of Little-by-little." Anyway, there are perhaps a hundred more people today than there were a century ago who know what poetry is. Perhaps in another century there will be a hundred more who have learned, by then, what culture is, and who have learned that the Germans have so far had no culture at all, however proudly they talk about it. To those people, the Germans' general pleasure in their own culture will seem just as silly and unbelievable as two old reputations seem to us: the once-praised classical style of the writer Gottsched, and the fame of the poet Ramler as the "German Pindar." They may

decide that this "culture" is just a kind of knowledge about culture, and a false and shallow knowledge at that. It is false and shallow because the Germans put up with the split between life and knowledge. They did not see what marks the culture of truly educated peoples: that culture can only grow and bloom out of life. But the Germans wear their culture like a paper flower, or spread it on top like icing on a cake. And so it must stay a useless lie forever.

The education of young people in Germany begins with this false and fruitless idea of culture. If you look at it honestly, its goal is not to shape a person who is broadly and freely educated. Its goal is to shape the professor, the man of science, who wants to put his science to use as soon as possible, and who stands off to the side so he can see life clearly. Even from a coldly practical point of view, what comes out of it is the narrow-minded conformist trained in history and art. He is someone who chatters old sayings and new wisdom about Church, State and Art. He is like a sense organ that takes in a thousand impressions, like a belly that is never full and yet does not know what real hunger and thirst are. An education with such a goal and such a result goes against nature. But only someone who is not fully drowned in it can feel that. Only the young can feel it, because they still have the instinct of nature, and that instinct is the first thing this education breaks. But whoever manages to break through this education himself must come and help the young when they call. He must shine the clear light of understanding on their blind, unaware striving, and help them become fully aware of it and able to put it into words. How is he supposed to reach such an unusual goal?

Mainly by destroying the superstition that this kind of education is necessary. People think that this troublesome reality of ours is the only one possible. Look through everything written about higher education in schools and universities over the last ten years. You will be amazed, and hurt, to see how alike all the reform plans have been, in

spite of all the doubts and fierce arguments around them. You will see how blindly they have all accepted the old idea that the "educated man," in our sense of the word, is the necessary and sensible foundation of the whole system. The dull, unchanging rule goes like this: the young man must start with knowledge about culture. He does not even start with knowledge about life, and still less with life itself and the living of it. This knowledge about culture is forced into the young mind in the form of historical knowledge. That means his head is stuffed with a huge pile of ideas taken second-hand from past times and peoples, not from direct contact with life. He wants to experience something for himself, and to feel a tight, living web of experiences growing inside him. But this wish gets drowned and made dizzy in a sea of fakes, as if it were possible to cram into a few years the highest and most remarkable experiences of ancient times, and of the greatest times too. It is the same crazy method that sends our young artists off to art galleries instead of to a master's workshop, and above all to the one workshop of the only true master, Nature. As if you could discover the ideas and skills of past times, and their own personal way of seeing life, by rushing quickly through history! Because life itself is a kind of craft. It has to be learned thoroughly and with hard work, and practised carefully, if we do not want the result to be nothing but bunglers and chatterers!

Plato thought that the first generation of his new society, in his perfect state, would have to be raised with the help of a "mighty lie." The children would be taught to believe that they had all lain dreaming for a long time under the earth, where Nature, like a master craftsman, had shaped and formed them. Nobody could fight against the past, or work against what the gods had made! So it had to be a law of nature that could never be broken: whoever is born to be a philosopher has gold in his body, the soldier has only silver, and the worker has iron and bronze. Plato said these metals cannot be mixed,

and in the same way the classes could never be mixed up. The belief that this arrangement was an "eternal truth" was the foundation of the new education and the new state. The modern German, too, believes that his education, his kind of culture, is an eternal truth. And yet this belief will collapse, just as Plato's state would have collapsed, if the mighty German lie is ever faced with the truth: the German has no culture, because he cannot build one on top of his education. He wants the flower without the root or the stem, and so he wants it for nothing. That is the simple truth. It is a rough and unpleasant truth, but a mighty one all the same.

But our first generation must be raised in this "mighty truth," and must suffer from it too. It has to educate itself through this truth, even against its own nature, to reach a new nature and a new way of living, which must still grow out of the old one. So it might say to itself, in the words of an old Spanish saying, "Defienda me Dios de my": God keep me from myself, meaning from the character that others have put into me. It must take in that truth drop by drop, like a bitter, strong medicine. And every person in this generation must force himself to pass on his own nature the judgment that he could more easily pass on his whole era: "We have no real education. In fact, we are too spoiled to live, to see and hear truly and simply, to understand what is close and natural to us. We have not even laid the foundations of culture yet, because we are not ourselves sure that there is any honest life in us." We are crumbling and falling apart. Our whole being is split, almost like a machine, into an inside and an outside. Ideas are sown in us like the dragon's teeth in the old story, and from them a new crop of dragons springs up. We suffer from a sickness of words, and we do not trust any feeling unless it has its own special word stamped on it. And since I am such a dead thing made of words and ideas, which still moves in a strange, eerie way, maybe I still have the right to say "I think, therefore I am," but not "I

live, therefore I think." I am allowed the empty fact of existing, not the full, green fact of living. A deep, basic feeling tells me that I am a thinking being but not a living one, that I am not an "animal" but at most a "thinking machine." "Give me life, and I will soon make a culture out of it for you!" That will be the cry of every person in this new generation, and they will all recognize each other by this cry. But who will give them this life?

No god and no human will give it. Only their own youthfulness will. Set that free, and you will set life free as well. Because life was only hidden away, locked in a prison. It has not dried up or died yet. Ask yourselves!

But this life that has been set free is sick, and it must be healed. It suffers from many diseases, not only from the memory of its chains. It suffers from the sickness I have been talking about: history sickness. Too much history has damaged life's power to heal and grow, so that life no longer knows how to use the past as a source of strength and food. It is a terrible disease. And yet, if the young did not have a natural gift for seeing clearly, nobody would even notice that it is a disease, or that a paradise of health has been lost. But those same young people, with that same natural instinct for health, have guessed how that paradise can be won back. They know the magic herbs and simple remedies for history sickness and for having too much history. And what are these remedies called?

It is no surprise that they have the names of poisons. The cures for history are being "able to forget the past" and being "above history." With these names we come back to the beginning of our investigation, and we come close to its end.

By "able to forget the past" I mean the power, the skill, of forgetting, and of drawing a limited outlook around yourself. And I call "above history" the power that turns our eyes away from endless change and

toward what gives life a lasting, steady character: toward art and religion. Science, because it is science that makes us call these things "poisons," sees these powers as its enemies. Science thinks that the only true and correct view of things, and so the only scientific one, is the view that treats something as finished and historical, not as ongoing and eternal. So science lives in deep conflict with the powers that point toward the eternal, art and religion. It hates forgetting, because forgetting is the death of knowledge. And it tries to remove every limited outlook and throw people into an endless sea with no shores, whose waves shine with clear knowledge, the knowledge of endless change!

If only people could actually live in that sea! When an avalanche shakes a town, the town becomes empty and ruined, and people build their houses there only in fear, and only for a short while. In the same way, life is broken apart and becomes weak and lifeless when the avalanche of ideas set off by science takes away the ground people stand on for rest and safety: the belief in what is steady and eternal. Should life rule over knowledge, or knowledge over life? Which of the two is the higher power, the one that decides? There is no room for doubt. Life is the higher power, the one that rules, because knowledge that destroyed life would destroy itself too. Knowledge depends on life existing first, and it has the same interest in keeping life going that every creature has in keeping itself alive. Science needs to be watched very carefully. Next to the books of science there is a set of health rules for life, and one of its rules says this: Being able to forget the past and being above history are the natural cures for history overpowering life. They are the cures for history sickness. Those of us who have this disease may suffer a little from the cure. But that does not prove that the treatment we have chosen is wrong.

And here I see the task of the young who make up the first generation of fighters and dragon-slayers. They will bring about a more beautiful

and happier humanity and culture, but they themselves will get no more than a glimpse of that promised land of happiness and amazing beauty. These young people will suffer both from the history sickness and from its cures. And yet they believe in strength and health, and they proudly claim to be closer to great Nature than their elders, the cultured men and graybeards of today. But their task is to shake today's ideas of "health" and "culture" right down to their foundations, and to put hatred and scorn in the place of this fussy, over-decorated pile of ideas. And the clearest sign of their own strength and health is exactly this: they cannot use any idea, any slogan, from today's factory of words and ideas to describe what they are. They only draw their certainty from the power inside them that acts and fights, that breaks things up and destroys them, and from a feeling of life that grows ever stronger when the moment comes. You may say these young people have no culture. But why would the young take that as an insult? You may call them rough and lacking in self-control. But they are not yet old and wise enough to just go along with things. They do not need to pretend to have a ready-made culture at all. Instead, they enjoy all the rights, and all the comforts, of being young: above all, the right to brave, unthinking honesty, and the comfort of a hope that lifts them up.

I know that such hopeful people understand all these simple truths from the inside. Through their own experience, they can turn them into a set of beliefs to live by. To everyone else, for now, these truths will look like nothing more than a row of covered dishes, which may even seem empty. But one day they will see, with amazed eyes, that the dishes are full, and that every idea, every urge and every passion is packed into these simple truths, which cannot stay covered for long. I leave those doubters to time, which brings everything to light. And at last I turn to that great company of hope. I want to tell them, in the form of a parable, the path to their rescue: how they can be saved

from the history sickness, and what their own story will be. Through this, they can become healthy enough to study history again, and, guided by life, to use the past in those three ways: as a history of great examples, as a history that preserves and honours the old, or as a history that judges the past. At first they will know less than today's "educated men." They will have unlearned a lot, and they will have lost any wish even to find out the things those educated men most want to know. In fact, from the educated point of view, their main mark will be exactly their lack of learning: they will not care about, and will not be reached by, all the fine and famous things. But at the end of the cure, they are human beings again, and are no longer mere shadows of humanity. That is something. There is still hope. And you who hope, don't you laugh with joy in your hearts?

"How can we reach that goal?" you will ask. At the start of your journey, the god of Delphi calls out his message to you: "Know yourself." It is a hard saying. For that god, as Heraclitus said, "tells nothing and hides nothing, but only points the way." But where does he point?

At certain times, the Greeks were in a similar danger. They risked being swamped by what was past and foreign, and being wrecked on the rock of "history." They never lived proudly apart, untouched by others. For a long time their "culture" was a jumble of foreign styles and ideas, from the Semitic peoples, from Babylon, Lydia and Egypt, and their religion was a battle among all the gods of the East. In the same way, German culture and religion today is a life-and-death struggle among all foreign nations and past ages. And yet Greek culture did not become a mere machine-like patchwork, thanks to that oracle at Delphi. The Greeks slowly learned to bring order to the mess inside. They took Apollo's advice: they thought back to themselves, to what they truly needed, and let all the fake needs go. In this way they became masters of themselves again. They did not stay for long the late-comers of the whole East, weighed down by what they had inher-

ited. After that hard fight, by obeying the oracle, they grew and enriched the treasure they had received, and they became the ancestors and models for all the cultured nations that came after.

This is a parable for each one of us. Each person must bring order to the mess inside himself by "thinking himself back" to what he really needs. He will need all his honesty, all the toughness and sincerity in his character, to help him rebel against second-hand thinking, second-hand learning and second-hand action. And then he will begin to understand that culture can be more than a "decoration of life" — which really means a way of hiding life and spoiling its looks, because every decoration hides what it decorates. And so he will discover in himself the Greek idea of culture, as opposed to the Roman one. This is the idea of culture as a new and finer nature, with no split between inside and outside, with no empty custom or disguise, where thought and will, life and appearance, are all one. He will also learn from his own experience that the Greeks won because they had greater strength of moral character. And he will learn that everything that leads to sincerity is one more step towards true culture — even if this sincerity damages the ideals of education that people worship at the time, or even if it has the power to smash a whole system of culture that is only for show.

Schopenhauer as Teacher

I.

A traveller had seen many countries, nations and continents. Someone asked him what one quality he had found in people everywhere. He answered, "They tend to be lazy." Many people may think the fuller truth would have been, "They are all afraid." People hide behind "manners" and "opinions." Deep down, every person knows very well that he is one of a kind, here on this earth only once. No lucky accident, however strange, will ever put together a second time such an amazingly colorful mix of many different things joined into one, the way he is. He knows this, but he hides it as if it were a guilty secret. And why? Because he is afraid of his neighbour. His neighbour expects him to follow the latest customs, and is wrapped up in those customs himself. But what forces a person to fear his neighbour, to think and act like the rest of the herd, and not to look for his own joy? In a few rare cases, maybe shyness. But for most people it is laziness: "taking things easy," or in a word, the "tendency to be lazy" that the traveller talked about. He was right. People are lazier than they are afraid. What they fear most is the heavy load that total honesty, and speaking and acting without any disguise, would put on them. Only artists hate this lazy drifting around in borrowed manners and opinions that don't fit. Artists uncover the guilty secret: the truth that every human being is a one-of-a-kind wonder. They show us that in every tiny movement of his muscles, a person is his own individual self. And they show, as something that follows from his being an individual, that he is also beautiful and interesting to look at, something new and unbelievable, like every work of nature, something that can never become boring. If the great thinker looks down on people, it is

because of their laziness. Because of it, they seem like ordinary, worthless pieces of pottery, not worth dealing with or trying to improve. A person who does not want to belong to the crowd only has to stop "going easy on himself." He has to follow his conscience, which cries out to him: "Be yourself! Everything you are now doing and thinking and wanting is not you!"

Every young soul hears this cry day and night, and trembles when she hears it. That is because she senses all the happiness that has been meant for her since forever, if only she thinks about how to truly set herself free. And she cannot be helped toward this happiness at all, as long as she lies chained up by Opinion and by Fear. And without this freedom, life can become so empty and meaningless! There is no creature in nature more lonely and outcast, like the wandering Ishmael in the Bible, than the person who has broken away from his true genius, his true inner calling, and does nothing but stare around him without any aim. There is no point in even attacking such a person. He is just a shell with no nut inside, a painted cloth that is torn and hanging loose, a ghostly scarecrow that cannot make anyone afraid, and certainly cannot make anyone feel sorry for him. People are right to say that a lazy person is "killing time." But think of an age that bets its whole salvation on public opinion, which really means on each person's private laziness. About such an age, we must be fully determined that this time should be "killed," once and for all. What I mean is that it should be wiped out of life's true History of Freedom. Later generations will feel deeply disgusted when they come to study what went on in a period when no living people were in charge, but only shadow-people, like shapes cast on the screen of public opinion. To people far in the future, our age may well seem the darkest chapter of history, the least known because it was the least human. I have walked through the new streets of our cities. I thought about all the awful houses that these gentlemen with their public opinion have

built for themselves. Not a single stone of them will be left in a hundred years, I thought, and the opinions of these busy builders may well have fallen down along with them. But how full of hope all those people should be who feel that they do not belong to this age! If they did belong to it, they would have to help with the work of "killing their time" and dying along with it. Instead, they want to bring the time to life, and to truly live in that life themselves.

But even if the future gives us nothing to hope for, there is still the amazing fact that we exist right now, at this moment in time. That fact gives us the greatest push to live by our own rules and our own standards. It is so hard to explain why we should be alive exactly today, when there has been endless time in which we could have come into being. All we own is a tiny stretch of time, this "today," and in it we must show why we came into being and what we came for. We have to answer to ourselves for our existence. So we will steer our own lives, and we will not accept that our life is just a blind accident. We should treat this riddle of life in a rather bold and careless way, especially since we are likely to lose the key to it, however things turn out. Why hold on to your little piece of land, or your little business, or listen to what your neighbour says? It is so small-town to tie yourself to ideas that nobody follows a couple of hundred miles away. East and West are just signs that someone chalks up in front of us to fool cowards like us. "I will try to become free," says the young soul. And then she is held back, just because two nations happen to hate each other and go to war, or because there is a sea between two parts of the world, or because a religion is taught nearby that did not even exist two thousand years ago. "And this is not you," the soul says to herself. "No one can build you the bridge you must use to cross the river of life, except you alone. There are countless paths and bridges and half-gods who will happily carry you across, but only if you pay with your own self. You would have to hand over your self as a

pledge, and then you would lose it. There is one road in the world that no one can walk except you. Don't ask where it leads. Just walk forward. Who was it that said this true thing: 'A person has never climbed higher than when he does not know where his road may still lead him'?"

But how can we "find ourselves" again? And how can a person "know himself"? A human being is a dark and hidden thing. People say a hare has seven skins, but a person could peel off seventy times seven layers and still not be able to say, "Here you truly are; this is not just an outer shell anymore." Besides, digging into yourself like this, plunging straight and hard down into the deep pit of your own being, is a difficult and dangerous thing to begin. You can easily hurt yourself so badly that no doctor can heal you. And anyway, what would be the point, when everything about us already shows who we really are? Our friendships and our hatreds, the way we look at people and greet them, what we remember and what we forget, the books we read and the things we write, all of these reveal us. Here is the best way to do it. Let the young soul look back over its life and ask: "What have you truly loved up to now? What has lifted your soul up, taken hold of it, and also made it happy?" Line up in front of you all these things you have honoured. Maybe, by what they are and the order they come in, they will show you a law, and that law is the basic law of your own self. Compare these things. Look at how one fills out another, widens it, goes beyond it, and explains it. See how together they make a ladder that you have been climbing all along, up toward your own self. For your true self is not buried deep inside you. It is endlessly high above you, or at least high above the person you usually think you are. Real teachers, the people who truly shape us, show you the real foundation and meaning of who you are. That deepest part of you cannot itself be shaped or taught, but it is hard to reach, tied up and crippled. So your teachers can only be the ones who set you free. And

that is the secret of all culture. Culture does not hand you fake arms and legs, wax noses, or glasses for your eyes. Any education that gives you such things is just cheap, fake money. Instead, true culture is a setting free. It is like clearing away all the weeds, the rubbish and the pests that attack the young, delicate plants. It is like light and warmth pouring down, and the gentle falling of rain at night. It means following Nature and loving her when she acts kindly, like a mother. And it means finishing Nature's work: when culture bows before her wild and merciless storms, it turns them into something good, and it covers over every sign of her tragic senselessness. Because Nature is also, sometimes, a cruel step-mother.

There are other ways of "finding ourselves," of coming back to ourselves out of the confusion we all wander around in, as if lost in a gloomy cloud. But I know of no better way than to think about our teachers. So today I will take as my subject that tough teacher, Arthur Schopenhauer, and I will talk about others later.

II.

To explain properly what a big event it was for me when I first looked into Schopenhauer's writings, I have to stop for a moment on one idea. In my youth, this idea came back to me more often, and moved me more deeply, than any other. Back then I let my mind wander freely in a world of wishes. I thought fate would spare me the awful and exhausting job of educating myself. Some philosopher, I believed, would show up at just the right moment and do it for me. He would be a true philosopher, someone I could obey without asking questions, because I would trust him more than I trusted myself. Then I asked myself: "What rules would he use to teach you?" And I thought hard about what he would say to the two main ideas about education that are most popular in our time. The first idea says that the teacher should quickly find out his student's strong point. Then he should put

all his skill and effort, all the water and all the sunshine, so to speak, into making that one gift grow until it bears ripe fruit. The second idea says the teacher should strengthen all the qualities the student already has, take care of them, and bring them into balance with each other. But we might ask: should someone with a clear talent for working with gold be forced to learn music just for the sake of balance? And can we agree that Benvenuto Cellini's father was right to keep pushing his son back to the "dear little horn," which Cellini himself called that "cursed piping"? We can't believe that, not with a talent as strong and obvious as his. It may well be that this idea of balanced development only fits weaker people. Such people have a whole crowd of wishes and leanings, even if none of them adds up to much, either alone or all together. On the other hand, where do we find such a beautiful mix of voices in harmony, in fact the very soul of harmony, as in people like Cellini? In such people, everything, their knowledge, their wants, their love and their hate, points toward one single spot, the root of everything. And a balanced whole, made from all these different forces, is built up because this living center rules over everything with a power nothing can resist. So maybe the two ideas don't contradict each other at all. One is just saying that a person must have a center, and the other that he must also have an outer edge, a circle around that center. The philosopher-teacher I dreamed of would not only find the central force in a person. He would also know how to stop it from destroying the other powers. His job, I thought, would be to join the whole person together into something like a solar system, full of life and motion, and to discover the hidden laws, beyond ordinary physics, that make it work.

Meanwhile, no matter how hard I tried, I could not find my thinker. I saw how badly we modern people compare with the Greeks and Romans, even when it comes to taking the problems of education seriously. You could travel all over Germany, and especially through all its

universities, with this need in your heart, and you would not find what you were looking for. Even much humbler wishes than that still go unanswered there. For example, if a German seriously wants to become a public speaker, or to join a "school for writers," he will find neither a master nor a school. Nobody yet seems to have realized that speaking and writing are arts, and that you cannot learn them without the most careful method and tireless practice. But nothing shows more clearly the rude self-satisfaction of our people, to their shame, than the fact that nobody asks for teachers. This comes partly from stinginess and partly from not thinking. Anyone at all will do as a so-called "family tutor," even among our most important and cultured families. And what a zoo of crazy minds and stale, moldy methods mostly make up our much-praised high schools! And think of what we are satisfied with in our final schools, our universities. Look at our professors and the institutions they run! And then compare that with how hard the task really is of educating a person to be fully human! Above all, the amazing way German scholars dive into their plate of knowledge shows that they are thinking more about Science than about human beings. They are trained to march on a hopeless mission in Science's service, like soldiers sent on a suicide attack, so that each new generation will be encouraged to make the same sacrifice. Suppose their dealings with knowledge are not limited and guided by any broader principles of education, but are allowed to run on without end, with the motto "the more the better." Then this is just as harmful to learning as the economic idea of letting business do whatever it likes is harmful to ordinary morals. Nobody now sees that educating the professors themselves is an extremely hard problem, if their humanity is not to be sacrificed or dried up. You can actually see this difficulty in countless examples of people whose nature has been bent and twisted by their reckless, too-early devotion to science. There is an even more important sign that higher education is completely missing, and it points to a bigger danger that touches everyone. It is

clear right away why a public speaker or writer cannot be educated today: there are no teachers. And it is clear why a scholar must turn out bent and warped: he will have been trained by science, which is a cold, inhuman abstraction. Since this is how things are, let a person ask himself: "Where today are the models of moral greatness and honor for our whole generation, for the educated and the uneducated, the high and the low? Where is the living, visible example of how to build a good life for this age? Where has all the thinking about moral questions gone, the kind that has filled every great, developed society in every period of history?" There is no honor to be won for that kind of thing now, and nobody left to think about it. We are really living off the moral savings that our ancestors built up for us, like an inheritance. We do not know how to add to it; we only know how to waste it. In our society such things are either never mentioned at all, or, if they are, it is with such a childish lack of personal experience that it makes you feel sick. It comes down to this: our schools and professors simply turn away from any moral teaching, or they settle for empty formulas. On both sides, virtue is a word and nothing more, an old-fashioned word that they laugh at. And it is worse when they do not laugh, because then they are hypocrites.

Explaining this lack of courage, and this draining away of all moral strength, would be hard and complicated. But anyone who thinks about how Christianity, at the moment of its victory, shaped the morals of the Middle Ages must not forget something else. Christianity also has an effect in its defeat, and defeat seems to be where it stands today. With its lofty ideal, Christianity outbid the ancient systems of ethics, which always stayed close to nature, and people came to feel a dull disgust for those old systems. Later, when people did come to see what was better and higher in the ancient ways, they found that, however much they wanted to, they no longer had the strength to go back and live out the ancient virtues. And so modern

people spend their lives see-sawing between Christianity and paganism. On one side they sneak up on Christian morals in a secretive or hypocritical way; on the other side they flirt with the ancient world in an equally shy and lifeless way. And they do not do well under this. Modern people have an inherited fear of living by nature, and at the same time a newer attraction to it. They long to settle down somewhere, yet their mind is too weak to choose, so it swings back and forth between the "good" path and the "better" path. All this shows an unsteadiness in the modern mind that dooms it to be without joy and without results. Moral teachers were never more needed, and never less likely to be found. Doctors are in the most danger themselves exactly when they are needed most and many people are sick. For where are our modern doctors of the soul who are strong and steady enough on their feet to hold someone else up or lead him by the hand? A certain heavy gloom lies over the best people of our time. There is an endless disgust at the battle being fought in their hearts between honesty and lies, and a shaky trust in themselves. All this makes them completely unable to show others the way they must go.

So I was right to talk about my "wandering in a world of wishes" when I dreamed of finding a true thinker. Such a person could pull me out of the swamp of not being good enough. He could teach me again, simply and honestly, to be against the times in my thoughts and in my life, in the deepest sense of those words. I say simply and honestly, because people have now become such complicated machines that they have to be dishonest whenever they speak at all, or whenever they want to act on what they say.

These were the needs and longings I carried inside me when I came to know Schopenhauer.

I am one of those readers of Schopenhauer who know perfectly well, once they have turned the first page, that they will read all the rest

and listen to every word he ever said. I trusted him right away, and that trust has stayed the same for nine years. I understood him as if he had written just for me. (That is the clearest way to say it, even if it sounds a bit silly and full of myself.) Because of this, I never found a paradox in him, though now and then I found a few small mistakes. Paradoxes, after all, are just claims that don't convince anyone, because the writer made them without believing them himself. He made them to look clever, or to lead people astray, or, most of all, to show off. Schopenhauer never shows off. He writes for himself, and nobody likes to be fooled, least of all a thinker whose own rule is: "Fool nobody, not even yourself." That means no "white lies" of the kind people tell in polite company, which writers copy almost without noticing. It means even less the more deliberate tricks of the public speaker and the fake tools of fancy speech-making. Schopenhauer talks only to himself. Or, if you want to picture a listener, picture a son being taught by his father. It is rough, honest, good-natured talk to someone who "listens and loves." Writers like that are rare. His strength and good sense surround us the moment we hear his voice. It is like climbing high into the forest, where we breathe deeply and feel healthy again. We feel fresh, bracing air all around, a kind of openness and naturalness all his own. That belongs to people who feel at home inside themselves, and who are masters of a very rich home indeed. He is nothing like the writers who are surprised at themselves when they say something smart, and whose statements therefore sound nervous and forced. Nor does Schopenhauer remind us of the professor, with his stiff joints made worse by lack of exercise, his narrow chest and bony body, and his way of either sneaking along or strutting about. Also, his rough and rather grim spirit makes us not so much miss as look down on the smooth flexibility and courtly grace of the fine French writers. And no one will find in him the shiny fake-French imitations that our German writers value so highly. In places his style reminds me a little of Goethe, but otherwise

it is not modeled on any German at all. He knows how to be deep while staying simple, powerful without fancy speech-making, and strictly logical without being fussy and nitpicky. What German could he have learned that from? He also stays clear of Lessing's hair-splitting, choppy, and (with all due respect) rather un-German way of writing. That is no small credit to him, because Lessing is the most tempting of all models for anyone writing prose. The highest praise I can give the way he presents his ideas is to use his own words about himself: "A thinker must be very honest to use no help from poetry or fancy speech-making." The idea that honesty counts for something, and is even a virtue, is one of those private opinions that are forbidden in our age of public opinion. So I am not really praising Schopenhauer, only pointing out what sets him apart, when I say again that he is honest, even as a writer. So few writers are honest that we tend to distrust anyone who writes at all. I know only one author I can put next to Schopenhauer, or even above him, when it comes to honesty, and that is Montaigne. Just knowing that such a man existed makes living on this earth more joyful. At least for me, ever since I first got to know that strong and commanding spirit, I can say of him what he said of Plutarch: "As soon as I open his book, I feel like I am growing a pair of wings." If my task were to make myself at home on this earth, I would choose him as my companion.

Besides honesty, Schopenhauer shares a second quality with Montaigne: a joy that truly makes other people joyful. As the Latin saying goes, "Joyful for others, wise for himself." There are two very different kinds of joyfulness. The true thinker always passes on joy and life, whether he is showing his serious side or his funny side, his human understanding or his godlike patience. He does it without sour looks, shaking hands, or teary eyes. He does it simply and truly, fearlessly and with strength, maybe a little carelessly and harshly, but always like a winner. And that is what brings the deepest, strongest joy: to

see the victorious god standing among all the monsters he has fought. But the joyfulness you find here and there in second-rate writers and narrow thinkers makes some of us feel miserable. I felt this, for example, with the "joyfulness" of David Strauss. We are usually ashamed of that kind of cheerfulness in the people of our own time, because it exposes the emptiness of our age, and of the people in it, to those who come after us. Such "party boys" of cheerfulness do not see the suffering and the monsters that they, as thinkers, claim to see and fight. So their joy fools us, and we hate it. It tempts us into the false belief that they have won some kind of victory. Deep down, there is only real joy where there is real victory, and that is true of real philosophy just as much as of any work of art. The subject may be grim and serious, as the question of what life means always is. The work will only become dull and heavy if a sloppy thinker or an amateur has spread the fog of his own weakness over it. On the other hand, nothing happier or better can happen to a person than to be near one of those victorious spirits. Their deep thinking has led them to love what is most alive, and their wisdom has found its goal in beauty. They truly speak; they are not stammerers or chatterers. They live and move, and they take no part in the "dance of death" that the rest of humanity is doing. So in their company you feel like a natural human being again, and you could shout out with Goethe: "What a wonderful and priceless thing a living creature is! How well it fits its surroundings, how true it is, and how real!"

So far I have only been describing the first impression Schopenhauer made on me, one that was almost bodily. It was like a magical stream of inner strength passing from one living plant of Nature to another, which happens after the lightest touch. When I take this impression apart, I find that Schopenhauer's influence has three parts: his honesty, his joy, and his steadiness. He is honest because he speaks and writes only for himself. He is joyful because his thinking has won out

over the hardest problems. He is steady because he simply cannot be anything else. His strength rises like a flame in still air: straight up, without a flicker or a bend. He finds his path without our ever noticing that he was looking for it. He moves along his course so surely, so skillfully and so unstoppably that it seems as if he were pulled by some law like gravity. Our world today is full of mixed-up, half-and-half creatures, like the Centaurs and Chimeras of old myths. If anyone has felt what it means to find in such a world one simple, wholehearted, natural person, a true child of Nature who walks freely down his own road, then he will understand how happy and surprised I was to discover Schopenhauer. I recognized in him the teacher and the thinker I had wanted for so long. But I knew him only through his writings, and that was a great loss. So I tried all the harder to see, behind the book, the living man who had left it behind like a last will. In that will he promised what he left behind to those who could, and wanted to, be more than just his readers: to be his students and his sons.

III.

I get something out of a thinker only as far as he can be an example to me. There is no doubt that one person can lead whole nations behind him just by his example. Indian history shows this, since it is really the history of Indian philosophy. But this example has to show in the way he actually lives, not just in his books. It must follow the path of the ancient Greek thinkers, whose teaching showed in their clothes, in how they carried themselves, and in their whole way of life, more than in what they said or wrote. In German philosophy we have nothing yet of this "living proof." The mind, it seems, freed itself long ago, while the body has hardly started to. Yet it is foolish to think the mind can be truly free and independent if this victory over limits is not shown again in every glance and every movement. And in the end,

this victory is really a matter of shaping and limiting yourself. Kant stuck to his university, obeyed its rules, and, as his fellow teachers and students believed, belonged to a particular religious faith. So it is no surprise that his example has mostly produced university professors of philosophy. Schopenhauer thinks little of the learned crowd. He keeps himself apart, and he makes it his ideal to be independent of the state and of society, so that he can escape the chains of his situation. That is what makes him valuable to us. Many steps toward setting the thinker free are still unknown in Germany, but they cannot stay unknown forever. Our artists live more bravely and honourably than our thinkers. Richard Wagner, the best example of all, shows that a genius does not need to be afraid of a fight to the death with the accepted rules and customs, if we want to bring to light the higher truth and order that live inside him. But the "truth" our professors talk about so much seems to be a far more humble creature, and nobody needs to fear any trouble from her. She is relaxed and pleasant, and she keeps assuring the people in power that they will never have any trouble from her side, because, she says, a human being is nothing but "bare reasoning." So I will say this: philosophy in Germany must learn more and more not to be just "bare reasoning." And it could well take as its model "Schopenhauer the man."

It is nothing short of a miracle that he became this kind of human example. All around him, and inside him too, he faced the most terrible dangers, dangers that would have crushed and broken a weaker person. I think there was a good chance that Schopenhauer the man would have gone under, leaving behind, at best, some leftover bits of "bare reasoning." And that is only "at best." It was more likely that neither the man nor his reasoning would have survived.

A modern Englishman describes the most common danger facing extraordinary people who live in a society that worships the ordinary. He puts it like this: "Such unusual characters are first frightened into

giving in, then they become sick and gloomy, and then they die. A Shelley could never have lived in England. A whole people of Shelleys would have been impossible." Our own German poets, Hölderlin and Kleist, were destroyed because they did not fit the usual mold. They were not strong enough to survive the climate of so-called German culture. Only people as hard as iron, like Beethoven, Goethe, Schopenhauer and Wagner, could hold out against it. Even in them, you can see the effects of this tiring, endless struggle in many lines and wrinkles on their faces. They breathe harder, and their voices sound strained. There was an old diplomat who had just met and talked with Goethe. Afterwards he said to a friend, in French, "There is a man who has had great sorrows!" Goethe took this to mean: "That is a man who has worked very hard in his life." And Goethe added: "If the marks of the sorrow and effort we have lived through cannot be wiped off our faces, it is no surprise that everything left behind of us and our struggles carries the same marks." And yet this is the same Goethe whom our educated narrow-minded conformists point to as the happiest of all Germans. They do this to prove their claim that it must be possible to be happy among people like them. Hidden behind this is another idea they never say out loud: that nobody can be forgiven for feeling unhappy and lonely among them. So in practice they push their belief to its cruel conclusion: that there is always some secret guilt in loneliness. Poor Schopenhauer carried this secret guilt in his heart too. His guilt was that he loved his philosophy more than he loved the people around him. And he had the bad luck to learn from Goethe that he had to protect his philosophy at any cost from being ignored by the people of his time, just to keep it alive. For, according to Goethe, there is a kind of censorship, like that of the Grand Inquisitor, that the Germans are very skilled at. It is called: total, unbreakable silence. This silence achieved at least one thing: most copies of the first printing of Schopenhauer's masterpiece had to be thrown away and pulped as waste paper. The very real danger that

his great work would be wiped out simply by being ignored filled him with a restlessness that was dangerous and impossible to control. Not one follower of any importance came forward. It is tragic to watch him hunting for any sign that people recognized him. And at last, when he cries out in triumph that now he really will be read (in Latin, "I am read and I shall be read"), that sharp cry fills us with a shiver of pain. All the sides of him where we do not see the great philosopher show us instead a suffering man, worried about losing what he valued most. He was tormented by the fear of losing his small fortune, and maybe also by the fear that he could no longer keep his truly ancient, pure way of living for philosophy. Because he wanted so badly to find real trust and sympathy in people, he often chose the wrong people. Then he would come back, heavy-hearted, to his faithful dog. He was completely alone, without even one friend like himself to comfort him. And between one friend and no friend there is an endless distance, just as there always is between something and nothing. Nobody who has true friends knows what real loneliness means, even if the whole world stands against him. Oh, I can see clearly that you do not know what loneliness is! Wherever there are great societies with governments, religions and public opinion, in short, wherever there is a tyranny, the lonely philosopher will be hated. That is because philosophy offers people a safe place where no tyranny can reach. It is the inner holy room, the center of the heart's maze. And this makes the tyrants furious. This is where the lonely people hide. But this is also where their greatest danger waits. These people who have kept their inner freedom must still live and be seen in the outside world. They are tied into countless relationships with others: by their birth, their position, their education and their country, by their own situation and by other people pushing themselves on them. So everyone assumes they hold a huge number of opinions, just because those opinions happen to be common. Every look that is not a clear "no" is counted as a "yes." Every movement of the hand that does not

tear something down is seen as helping it. These free and lonely people know that they always seem to be different from what they really are. They want nothing but truth and honesty, yet they are caught in a net of misunderstanding. And no matter how strongly they wish otherwise, a fog gathers around everything they do: a fog of false opinions, of going along with things, of wrong conclusions, of being partly misunderstood and of keeping quiet on purpose. A cloud of sadness settles on their faces. For people like this hate having to pretend even more than they hate death. This constant bitterness makes them seem threatening, like a volcano about to erupt. Every now and then they take revenge for being forced to hide and hold themselves back. They come out of their hiding places with dark, angry looks. Their words and actions explode, and this can lead to their own ruin. Schopenhauer lived surrounded by dangers like these. Lonely people like this need love. They need friends they can be as open and honest with as they are with themselves, friends around whom the deadening silence and the pretending can finally stop. Take their friends away, and the danger keeps growing. Heinrich von Kleist was broken by the lack of love. The most terrible weapon against unusual people is to force them to shut themselves up inside. When they finally burst out again, it is like a volcano erupting. And yet there are always a few half-gods who can bear life under these awful conditions and even win against them. If you want to hear their lonely song, listen to the music of Beethoven.

So the first danger that hung over Schopenhauer's life was loneliness. The second danger is called despair about truth. Every thinker who starts out from the philosophy of Kant can fall into this danger, as long as he is strong and honest in his pains and his wishes, and not just a rattling box of thoughts or a counting machine. We all know what a shameful situation is hinted at by this last condition. I believe that Kant has touched only a very few people so deeply that he

changed the very flow of the blood in their veins. If you go by what you read, then every field of thought must have been turned upside down since this quiet, modest professor did his work. I can't believe it myself. The way I see it, even if only dimly, people themselves need to be turned upside down first, before any "fields of thought" can be. In fact, the first sign of whatever effect Kant may have had on ordinary people's minds is a kind of doubt that eats away at everything, and a feeling that nothing is fixed or certain. But only in noble and active minds, which could never settle down and live in doubt, could this turn into something worse: a crushing despair about truth itself. This, for example, is what Kant's philosophy did to Heinrich von Kleist. In his deeply moving way, Kleist writes: "Only a short time ago I got to know Kant's philosophy. I will tell you what I think, though I don't need to fear that it will shake you to the bottom of your soul, the way it shook me. We cannot know whether what we call truth really is truth, or whether it only seems true to us. If it only seems true, then the truth we gather here does not last after death. And then all our struggle to win something that could follow us even into the grave is useless. If the blade of this thought does not cut into your heart, at least do not laugh at someone else who feels it wounding him in his Holy of Holies, the most sacred place inside him. My one highest goal has disappeared, and I have no other." Yes, when will people feel things as deeply as Kleist did again? When will they learn to judge a philosophy by what it means to that most sacred place inside them? And yet that is exactly how we must judge what Schopenhauer can mean to us after Kant. He was the first trailblazer to lead us up from the heights of doubting disappointment, or of "critical" giving-up, to a still greater height: the height of tragic looking at the world, like looking up at the night sky with its endless crown of stars. His greatness is that he can stand in front of the painting of life and explain it to us as a whole. All the clever people, on the other hand, can't escape the mistake of thinking that you get closer to explaining the painting

by slowly and painfully studying its colours and materials. And in the end they probably admit that the weave of the canvas is very complicated and that the chemical make-up of the paints can't be figured out. Schopenhauer knew that you have to guess who the painter is in order to understand the painting. But now the whole tribe of learned men is busy trying to understand the paint and the canvas, and not the painting. Only the person who has kept the whole wide view of life and existence firmly in front of his eyes will be able to use the separate sciences without harming himself. Without this big picture as a guide, the sciences are threads that lead nowhere, and they only make the maze of our life even more confusing. Here we see, as I said, the greatness of Schopenhauer: he follows every idea to the end, the way Hamlet follows the Ghost, and he doesn't let himself wander off into some learned side-track, or get pulled away by the dry, abstract hair-splitting of furious argument. The only interesting thing about studying the small-minded philosophers is seeing that they have reached those floors in the great building of philosophy where learned debates for and against, and nit-picking objections and counter-objections, are the normal thing. And because of that, they dodge what every great philosophy demands: to speak from the point of view of eternity, saying, "This is the picture of the whole of life: learn from it the meaning of your own life." And the other way round: "Read your own life, and from it understand the secret signs of life as a whole." This is how Schopenhauer's philosophy must always be understood: as a philosophy of the individual. It starts from the single person, in his own nature, to see clearly into his personal sufferings, needs and limits, and to find the remedies that can comfort them. And the remedy is this: giving up the self and putting it in service of higher goals, above all true fairness and mercy. He teaches us to tell the difference between what really helps a person's happiness and what only seems to help. He shows that neither getting rich, nor gaining honour, nor gaining learning can lift a person out of his deep despair at being

unworthy. And he shows that chasing these good things only makes sense if there is a bigger goal beyond them that explains them: using them to gain the power to help our physical nature, and, as far as we can, to correct its foolishness and clumsiness. First of all for oneself alone; and in the end, through oneself, for everyone. It is a task that leads to doubt, because there is still so much to be made better, in each person and in all of us!

If we apply this to Schopenhauer himself, we reach the third danger he lived with. It was the most personal one, and it lay deep in the core of who he was. Everyone tends to find some limit in himself, both in his mind's gifts and in his moral will, and this fills him with longing and sadness. Just as a person reaches for holiness because he is aware of his own wrongdoing, so a thinking person deeply longs for the "genius" inside himself. This is the root of all true culture. And if we say this means a person's hope to be "born again" as a saint and a genius, I know you don't have to be a Buddhist to understand that old story. We feel strong disgust when we find talent without this kind of longing, among the learned or among the so-called educated. We see that such people, however clever they are, do not help but actually block the first beginnings of culture and the blooming of genius, which is the goal of all culture. There is a stiffness in them, much like the cold pride of ordinary, rule-following goodness, which also stands at the opposite end from true holiness. Schopenhauer's nature held an extremely dangerous split in two. Few thinkers have felt as he did the complete, unmistakable certainty of genius inside them. His genius gave him the highest promise of all: that no one could cut a deeper furrow than the one he was ploughing in the soil of the modern world. In other words, no one could make a deeper mark on our times. He knew that one half of his being was fully realized, as strong as it could be, and needed nothing more. And he followed, with greatness and dignity, his calling to make that victory secure. But in the

other half there was a gnawing longing. We can understand it when we hear that he once turned away with a sad look from a picture of Rancé, the founder of the Trappist monks, and said: "That is a matter of grace." He meant that holiness is a gift that cannot be earned. For genius always longs for holiness, because from its lookout tower it sees farther and more clearly than other people. It sees deep into the place where Thought and Being come together, into the kingdom of peace and the giving up of all wanting, and all the way to that other shore the people of India speak of. The amazing thing is that Schopenhauer's nature was so unbelievably steady and unshakable that this longing could neither destroy him nor turn him to stone. Each person will understand this according to the size of his own character and greatness. None of us will understand its full meaning.

The more you think about these three dangers, the more amazing his strength in fighting them will seem, and the more amazing his safety after the battle. It's true that he came away with many scars and open wounds, and with a way of thinking that may seem a bit too bitter and quarrelsome. But his one great ideal rises above even the best human qualities in him. Schopenhauer stands as a model for people, in spite of all those scars and scratches. We can even say that what was imperfect and "all too human" in him brings us closer to him as a person. We see someone who suffered and who is a brother to all who suffer, not just someone living on the unreachable peaks of genius.

These three dangers, built into Schopenhauer's nature, threaten all of us. Each of us carries a creative loneliness inside, and being aware of it surrounds us with a strange, foreign glow that sets us apart. Most people cannot stand it. As I said, they are lazy, and their loneliness hangs a chain of troubles and burdens around them. No doubt, for the person who carries this heavy chain, life loses almost everything you hope for from it when you are young: joy, safety, honour. What his fellow humans pay him as his reward is loneliness! Wherever he lives,

he is surrounded by wilderness and a cave, as if he were a hermit. He must take care not to be enslaved and crushed by it, and not to become gloomy because of it. And he should surround himself with pictures of good and brave fighters like Schopenhauer.

The second danger isn't rare either. Here and there we find someone who was given sharp insight by nature. His thoughts dance happily in the wild witches' party of argument and logic. If he carelessly lets his talent run free, he can easily lose all his humanity and live a ghostly life in the world of "bare reasoning." Or, by always hunting for the "pros and cons" of everything, he may wander away from the truth. Then he lives without courage or confidence, full of doubt, denial and dissatisfaction, with only the thin hope that comes after disappointment. As the saying goes: "No dog could live long like this!"

The third danger is a hardening, either in morals or in the mind. A person breaks the bond that tied him to his ideal. He stops being productive and stops passing on what he is in one area or another, and he becomes an enemy of culture or a parasite living off it. His inner loneliness has turned into a single, separate speck cut off from everything, an icy stone. And you can die of this loneliness just as much as of being afraid of it. You can be destroyed by your own self as well as by giving up your self, by longing as well as by turning to stone. To live is always to be in danger.

Besides these dangers, which Schopenhauer would have faced because of the kind of person he was, no matter what century he lived in, there were also some dangers that came from his own time. It is important to tell these two kinds apart, so that we can understand what was typical and what was shaping in his nature. The philosopher looks out over all of existence and wants to give it a new value, a new measure of worth. That has always been the special job of all great thinkers: to make the laws for what reality is worth, like officials who

decide the weight and the stamp of coins at the mint. And his job will be made harder if the people he sees around him are a weak and worm-eaten crop. If he wants to judge existence correctly, the worthlessness of the present time must count for only a very small part of the total. Studying ancient history, or the history of other peoples, is useful, if it is useful at all, because it helps us judge the whole fate of humankind correctly. That judgment must come not only from an average guess, but from comparing the highest fates that can happen to single people or to whole nations. But the present is pressing in on us too much. It pulls the philosopher's eyes toward it, even against his will, and in the final total it will always be counted for more than it is worth. So he must give his own time a low score compared with other times. He must push the present out of his picture of life, and out of himself too. He must move it into the background or paint over it. That is a hard task, almost an impossible one. The judgment of the ancient Greek thinkers about the value of existence means so much more than ours does. That is because they had life itself in full bloom right in front of them. Their view was not troubled by any felt split between two things: their wish for freedom and beauty on a grand scale, and their search for truth, with its one question: "What is life really worth?" Empedocles lived at a time when Greek culture was overflowing with the joy of life, and every age can learn from his words. This is all the more true because no other great thinker of that great time dared to disagree with him. Empedocles is just the clearest voice among them. They all say the same thing, if only you are willing to listen. A modern thinker, on the other hand, is always struggling with a desire that is never fulfilled. He is searching for life, warm, red-blooded life, so that he can judge it. At the very least, he will feel that he must be a truly living person himself before he can trust his own power to judge. And this is what gives modern thinkers the right to sit among the great helpers of life, or rather of the will to live. It is also the reason why they can look away from their own worn-out time

and reach for a truer culture and a clearer explanation. But this longing is also their danger. Inside them, the reformer who wants to change the world fights with the philosopher who wants to judge it calmly. And whichever side wins, the victory also means a defeat. How was Schopenhauer supposed to escape this danger?

We like to think of the great man as the noble child of his age, someone who feels its faults more strongly and more deeply than ordinary people do. If that is true, then the great man's struggle against his age seems to be nothing but a crazy fight to the death with himself. But it only seems that way. He fights only those parts of his time that block his own greatness, which means his own freedom and his own sincerity. So, deep down, he is an enemy only of what is not truly himself: the clash inside him between what belongs to his passing time and what is eternal, a clash that can never be settled. The so-called "child of his age" turns out to be only a step-child. From the time he was a boy, Schopenhauer fought against his time, which was a false and unworthy mother to him. And as soon as he had driven her away, he could bring his being back to its natural health and purity. For exactly this reason, we can use his writings as mirrors of his time. It is not the mirror's fault if everything of that time shows up in it as if struck by a terrible disease: pale and thin, with tired faces and hollow eyes. That is the step-child's sorrow made visible. His longing for natural strength, for a healthy and simple humanity, was really a longing for himself. And as soon as he had defeated his time inside himself, he stood face to face with his own genius. The secret of nature's being, and of his own, now lay open to him. The step-mother's plot to hide his genius from him had failed. And now he could look without fear at the question, "What is life really worth?" He no longer had to weigh up a bloodless, confused age full of doubt and fake behaviour. He knew that something higher and purer could be won on this earth than the life of his own time. And he knew that a

person does a bitter wrong to existence if he knows it and judges it only in this ugly form. Genius, which is itself the highest thing that life produces, is now called on to defend life, if it can. The noble, creative soul must answer this question: "In your heart, do you say 'Yes!' to this existence? Is it enough for you? Will you speak for it and save it? One true 'Yes!' from your lips, and life, which stands so harshly accused, will be set free." How will he answer? With the words of Empedocles.

IV.

That last hint may stay unclear for a while. I have something easier to explain: how Schopenhauer can help us educate ourselves *against* our own age. He can do this because, through him, we really get to know our age, if that is an advantage at all! In a couple of hundred years it may no longer be possible. Sometimes I amuse myself with the idea that people may soon grow tired of books and the people who write them. Then the scholar of tomorrow might leave instructions in his will that his body be burned in the middle of his books, including, of course, the ones he wrote himself. And as the forests are slowly cut down, couldn't our libraries quite sensibly be used as straw and firewood? Most books are born from the smoke and steam of the brain, and they may as well go back to steam and smoke. Since they have no fire inside them, fire will come to them from outside. And maybe some later century will call ours the "Dark Age," because the things we produced kept the furnace burning hotter and longer than ever before. In any case, we are lucky that we can learn to know our time. And if there is any point in busying ourselves with our time at all, we might as well do it as thoroughly as we can, so that nobody can have any doubt about it. We owe the chance to do this to Schopenhauer.

Of course, we would be far, far happier if our study showed that there had never been an age as hopeful and splendid as ours. Today, in some

corner of the world, perhaps in Germany, there are simple people who seriously believe that the world was set right two years ago,[1] and that every serious and gloomy view of life has now been proven wrong by "facts." For them, the founding of the new German Empire is the final blow that wipes out all the "pessimistic" philosophers, and they have no doubt about it. If we want to judge how much a philosopher matters as a teacher in our time, we have to stand against a common view like this one, which is especially common in our universities. We have to say this: it is shameful that a crowd of so-called thoughtful and respectable men should pour out such disgusting flattery to the present age, as if it were an idol to be worshipped. It proves that we can no longer see how far the seriousness of philosophy is from the seriousness of a newspaper. Such men have lost the last bit of feeling, not only for philosophy but also for religion. In its place they have put a spirit that is not so much hopeful as newspaper-minded: the evil spirit that hangs over each day, and over each daily paper. Any philosophy that thinks the problem of human existence has been put aside, or even solved, by a political event is a fake philosophy. Countless states have been founded since the world began; that is an old story. How could some new political arrangement make everyone on earth content, once and for all? If anyone truly believes this is possible, he should report to our authorities. He really deserves to be a Professor of Philosophy at a German university, like Harms in Berlin, Jürgen Meyer in Bonn, and Carrière in Munich.

[1] This was written in 1873. (Translator's note.)

We are now feeling the effects of an idea that has lately been shouted from every rooftop: that the state is the highest goal of human life, and there is no higher duty than serving it. I don't see this as a slide back into paganism. I see it as a slide back into stupidity. A man who thinks serving the state is his highest duty may well know of no higher one. But there are people and duties in a realm beyond that.

And one of those duties, which seems to me at least more valuable than serving the state, is to destroy stupidity in all its forms, including this particular stupidity. I am dealing with a kind of person whose idea of life's purpose reaches further than the well-being of a state. I mean philosophers. And I am dealing with them only in their connection to the world of culture, which again is almost independent of the "good of the state." Humanity is like a long, twisted chain made of many links: some of them are gold, and others are cheap pewter.

How does the philosopher of our time look at culture? Quite differently, I promise you, from those professors who are so pleased with their new state. He seems to see signs that culture is being torn up by the roots: life keeps getting faster and more rushed, and all calm thinking and simplicity are decaying. Religion is like water going out with the tide, leaving behind swamps and stagnant pools. The nations are pulling apart in hatred again, eager to tear each other to pieces. The sciences charge ahead blindly, with no guiding plan and no shared standard; they are splitting into pieces and losing their grip on every firm principle. The educated classes are being swept along in a low, shameful race for money. The world has never been so worldly, never so lacking in goodness and love. Learned men are no longer lighthouses or safe shelters in the middle of this storm of worldliness. They themselves are becoming more restless, more thoughtless and more loveless every day. Everything, art and science included, is bowing down before the barbarism that is on its way. Educated people have sunk so low that they have become the worst enemies of education, because they refuse to admit the sickness that has spread everywhere, and they get in the way of the doctor. These poor, spineless creatures turn cranky if anyone mentions their weakness or fights the shameful spirit of lying inside them. They would love to make us believe they have outdone every century before them. They walk around pretending to be happy, and there is something pitiful about it, be-

cause their happiness makes no sense at all. We wouldn't even ask them what Tannhäuser asked Biterolf in the old song: "What have you ever enjoyed, poor wretch?" Because, sadly, we know the answer far better ourselves, in a different way. There is a wintry sky above us, and we live on a high mountain, in danger and in need. All our joy is short, and the sunlight falls pale on our white, snowy mountains. Music is heard: an old man is turning a barrel organ, and the dancers spin around. The heart of the traveller watching is shaken inside him, because everything is so messy, so dull, so hopeless. Even now there is a sound of joy, of clear, carefree joy! But soon the evening mist closes in, the music fades away, and all you hear is the traveller's footsteps on the gravel. As far as he can see, there is nothing but the grim, empty face of nature.

Someone might say it is one-sided to point only at the blurry lines and dull colours in the picture of modern life. But the other side of the picture is no more encouraging. It is only more disturbing. There is strength there, for sure, huge strength. But it is wild, raw and without mercy. We watch it with a cold feeling of waiting, as if we were looking into a witch's boiling pot in her kitchen. At any moment sparks and steam may rise up, warning that something terrifying is about to appear. For a hundred years we have been waiting for a shock that will shake the whole world. Lately we have tried to use the steadying, holding-back strength of the so-called nation-state against the great modern urge to explode and destroy, like a volcano. But for a long time to come, this will only make worse the restlessness that hangs over all of us. We should not be fooled by people who act as if they know nothing about all this worry. Their own restlessness shows how well they know it. They think about themselves alone more than people have ever done before. They plant and build only for their own short day. And the hunt for happiness is never fiercer than when the prey has to be caught today or tomorrow, because the day after, maybe

there will be no more hunting at all. We live in the Age of Atoms, or better said, in the Chaos of Atoms, where everything has broken into separate little pieces. In the Middle Ages, the Church more or less held these opposing forces together. By the strong pressure it put on them, it even blended them together to some degree. When that shared bond broke and the pressure eased, the forces rose up against each other once again. The Reformation taught that many things were "adiaphora", meaning areas of life that did not need any guidance from religion. That was the price it paid to be allowed to exist. Christianity paid a similar price long before, to protect itself against the ancient world, which was far more religious than it was. And in doing that, it planted the seeds of conflict right away. Today everything is run by fools and crooks, by the greed of the money-makers and the brute force of the military. In their hands, the state puts on a good show of reorganising everything and of becoming the tie that holds the fighting parts together. In other words, the state wants people to worship it the same way they once worshipped the Church.

And we will still feel what comes of this. Even now we are standing on chunks of ice floating down the river of the Middle Ages. They are melting fast, and the way they are moving is a bad sign. The riverbanks are flooded and starting to collapse. The revolution, a revolution that will break society into its tiniest pieces, cannot be avoided. But what exactly are those smallest pieces of human society, the ones that cannot be split any further?

Surely times of change like ours are far more dangerous for humanity than the actual time of revolution and chaos itself. People are tortured by the waiting, and they greedily grab at every moment. This breeds all kinds of cowardice and selfishness in them. But when people truly feel a great need that everyone shares, it always lifts them up and makes them better. In the middle of such dangers, who will provide the guards and defenders for Humanity? Who will protect that holy,

untouchable treasure, which countless generations have stored up, bit by bit, in the temples? Who will once again set up the model of a human being, now that people, in their selfishness and fear, see only the trace of the snake or the stray dog in themselves? Who will do it, when people have fallen from their high place down to the level of a beast or a machine?

Our modern age has shaped three models of a human being. For a long time yet, they will push ordinary people to transform their own lives. They are Rousseau's type of person, Goethe's type of person, and the Schopenhauer type of person. The first has the most fire, and is best suited to stir up the common people. The second is only for a few, for those thoughtful, watching natures "in the grand style" whom the crowd does not understand. The third asks the most action from anyone who wants to follow it. Only such active people can look at that model without being harmed by it. It crushes the spirit of the person who only watches and thinks, and the mob shudders at it. From the first model came a strength that led to terrible revolution, and still leads to it. In every socialist uprising, it is always Rousseau's type of person who is like Typhoeus, the giant of the old myths trapped under the volcano Etna, shaking the ground. This person is oppressed and half crushed to death by the pride of the upper classes and the heartlessness of wealth. He has been spoiled by priests and bad schooling, and he is a joke even to himself. In his need he cries out to "holy mother Nature." And suddenly he feels that she is as far away from him as the gods of the Epicureans, who were said to live far off and never care about humans. His prayers do not reach her, because he has sunk so deep into the mess of everything unnatural. With contempt, he throws away all the fancy things that only a little while ago seemed to be the truest part of his humanity: all his arts and sciences, all the refined comforts of his life. He beats his fists against the walls in whose shadow he has grown weak and rotten, and

he goes out to look for the light and the sun, the forest and the rocky cliffs. And he cries out, "Only Nature is good, only the natural man is truly human!" He despises himself and longs to rise above himself. In this state, the soul is ready to make a terrible decision. But it also calls up what is noble and rare from its very deepest depths.

Goethe's type of person is not that kind of threatening force. In a way, he is a correction and a calming medicine for the dangerous storms of feeling that Rousseau's type of person falls victim to. When Goethe himself was young, he followed the "gospel of kindly Nature" with all the passion of his soul. His Faust was the highest and boldest picture of Rousseau's type of person, at least as far as Faust's hunger for life, his discontent and longing, and his dealings with the demons of the heart could be shown. But what comes out of all these gathered storm-clouds? Not a single flash of lightning! And this is where the new model of a human being begins: the person as Goethe saw him. You might have expected Faust to live a life of constant suffering, as a rebel and a rescuer. You might have expected him to be the force that says "no" because it comes from goodness, a genius of destruction, both religious and devilish, set against his companion, who has nothing devilishly grand about him at all. Of course, Faust could not get rid of this companion. He had to both use and despise the companion's evil, destructive doubting. That is the tragic fate of all rebels who try to set the world free. But it is wrong to expect anything like this. Here Goethe's type of person goes a different way from Rousseau's. He hates all violence, all sudden change, which means he hates all action. And so the one who was supposed to rescue the whole world turns into someone who just travels around the whole world. All the riches of life and nature, all of the ancient world, with its arts, myths and sciences, pass before his eager eyes. His deepest desires are woken up and satisfied. Even Helen, the most beautiful woman of legend, cannot hold him any longer. And then the moment must come

that his mocking companion has been waiting for. At a lovely spot on the earth, his flight comes to an end. His wings drop, and Mephistopheles is right beside him. When the German stops being Faust, the greatest danger is that he will become a narrow-minded conformist and fall into the hands of the devil. Only heavenly powers can save him then. As I said, Goethe's type of person is the great watcher and thinker, done in the grand style. The only thing that keeps him from dying of boredom is feeding on all the great and memorable things that have ever existed, and living from one desire to the next. He is not a man of action. And when he does take his place among people of action, the way things are, you can be sure nothing good will come of it. Think, for example, of how eagerly Goethe wrote for the theatre! And you can also be sure that "things as they are" will not change at all. Goethe's type of person is a peace-making spirit who wants to keep things as they are. But he is in danger of sinking into a narrow-minded conformist, just as Rousseau's type of person can easily turn into a Catiline, a violent rebel. All his good qualities would be improved by adding a little raw force and wild passion. Goethe seems to have seen where the weakness and danger of his creation lay. This is clear from what the character Jarno says to Wilhelm Meister: "You are bitter and bad-tempered, and that is actually a very good thing. If you could just once become truly angry, it would be even better."

To put it plainly, you have to become truly angry so that things can get better. The picture of the Schopenhauer type of person can help us here. The Schopenhauer type of person chooses, of his own free will, to take on the pain of telling the truth. This pain works to put out his selfish personal will and to prepare him for the complete change of his whole being. Bringing about that change is the hidden meaning of life. Other people see this openness in him as a sign of spite. That is because they think the most important human duty is to protect their tricks and pretending, and they think anyone who breaks their toys is

simply being nasty. They are tempted to shout at such a person what Faust says to Mephistopheles:

"So against the living, never-ending force that creates, you coldly and scornfully raise your fist from hell."

And a person who wanted to live the way Schopenhauer taught would look more like Mephistopheles, the devil, than like Faust. At least, that is how it looks to our weak modern eyes, which always see something wicked in any kind of saying no. But there is a kind of saying no, and a kind of tearing down, that comes from a strong longing for holiness and for being set free. Schopenhauer was the first thinker to teach this longing to our worldly generation, which cares nothing for holy things. Everything that can be denied deserves to be denied. And real honesty means believing in a state of things that cannot be denied, a state in which there is no lie. The honest person feels that what he does has a meaning beyond this physical world. It can only be explained by the laws of a different and higher life. In the deepest sense, it is a way of saying yes, even if everything he does seems to go completely against the rules of the life we live now. So it must lead to constant suffering. But he knows what the old mystic Meister Eckhart knew: "The fastest animal that will carry you to perfection is suffering." I would think that anyone who keeps such an ideal in front of him must feel his heart grow wider. He will burn with the wish to become the Schopenhauer type of person. Such a person is pure and wonderfully patient. In his mind he is full of a fire that eats everything up, and he is far away from the cold, scornful so-called neutrality of the so-called scientific man. He stands so high above any twisted, gloomy view of life that he offers himself as the first victim of the truth he has found, knowing deeply how much suffering his honesty will bring him. His courage will destroy his happiness on earth. He must become an enemy of the people he loves and of the institutions he grew up in. He must spare neither people nor things, however

much it hurts him. He will be misunderstood, and people will think he is on the side of forces he hates. In his search for what is right, he will seem wrong by human standards. But he must comfort himself with the words his teacher Schopenhauer once used: "A happy life is impossible. The highest thing a person can hope for is a heroic life. That is the life of someone who is always fighting against impossible odds for the good of others, and who wins in the end without anyone thanking him. When the battle is over, he stands like the Prince in Gozzi's play 'The Raven,' with dignity and nobility in his eyes, but turned to stone. His memory lives on and will be honoured like a hero's. His will, which has been beaten down all his life by hard work and struggle, by bad treatment and ingratitude, melts away into Nirvana, into peaceful nothingness." Such a heroic life, with all its 'beating down' of the self, has very little to do with the shabby ideas of the people who talk about it the most. These people hold celebrations in memory of great men. They believe that a great man is great in the same way that they are small. They think he is great either because he used his talents to please himself, or because he blindly and mechanically obeyed some force inside him. So, they reason, a person who does not have the talent or feel the force has just as much right to be small as the other has to be great. But "talent" and "force" are worthless words. They are just ways of running away from an inner voice. They insult the person who has listened to that voice, the great man. He, of all people, will not let anything simply be given to him or forced on him. He knows as well as any smaller person how easy life can be, and how soft a bed he could lie on if he took the pleasant, normal path with himself and with the people around him. All the rules and customs of humanity are set up so that the strong feeling of being alive gets lost in endless distractions. So why does he so firmly choose the opposite, and try to truly feel life, which means to suffer from life? Because he sees that people will tempt him to betray himself. He sees that there is a sort of silent agreement to pull him out of

his hiding place. He will prick up his ears, pull himself together, and say, "I will stay my own." Little by little he comes to understand what a frightening decision this is. For he must go down into the depths of existence with a row of strange questions on his lips: "Why am I alive? What lesson do I have to learn from life? How did I become what I am, and why do I suffer in this existence?" He is troubled, and he sees that no one else is troubled in the same way. Instead, he sees that the hands of the people around him reach out eagerly toward the make-believe show of politics. Or else they are on the stage themselves, playing many roles in many costumes: as young men, grown men and old men, as fathers, citizens, priests, merchants and officials. They are all busy with the comedy they are acting in, and they never think about their own selves. If you asked them, "What do you live for?" they would all answer at once, with pride: "To become a good citizen, or professor, or politician." And yet they already are something that can never be changed. And why are they exactly this? Oh, and why nothing better? A person who sees his life only as a moment in the development of a people, or a nation, or a science, and who wants to belong only to a story of endless change, has not understood the lesson of existence and must learn it all over again. This never-ending "becoming something" is a lying puppet show in which people have forgotten themselves. It is the force that blows each person's individual self away to the four winds. It is the endless, childish game that time, like a big baby, plays in front of us, and plays with us. The heroism of honesty means refusing to be time's toy any longer. Everything caught up in endless change is a hollow fake, worthless and shallow. A person can only solve the riddle of himself by "being" something fixed and unchangeable. He begins to test how deeply both endless change and true being are rooted in him. And a frightening task lies before his soul: to destroy the first, and to drag all the falseness of things out into the light. He wants to know everything. But he does not want this to feed a refined taste, like Goethe's type of

person, who enjoys the endless variety of life from a safe distance. Instead, he himself is the first sacrifice he offers up. The heroic person does not think about his own happiness or misery, his good points or his faults, or about being the measure of all things. He no longer hopes for anything for himself, and he will accept everything that follows from having no hope. His strength lies in forgetting himself. If he thinks about himself at all, it is only to measure the huge distance between where he is and where he is aiming, and to look at everything he has left behind as worthless rubbish. The old thinkers searched for happiness and truth with all their strength. And there is a cruel rule in nature that no one will find the thing he cannot stop searching for. But the person who looks for the lie in everything, and who willingly makes friends with unhappiness, will have a wonderful awakening from illusion. Something that cannot be put into words hovers near him, and next to it, truth and happiness are only false idols born out of the darkness. The earth loses its heavy pull on him. The events and powers of the earth become like a dream, and a slow brightness spreads around him like a summer evening. It is as if the person who sees these things is starting to wake up, and everything around him was only the clouds of a passing dream. Someday those clouds will disappear, and then it will be day.

V.

But I promised to talk about Schopenhauer as a *teacher*, as far as my own experience goes. It is not nearly enough just to paint a picture of the ideal human being, which is what Schopenhauer would call the "Platonic idea," the perfect pattern of a person. That is especially true because my picture is not a complete one. The hardest job is still ahead. I have to explain how a new set of duties can grow out of this ideal, and how such a lofty, other-worldly goal can fit together with ordinary everyday action. In short, I have to prove that the ideal can

actually *teach* us something. Otherwise, people might think it is just a blissful or dizzying vision that comes to us in a few rare moments and then leaves us even more disappointed than before. It is true that the ideal first affects us in this way, when we suddenly start to see the difference between light and darkness, between joy and disgust. That experience is as old as ideals themselves. But we should not stand in the doorway for long. We should soon move past these first stages and ask, seriously and clearly: "Is it possible to bring this unbelievably high goal close enough to us that it can teach us, can 'lead us out,' as well as lift us up?" We need to ask this so that Goethe's famous words do not come true for us. Goethe said: "People are born into a limited situation. They can understand goals that are simple, right in front of them, and clearly defined, and they are used to working with tools that are close at hand. But as soon as they step out into the open, they no longer know what they want or what they should do. It makes no difference whether they are confused by the huge number of things around them or thrown off balance by how big and important those things are. It is always their bad luck to be pushed into reaching for something they cannot get through any ordinary effort of their own." Someone could raise an objection against the Schopenhauer type of person, and it might seem reasonable. They could say that this person's greatness and dignity will only make our heads spin and cut us off from the busy, practical people of the world. The everyday round of duties, the quiet steady flow of life, would be gone. One person might get used to living in an unwilling split, that is, in a constant fight with himself. He would become unsteady, weaker every day, and less able to get anything done. Another person might give up all action on principle and barely be able to stand watching other people being active. There is always great danger when a person carries too heavy a load and cannot truly *finish* any of his duties. Stronger people may be broken by it. Weaker people, who are the majority, sink into a

lazy habit of just thinking and dreaming. And in the end, because of that laziness, they even lose the ability to think deeply at all.

About objections like these, I will admit that our work has barely started. As far as I can tell, I see only one thing clearly and for certain: that ideal picture can give you and me a chain of duties that we really can carry out. Some of us can already feel the pull of those duties. But before I can explain in plain words the rule that sums up this new set of duties, I need to start with the following thoughts.

The deepest thinkers of every age have felt pity for animals. They pity them because animals suffer from life but do not have the power to turn the sting of that suffering back on themselves and understand their own existence at its deepest level. Seeing suffering that is blind, that does not understand itself, is the source of the strongest feelings we have. In many parts of the world, people have believed that the souls of guilty people have passed into animals. They believed that this blind suffering, which at first glance makes us feel such pity, actually has a clear meaning and purpose in the true fairness of the gods: it is punishment and a way of paying for wrongdoing. And it is a heavy punishment indeed, to be sentenced to live in hunger and need in the body of an animal, and never in this life to become aware of oneself. I can think of no harder fate than that of a wild animal. It is driven through the forest by the sharp pain of hunger, which rarely leaves it in peace. And even peace is a kind of torture: it is just the bloated feeling after eating disgusting food, which it may have won in a deadly fight with other animals. To hold on to life blindly and madly, with no other goal; not to know the reason for one's punishment, or even that one is being punished at all; and more than that, to crave it as if it were a pleasure, with all the twisted desire of a fool: that is what it means to be an animal. If the whole of nature builds up toward human beings, it is to show us that humans are needed to rescue nature from the curse of animal life. In human beings, existence

can find a mirror in which it sees itself, and in that mirror life no longer looks blind, but shows its real, deepest meaning. But we should think carefully about where the animal ends and the human begins, the human being who is Nature's one real concern. As long as anyone wants life simply because it is pleasant in itself, he has not lifted his eyes beyond the limited outlook of an animal. He only wants, more consciously, what the animal chases by blind instinct. That is true of all of us for most of our lives. We do not shake off the animal in us. We are animals ourselves, suffering without knowing why.

But there are moments when we do know. Then the clouds part, and we see how we, along with the rest of nature, are pushing and straining toward the true human being, as toward something that stands far above us. We look around us and behind us, and we are afraid of the sudden flood of light. The animals are changed and lit up in a new way, and so are we. Think of the huge wanderings of humankind across the wild places of the world, the cities people build and the wars they fight, the way they keep coming together, splitting apart and mixing again, the beliefs they follow blindly, the ways they cheat and trick one another, the cries of pain and the shouts of victory. All of this is just the animal living on inside us. It is as if the training of human beings had been held back on purpose, and their promise of becoming truly aware of themselves had been blocked. In fact, it is as if Nature, after longing for the human being for so long and finally reaching him through her hard work, now pulled back from him in fear and wanted to go back to a state of blind instinct. Oh, Nature needs knowledge, yet she shrinks back from the very knowledge she needs. The flame of knowledge flickers unsteadily, afraid of its own brightness, and grabs at a thousand other things before it reaches the one thing knowledge is really needed for. There are moments when we all know that our most carefully planned ways of living are really

built only to give us a hiding place from our true task in life. We want to hide our heads somewhere, as if our conscience, which sees everything like the hundred-eyed giant Argus of the old Greek stories, could not track us down. We are quick to hand our hearts over to serving the state, or making money, or social duties, or scientific work, just so that we no longer have to own them ourselves. We are more willing, and more instinctive, slaves to the hard day's work than simply staying alive requires, because it seems even more necessary to us not to be in a position where we could think. Everyone is in a hurry, because everyone is running away from himself. And everyone hides this just as much, because we want to look content and hide our misery from sharper eyes. So we all share a need for a new set of ringing words, like a new set of bells, to hang in the temple of life and clang loudly for its noisy party. We all know the strange way unpleasant memories suddenly crowd in on us, and how we try our hardest to push them out of our minds with loud talk and wild gestures. But the gestures and talk of our everyday life make you think we are all in this state, scared of any memory and of any look inside ourselves. What is it that keeps troubling us? What is the mosquito that will not let us sleep? There are spirits all around us. Every moment of life has something to tell us, but we refuse to listen to these spirit voices. When we are quiet and alone, we are afraid something will be whispered in our ears. So we hate the quiet, and we numb our senses by being with other people.

As I said, we do understand this sometimes. Then we stand amazed at the spinning and the rushing and the worry, at the whole dream that we call our life. We seem to fear waking up, and as the moment of waking gets closer, our dreams also become sharper and more restless. But we also feel that we are too weak to bear these deep, close moments for long, and that we are not the people whom all of nature is looking to as her rescuers. It is already something to be able to lift

our heads, even just for a moment, and see the stream we are sunk in so deeply. We cannot win even this short moment of waking up by our own strength. We must be lifted up. And who are the ones who will lift us?

They are the honest, true people who have driven out the animal in themselves: the thinkers, the artists and the saints. Nature, which, as the old Latin saying goes, never makes a jump, made her one single leap when she created them. It was a leap of joy, because she feels for the first time that she has reached her goal. There she starts to see that she must learn not to set goals above herself, and that she has played the game of always passing from one stage to the next for too long. This knowledge changes her and lights her up, and on her face rests the gentle tiredness of evening, which people call "beauty." The words she speaks after this change are like a great light shining over all of life. And the highest wish any human being can reach is to keep listening to her voice, with ears that truly hear. If someone thinks of everything that Schopenhauer, for example, must have heard in his life, he may well say to himself: "My deaf ears, my weak understanding and my shriveled heart, everything that I call mine, how I despise them! To be unable to fly, and only able to flap one's wings! To look up above oneself and have no power to rise! To know the road that leads to the thinker's wide view, and to stagger back after a few steps! If there were just one day when that great wish could come true, how gladly we would pay for it with the rest of our life! To climb as high as any thinker ever has, into the pure, icy mountain air, where there is no fog and no veil, and where the inner makeup of things is shown in a bare and piercing clearness! Just thinking about this makes the soul endlessly alone. But if its wish came true, if its gaze fell just once, straight as a ray of light, on the things below, if shame and worry and craving were gone forever, then there would be no words for how it would feel. There would be no words for the mysterious, calm feeling

with which, like Schopenhauer's soul, it would look down on the huge, strange picture-writing of existence and the frozen, stony teachings about endless change. It would look down not like the gloomy, brooding night, but like the red, glowing day that pours over the earth. And what a fate it is to know only enough about the steadiness and happiness of the true thinker to feel the total unsteadiness and unhappiness of the false thinker, the one 'who lives in longing without hope'! What a fate it is to know that you are the fruit of a tree that stands too much in the shade ever to become ripe, and to see a world of sunshine in front of you where you are not allowed to go!"

Here, if anywhere, there would be enough sorrow to make such a person jealous and bitter. But he will turn away, so that he does not ruin his soul with a useless longing. And he will discover a new set of duties.

Now I can answer the question of whether it is possible to come closer to the great ideal of the Schopenhauer type of person "through some ordinary effort of our own." First of all, the new duties are certainly not the duties of a hermit who lives alone. Instead, they mean belonging to a huge community. This community is not held together by outside rules or forms. It is held together by one basic idea, the idea of culture. But culture counts here only in so far as it gives each of us one single task: to bring the thinker, the artist and the saint out into the light, both inside ourselves and in the world around us, and in this way to work toward the completion of Nature. Nature needs the artist, just as she needs the thinker, for a purpose that goes beyond the physical world. That purpose is to explain herself. Through them she can get a clear, sharp picture of what she only saw dimly during her confused time of change, and so she can finally become aware of herself. Goethe said this in a proud but deep way. He showed that all of Nature's efforts are only worth something when the artist understands her stammering words, meets her halfway, and

says out loud what she really means. "I have often said, and I will say it often again," he cries out in one place, "the final purpose of all natural and human activity is dramatic poetry. Otherwise the material is of no use at all."

Finally, Nature needs the saint. In the saint, the self has melted away. The suffering in his life is, in practice, no longer felt as his own private pain. Instead, it becomes the source of the deepest sympathy and closeness with every living creature. He sees the wonderful change of scene that the comedy of endless change never manages to reach: the moment when, at last, the high state of humanity is reached, the state that all of nature is struggling toward, so that she can be set free from herself. Without doubt, all of us are closely connected to the saint, just as we are to the thinker and the artist. There are moments, like sparks from the clear fire of love, when in their light we no longer understand the word "I." There is something beyond our own being that, for those moments, crosses over to our side. And this is why, deep in our hearts, we long for a bridge from here to there. In our ordinary state we can do nothing to help bring about the new redeemer. So we hate ourselves in this state. This hatred is the root of the pessimism that Schopenhauer had to teach our age all over again, even though that pessimism is as old as the longing for culture itself. But it is only the root, not the flower. It is the foundation, not the top. It is the start of the road, not the end. Because at some point we must learn to hate something else, something bigger and more universal than our own strong self with its miserable limits, its changes and its restlessness. And that will happen when we learn to love something different from what we are able to love now. When we ourselves are taken into that high order of thinkers, artists and saints, whether in this life or in some rebirth of it, a new object for our love and our hate will also appear before us. As things are now, we have our task and our circle of duties, our hates

and our loves. For we know that culture asks us to prepare for the coming of the Schopenhauer type of person. And this is the "use" we are supposed to make of him. We must know what obstacles stand in the way and knock them out of our path. In fact, we must fight a never-ending war against everything that held back our growth and stopped us from becoming the Schopenhauer type of person ourselves.

VI.

Sometimes it is harder to agree with something than to understand it. Many people will feel this when they think about this statement: "Humanity must work without stopping to produce individual great people: this, and nothing else, is its job." We would like to apply to society and its goals a fact that is true everywhere in the world of animals and plants. There, progress depends only on the higher individual types. These are rarer, but they last longer, they are more complex, and they produce more. But the usual ideas about what society is for completely block the way. We can easily understand how it works in nature, where one species at some point turns into a higher one. There, the goal of evolution cannot be the high level reached by the whole crowd, or the newest types that have appeared. Instead, the goal lies in what look like accidental beings, born here and there when conditions happen to be good. It should be just as easy to understand that humanity has a duty to create good conditions for the birth of a new savior, simply because people are able to be aware of their goal. But something always gets in their way. They think their final goal is the happiness of everyone, or of the greatest number, or the growth of a great nation. A person will quite readily decide to give up his life for the state. But he will be much slower to say yes if a single person, and not a state, asks him for that sacrifice. It seems unreasonable that one person should exist for the sake of another. People say: "Let it rather

be for the sake of everyone else, or at least as many people as possible!" What an honest judge! As if it made more sense to let the majority decide a question about value and meaning! Because the real question is this: "How can your life, the life of one person, keep the highest value and the deepest meaning? And how can it be wasted as little as possible?" The answer: only by living for the good of the rarest and most valuable types, not for the good of the majority. Taken one by one, the majority are the least valuable types. This way of thinking should be planted and grown in the mind of every young man. He should see himself both as one of Nature's failures and as proof of her bigger plans. He should say: "Nature has not done a good job with me. But I will honour her great plan by helping it succeed better."

With these thoughts he will step into the world of culture, which is born from every person's knowledge of himself and from his dissatisfaction with himself. He will come forward and say out loud: "I see something above me, something higher and more human than I am. Let everyone help me to reach it, just as I will help everyone who understands and suffers the way I do. Let us work so that at last a person may appear who feels that his knowledge and love, his vision and power, are complete and without limits. Such a person, in his wholeness, would be one with nature, and would be the critic and judge of all existence." It is hard to give anyone this brave awareness of himself, because love cannot be taught. Only from love does the soul gain two things. First, it gains the clear sight that makes it look down on itself. Second, it gains the wish to look toward a higher self that is still hidden, and to climb up toward it with all its strength. And so the person who puts his hope in a future great person takes his first step into true culture. The sign of this is shame or annoyance with yourself. It is hating your own narrowness. It is a deep sympathy with the genius who keeps lifting his head again out of our foggy

wastelands. It is a feeling for everything that is struggling to come alive. It is the firm belief that Nature must be helped in her time of need to push forward toward that true human being, no matter how badly she seems to be doing, and no matter how her amazing forms and projects turn out. Seen this way, the people we live among are like the broken pieces of some precious statues, which cry out: "Come and help us! Put us back together, because we long to be whole."

I called this inner state the "first step into true culture." Now I have to describe the effects of the "second step," which is a harder job. This second step is the move from the inner life to judging the outer world. A person must turn his eyes outward and look for, in the great moving world, the same longing for culture that he knows directly from his own experience. He must use his own efforts and hopes like an alphabet, to read and understand the efforts and hopes of humanity. But he cannot stop here either; he must go higher still. Culture asks of him not only that inner experience, and not only that judging of the outside world around him, but finally action as well, to top them all off. It asks him to fight for culture against all the influences, habits and institutions in which he cannot find his own goal. And that goal is the production of genius.

Anyone who can reach this second step will see how very rare and hard to notice the knowledge of that goal is, even though everyone keeps busy with culture and puts huge amounts of work into serving it. Amazed, he asks himself: "Isn't this knowledge absolutely necessary after all? Can we say that Nature reaches her goal if people have a wrong idea about the purpose of their own work?" And someone who strongly believes that Nature, without knowing it, fits the means to the goal will probably answer right away: "Yes. People can think and say whatever they want about their final goal. Their blind instinct will still show them the right path." It takes some experience of life to be able to argue against this. But let a person become convinced of

the real goal of culture, which is to produce the true human being and nothing else. And let him notice that, behind all the show and bragging of today's culture, the conditions for producing such a person are nothing but a constant "fight among wild animals." Then he will see that we badly need a conscious will to take the place of that blind instinct. There is another reason too. We must stop this unclear urge from being turned toward completely different goals, in a direction where our highest goal can no longer be reached. Because we must watch out for a certain kind of culture that is misused and lives like a parasite. The forces that are doing the most right now to spread culture have other ways of thinking, and these keep their connection to culture from being pure and free of selfish interest.

The first of these powers is the self-interest of business people. Business needs the help of culture, and it helps culture in return, but only at a price: it gets to decide what culture is for and how far it may go. Their favourite chain of reasoning goes like this: "We must have as much knowledge and education as possible. That means as much demand for it as possible. That means as much production as possible. And that means as much wealth and happiness as possible." This is the tempting formula. The people who preach it would describe education as the kind of understanding that turns a person, through and through, into a "child of his age" in what he wants and how he gets it, and that gives him control over the best ways of making money. Its goal would be to produce people made for the money market, the way money is made to pass easily from hand to hand. In their view, the more such people there are, the happier the nation. So the purpose of modern school systems is to make each person as easy to use in the money market as his nature allows, and to give him the chance of the greatest success and happiness he can squeeze out of his own particular store of knowledge. He is expected to have, thanks to his broad education, just enough sense of his own worth to know what he can

demand from life. And he is told that there is a natural and necessary link between "brains and property," and that this link is not only real but also a moral duty. Any education is hated that leads to loneliness, that aims at something higher than making money, and that takes a long time. People look suspiciously at such serious education and call it mere "refined selfishness" or "immoral love of pleasure." The opposite, of course, is what ordinary morality holds: education should be finished quickly so that the chase after money can start quickly, and it should be just thorough enough to let a person make a lot of money. How much education you get is decided by business interests. In short, they say: "A person has a rightful claim to happiness in this world; that is the only reason education is needed."

The second power is the self-interest of the state. The state wants culture spread as widely and as evenly as possible, and it has the strongest weapons to get what it wants. If the state is strong enough not only to start education but also to control it and carry its whole weight, then this wide spread of culture will only serve the state in its competition with other states. Today, a "highly civilised state" usually means one that sets free the mental and spiritual powers of a generation only as far as they are useful to the institutions already in place. It is like a mountain stream that is broken up by banks and channels, so that its weakened flow can turn mill-wheels; at full strength it would be more dangerous than useful to the mills. And so "setting free" ends up meaning "chaining up." Look, for example, at what the state's self-interest has done to Christianity. Christianity is one of the purest expressions of the drive toward culture and toward producing the saint. But it was used in countless ways to turn the mills of those in power, and so it slowly grew sick at heart, false and rotten, and ended up working against its own original purpose. Its last stage, the German Reformation, would have been nothing more than the last

sudden flicker of a dying flame, if it had not drawn new strength and light from the clashing and burning of nations at war.

The third group that favours culture is made up of all the people who know that their own character is unpleasant or boring, and who want to cover it up with so-called fancy manners. Words, gestures, clothes, etiquette and other such outward things are meant to give a false impression, so that the inside is judged by the outside. I sometimes think that modern people are endlessly bored with one another and turn to the arts to make themselves interesting. They let their artists cook them up into tasty, tempting dishes. They soak themselves in the spices of East and West, and in the end they give off a very interesting smell. They are ready to suit every taste, and everyone will be served, whether he wants something in good taste or bad, something noble or crude, Greek or Chinese, tragedy or cheap street theatre. Among modern people who want to interest others and be interested at any cost, the most famous cooks are the French; the worst are the Germans. Really, this is more of a comfort for the Germans. We have no reason to mind if the French look down on us for being dull, clumsy and impolite. It reminds us of the native man who longs for a ring through his nose, and then goes on to tattoo himself.

Here I have to wander off the subject for a moment. Clearly, many things in Germany have changed since the recent war with France, and new demands for German culture have been brought back from it. For many people, the war was their first trip into the more elegant half of the world. And how wonderfully humble the winner is, not too proud to learn something about culture from the loser! The decorative arts in particular are to be reformed to copy our more refined neighbours. The German home is to be furnished like a French one. A "sound taste" is to be forced on the German language through an Academy built on the French model, so as to shake off the questionable influence of Goethe. That is the opinion of our new Berlin

Academy member, Dubois-Raymond. Our theatres have slowly and solemnly been heading toward the same goal. Even the elegant German scholar has now been discovered. So now we must expect that everything that does not follow this law of elegance, such as our music, our tragedy and our philosophy, will be pushed aside as "un-German." But nobody would need to lift a finger for German culture if German culture (which the Germans still have to find) meant nothing more than the little niceties that make life prettier, including the skills of the dancing teacher and the furniture maker. Nor would anyone need to bother if the Germans only cared about academic rules of language and a general air of politeness. The recent war, and comparing themselves with the French, do not seem to have stirred any deeper wishes. I suspect that, for now, the German badly wants to be free of the old duties placed on him by his wonderful gifts of seriousness and depth. He would much rather play the clown and the monkey, and learn the tricks that make life entertaining. But there is no worse insult to the German spirit than to treat it like wax that can be pressed into any elegant shape.

Sadly, a good many Germans will let themselves be shaped like this. So someone has to keep telling them, over and over, until they finally listen: "The old German way is not yours anymore. It was hard and rough, and it pushed back against whoever tried to shape it. But it is still the most valuable material there is. Only the greatest sculptors can work with it, because only they deserve to use it. What you have inside you now is soft, mushy stuff. Make whatever you like out of it, elegant dolls and fascinating idols. Richard Wagner's words will still be true: 'The German is awkward and clumsy when he tries to be polite. But he rises high above everyone else when he starts to catch fire.'" All the elegant people have good reason to be afraid of this German fire. One day it may burn them up, along with all their wax dolls and idols. The love of "fancy manners" that is everywhere in

Germany may have a deeper cause. People grab, out of breath, at whatever the moment can give them. They are in such a hurry that they pick the fruit while it is still green. The race and the struggle carve lines into their foreheads and put the same stamp on everything they do. It is as if there were a poison inside them that would not let them breathe. They rush around in a mess, like nervous slaves of the "three m's": the moment, the mode (that is, fashion), and the mob. They can see only too clearly that they lack dignity and do not fit their place, so they need a fake elegance to hide the disease that is eating them up fast. The fashionable wish for "fancy manners" goes hand in hand with a disgust for what human beings are really like inside. The manners are there to hide something, and our inner nature is the thing that gets hidden. These days, education means hiding human misery and wickedness: our fights like wild animals, our endless greed, and our shameless way of enjoying what we get. When I have pointed out that Germany has no real culture, people have often thrown this back at me: "Of course there's none. That's only natural, because up to now the Germans have been too poor and too modest. Once our people are rich and sure of themselves, they will have a culture too." Belief can often make people happy. But this particular belief makes me unhappy. I feel that the culture they are so hopeful about, a culture of wealth, politeness and elegant cover-ups, is the bitterest enemy of the German culture I believe in. Anyone who has to live among Germans suffers from how terribly gray and dull their lives are. They have no shape, they are sluggish and clumsy, and worse still, they are envious, secretive and unclean. Such a person is troubled by their built-in love of what is false and low, and by the way they sadly copy a good foreign thing and turn it into a bad German one. And now, on top of all that, comes the feverish restlessness, the chase after profit and success, the way people value only the present moment. It makes you furious to think that this whole sickness can never be cured. It can only be painted over by this kind of "worship of

the interesting." And this is happening among a people that produced a Schopenhauer and a Wagner! And it will produce others like them, unless we are blindly fooling ourselves. After all, doesn't the very fact that such men existed prove that these powers are still sleeping in the German spirit right now? Or will they turn out to be exceptions, the last heirs of the qualities that used to be called German? I can see nothing here that would help me answer. So I return to my main argument, which my doubts and worries made me wander away from. I have not yet listed all the forces that support culture without seeing what culture is really for, which is producing genius. I have named three: the self-interest of business, the self-interest of the state, and the self-interest of those who wrap themselves in the cloak of "fancy manners." The fourth is the self-interest of science, together with the special nature of the people who serve it: the learned.

Science stands to wisdom the way everyday morality stands to holiness. Science is cold and dry. It has no love, and it knows nothing of deep discontent or longing. It harms the people who serve it while it helps itself, because it stamps its own character onto them and dries up their humanity. As long as what we really mean by culture is the progress of science, science will walk past the great, suffering human being and harden its heart against him. Science only sees problems of knowledge. Suffering is something foreign to its world, something it cannot understand, even though suffering is just as much a problem!

Suppose someone gets used to writing down every experience as a set of questions and answers, translating it into the language of "bare reasoning." He will soon shrivel up and rattle his bones like a skeleton. We all know this. So why don't young people shudder at these human skeletons? Why do they throw themselves blindly into science, with no real reason and no sense of limits? It cannot be the so-called "drive for truth." How could anyone have a drive toward knowledge that is pure, cold and aimed at nothing? Anyone who looks

without prejudice can see the real driving forces only too clearly. It makes good sense to cut the professor open and examine him, since he himself is used to poking at and taking apart everything, even the most precious things! To be honest, the scholar is a mixture of many different urges and pulls. He is made of cheap metal through and through.

First, take a strong and growing hunger for adventures of the mind, the pull of the new and rare over the old and boring. Add to this a certain pleasure in sniffing out the trail of an argument and beating the bushes where that old fox, Thought, is hiding. What he wants is not so much the truth as the hunt for the truth, and his main pleasure is in surrounding it and killing it with skill. Add, third, a love of arguing, which lets a person show off his own self against everyone else. The fight is what matters, and his own victory is the goal. Truth is just the excuse. The urge to discover "particular truths" also plays a big part in the professor. It comes from his obedience to certain people in power, classes, opinions, churches and governments. He feels that he gains something for himself when he brings the truth over to their side.

The next qualities of the scholar are less common, but you can still find them. First, there is plain bluntness and a liking for simple things. This is very valuable if it is more than just clumsiness and being unable to lie, since lying takes a certain amount of natural cleverness. (In fact, we can be wary of someone who is too obviously clever and quick, and we may doubt whether he is sincere.) Apart from that, this bluntness is usually worth little, and it is rarely any help to knowledge. That is because it follows tradition and tells the truth only about things that do not matter, the "indifferent things." In those cases it is lazier to tell the truth than to ignore it. Everything new means something old has to be unlearned. So your blunt man will respect the old beliefs, and he will accuse the person bringing the

new message of lacking common sense, "the sense of what is right." The theory of Copernicus faced the same kind of opposition, and that opposition had likelihood and custom on its side. When a professor often hates philosophy, what he mainly hates is the long chains of reasoning and the artificial-looking proofs. In the end, the scholars of every age have a fixed boundary. Beyond it, cleverness is not allowed, and anything beyond it is suspected of plotting against honesty.

Second, the scholar sees things close up very clearly, but he is very shortsighted about things that are far away and general. A professor's field of view is usually very small, and he has to keep his eye right up against the object. To move from one point he has already looked at to another one, he has to shift his whole seeing machinery. He cuts a picture into small pieces, like a man at the theatre looking through opera glasses. He sees a head here, a bit of a costume there, but never the whole thing. For him the separate pieces never join together. He only works out in his head how they must be connected, and so he never gets a strong overall impression. For example, he judges a book by certain paragraphs or sentences or mistakes, because that is all he can do. Faced with an oil painting, he will end up seeing nothing but a heap of smears of paint.

Third, his likes and dislikes are dull and ordinary, just what everyone else has. That is why he especially loves history: he can read his own motives into the actions of people in the past. A mole feels most at home in a molehill. He is wary of all clever and bold theories. But he works hard at digging up all the ordinary, everyday motives of the past, because he feels at one with them. He is usually completely unable to understand or value what is rare or unusual, what is great or what is real.

Fourth, he lacks feeling, and that is what makes him able to cut open living animals for experiments. He knows nothing of the kind of suf-

fering that leads to real understanding, and he is not afraid to walk where other people shudder. He is cold, and he can easily seem cruel. People think he is brave, but he is not. He is no braver than a mule that walks along a cliff edge simply because it does not feel dizzy.

Fifth, he is shy and thinks little of himself. Even though he lives in a wretched little back alley of the world, he does not feel he is sacrificing or giving anything up. Deep down in his heart, he often seems to know that he is not a creature that flies but one that crawls. And this makes him seem almost touching and sad.

Sixth, he is loyal to his teachers and leaders. He truly wants to help them, and he knows the best way to do that is with the truth. He is grateful by nature, because it was only through them that he got into the great hall of science. He would never have got in by his own path. Today, anyone who can open up a new area of study, where his less gifted followers can do some useful work, becomes famous straight away, because such a huge crowd rushes in after him. These grateful pupils are certainly a bad thing for their teacher, because they all copy him. His faults are blown up larger in their small selves, and his good points shrink in the same way.

Seventh, he will follow the usual path of all professors. On this path, a feeling for truth comes from a lack of ideas, and once the wheel starts turning, it just keeps going. People like this become collectors, explainers of other people's texts, makers of indexes and of collections of dried plants. They poke around in one special area because it has never occurred to them that there are others. Their hard work has something of the huge, mindless stupidity of gravity, which just keeps pulling. And that is why they often manage to finish their work.

Eighth, he dreads boredom. The true thinker wants nothing more than free time, but the professor is afraid of it, because he does not know what to do with it. Books are his comfort. He listens to every-

body's different ideas and keeps himself entertained all day. He especially picks books that have something to do with him personally, books that stir up some feeling of liking or disliking. These are books about himself or his position, or about his political, artistic, or even grammar opinions. If he has mastered even one area of knowledge, he will never lack a way to swat away the flies of boredom.

Ninth, there is the motive of earning a living, or really, "the cry of the empty stomach." Truth is used directly as a way to get promoted, when it can be reached. Or it is used as a way to win the favour of those who hand out honours, and bread. But this is only true of "particular truths," the ones that serve someone's interests. There is a deep gap between the truths that pay, which many people serve, and the truths that do not pay. Only a few people give their lives to those, people whose motto is not "the belly is what feeds the mind."

Tenth, there is respect for fellow professors and fear of upsetting them. This is a higher and rarer motive than the last one, though it is not uncommon. All the members of this club keep a jealous watch to make sure that any truth, which can mean so much bread and honour and position, is properly named after the person who found it. One professor honours another for the truth he has discovered, so that he can demand the same payment back if he ever finds one himself. Untruth and error are loudly blown up and shot down, so that there will not be too many workers in the field. Now and then, the real truth will be shot down instead, so that a few bold and stubborn errors can be put on display for a while. And there is never a shortage of "moral quirks," which people used to call plain dishonesty.

Eleventh, there is the "scholar out of vanity," who is fairly rare now. He will get hold of a special area for himself one way or another, and study odd and curious things, especially if they require unusual spending, travel, research, or contact with every part of the world. He

is perfectly happy with the honour of being seen as a curiosity himself. He never dreams of making a living from his learned studies.

Twelfth, there is the "scholar for fun." He loves to look for knots, or puzzles, in knowledge and to untie them. But he does not do it too hard, in case he loses the playful spirit of the game. So he never gets to the depths. Still, he often notices something that the microscope-like eyes of the scientist who works just for his daily bread never see.

Last of all, I could speak of the "drive toward true fairness" as one more reason why a scholar does his work. But someone might answer me that this noble drive comes from somewhere beyond the ordinary world. They would say it is too hard to tell apart from the other motives, and that ordinary human minds cannot really understand it. So I will leave this thirteenth item with a hopeful wish: that this drive may be less rare in professors than it seems to be. Because even one spark from the fire of true fairness, landing in a professor's soul, is enough to light it up and make it clean. After that he can never rest again. He is pushed forever out of the cold or lukewarm state in which most of his fellow scholars do their daily work.

All these ingredients, or some of them, have to be pictured as melted and pounded together to make the so-called truth-seeker. Think about it. For the sake of something completely inhuman, which is knowledge with no purpose and so with no reason behind it, a whole heap of very human little motives have been mixed together like chemicals. And what comes out is the professor. He is so lit up and changed by the glow of that pure, unearthly goal that everyone forgets all the mixing and pounding that went into making him! It is very strange. But there are times when we have to remember it. Those are the times when we must think about what the professor means for culture. Anyone who looks closely can see that, deep down and from the very start, he creates nothing new. He also has a natural hatred of

people who do create. That is why there is a never-ending war between the genius and the scholar, both in their ideas and in how they live. The scholar wants to kill Nature by taking it apart and understanding it. The genius wants to add to Nature by making a new, living Nature. A happy age does not need the scholar and does not even know about him. A sick and lazy age ranks him as its highest and most worthy person.

Who would be a good enough doctor to tell whether our time is healthy or sick? What is clear is that the professor is valued far too highly. This has bad results for the genius of the future. The professor has no kindness for that genius. He only offers cold, scornful criticism and a shrug of the shoulders, as if the genius were something weird and twisted that he has no time or wish to deal with. And so the professor, too, knows nothing about the real goal of culture.

In fact, everything we have looked at shows the same thing: the goal of culture is least understood exactly where people seem most interested in it. The state can boast as loudly as it likes about how much it does for culture. But it only helps culture so that culture will help the state. It does not understand any goal that is higher than its own comfort, or even its own survival. Business people keep demanding more education, but all they really want is more business. Then there are the leaders of fancy manners. They pretend to be culture's true helpers, and they think that all art, for example, exists only to serve their own needs. When they praise culture, they are clearly just praising themselves. About the scholar, enough has been said already. All four of these groups are competing to work out how they can help themselves by using culture. But when their own interests are not involved, they do not think about culture at all. So they have done nothing to make it easier for a genius to be born in modern times. In fact, hostility toward truly original people has grown so much that no

Socrates could ever live among us. And he certainly could never live to be seventy.

I remember saying in the third chapter that our whole modern world is not steady enough for anyone to predict that its idea of culture will last forever. It is likely that in the next thousand years people will arrive at two or three new ideas that would make people today so shocked their hair would stand on end. The belief that culture has a meaning beyond the ordinary world would not be such a frightening thing in itself. But what it might do to the ways we teach and educate people could be frightening.

You need a completely new way of thinking to look past today's schools and universities and picture the very different ones that the next two or three generations will need. Right now, all the hard work of higher education turns out only the scholar, or the government official, or the business man, or the narrow-minded conformist, or, more often, a mix of all four. The schools of the future will have a harder job. Not harder in itself, though. Their job is actually more natural, and so easier. And besides, could anything be harder than what happens now, when a young person is turned into a scholar against his own nature? No, the difficulty lies in unlearning what we already know and setting up a new goal. It will take endless effort to change the basic idea behind our present system of education. That idea has its roots in the Middle Ages, and it treats the scholar of the Middle Ages as the perfect model of culture. It is already time to set these goals before us. Some generation has to start the battle, even if a later generation gets to enjoy the victory. The lonely person who has understood this new basic idea of culture stands where the road splits in two. On the first road, his own time will welcome him. He will win prizes and rewards, powerful groups will back him, and he will have as many supporters behind him as ahead of him. When the leader calls out the word that will set them free, it will echo down every line

of the marching crowd. On that road, the first duty is to "fight in line," and the second is to treat as enemies everyone who will not "fall in." On the other road, he will find fewer companions. It is steeper and more twisting. The people on the first road laugh at him, because his path is harder and more dangerous, and they try to tempt him to cross over. Where the two roads meet, he gets mistreated, pushed aside, or left all alone. So what does any particular kind of culture mean to these different travellers? The huge crowd pushing toward its goal on the first road takes culture to mean the rules and institutions that let them move forward in an orderly way, and that keep out all the lonely, stubborn people who look toward higher and more distant goals. For the small group on the other road, culture has a completely different job. They want a strong organisation to protect them, so that the crowd does not sweep them away, and so that none of their members collapses along the way or loses heart for their great task. These lonely people must finish their work. That is why they should all stick together. And those who have a part in this plan will work to get ready, with an ever purer aim, for the birth of the genius, and will make sure the time is mature for him when he comes. Many people are meant to help with this work, even among those with second-rate talents. Only by accepting this destiny can they feel that they are living for a duty, and that their lives have a meaning and a purpose. But right now these talents are being pulled away from the road their instinct chose. They are lured by the tempting voice of "fashionable culture," which plays on their selfishness, their vanity and their weaknesses. And the spirit of the age keeps whispering its flattering advice in their ears: "Follow me, and do not go that way! Over there you are only servants and tools. Greater people will overshadow you, and there will be no room for you to be yourselves. You will be pulled on strings and loaded with chains, like slaves and machines. With me, you can enjoy your true strong self and be masters. Your talents can shine with their own light, and you can stand in the front row with a

huge crowd of followers around you. And the cheers of public opinion will make you happier than some faint breath of praise drifting down from the cold, airy heights of genius." Even the best people get caught in these traps. In the end, what makes the difference is not so much how rare and powerful their talent is. It is a certain heroic character deep down inside them, and an inner feeling that they are related to genius. For there are people who feel it as their own pain when they see the genius toiling and struggling in agony, in danger of destroying himself, or ignored because of the short-sighted selfishness of the state, the shallowness of the business men, and the cold arrogance of the professors. And I hope there may be some who understand what I meant by my sketch of Schopenhauer's fate, and for what purpose Schopenhauer can truly educate us.

VII.

But let us put aside every thought of some revolution in education in the far-off future. What needs to be done right *now*, so that our future thinker has the best chance of waking up to a life like Schopenhauer's? Such a life is hard, but it can still be lived. And what else must we find out, so that his influence on the people of his own time is more certain? And what obstacles have to be cleared away before his example can have its full effect, so that one philosopher can train another? Here we come down to practical matters.

Nature always wants to be as useful as possible, but she does not know how to find the best and easiest way to reach her goal. That is her great sorrow, and the reason for her sadness. Her urge to save herself clearly shows that she wants to give human beings a meaningful life by bringing forth the philosopher and the artist. But how unclear and weak the effect usually is that she gets from her artists and philosophers, and how rarely there is any effect at all! She is especially puzzled about how to make the philosopher useful. Her

methods are random and hesitant, and her failures are countless. Most of her philosophers never touch the common good of humanity at all. She seems to act like someone who wastes money. But the reason is not that she loves wasteful luxury; it is that she lacks experience. If she were human, she would probably never stop being unhappy with herself and her clumsy mistakes. Nature shoots the philosopher at humanity like an arrow. She does not aim; she just hopes the arrow will stick somewhere. She makes countless mistakes, and they cause her pain. She is just as wasteful in the area of culture as she is when she plants and sows seeds. She reaches her goals in a big, clumsy way, using up far too much of her strength. The artist stands in the same relation to the experts and fans of his art as a huge cannon does to a flock of sparrows. Only a fool would use a great avalanche to sweep away a little snow, or kill a man just to hit the fly on his nose. The artist and the philosopher are evidence against the way Nature picks her tools, even though they may show how wise her goals are. They reach only a few people, when they ought to reach everyone. And even those few are not hit with the same force that was used when the shot was fired. It is sad that art has to be valued so differently as a cause and as an effect: how huge it is at the start, and how faint the echo afterwards! The artist does his work as Nature tells him to, for the good of other people; there is no doubt about that. But he knows that none of those people will understand and love his work as much as he understands and loves it himself. By Nature's clumsy law, that lonely high peak of love and understanding is needed just to produce something of a lower kind. The great and noble are used as tools to produce the small and the mean. Nature is a bad manager. She spends far more than she earns, and for all her wealth she will one day go bankrupt. It would have been more sensible for her to run her household by this rule: spend little and earn a hundred times as much. For example, there could have been only a few artists with modest talent, but a huge number of listeners to appreciate

them, people with stronger and more powerful characters than the artists themselves. Then the effect of the work of art, compared with its cause, might be like an echo with a hundred voices. You might at least expect the cause and the effect to be equally strong, but Nature falls endlessly short of that goal. An artist, and especially a philosopher, often seems to have dropped into his time by chance, like a wandering hermit or a straggler cut off from the main group. Think how truly great Schopenhauer is, and what a small and silly effect he has had! An honest person today can feel no greater shame than when he thinks about how carelessly Schopenhauer has been treated, and about the evil forces that have so far killed his influence on people. First, there was the lack of readers, which will forever shame our so-called educated age. Then, once he had public followers, they were not up to the task. And further, I think, there is the dullness of modern people toward books, which they no longer take seriously. Out of many attempts to make Schopenhauer fit this weakened age, a new danger has slowly appeared: people treat him as a strange kind of sharp-tasting herb, taking him in small pinches, as a kind of philosophical pepper. In this way he has slowly become famous, and I would guess more people have heard his name than Hegel's. And yet, in spite of all that, he is still a lonely figure who has not had the effect he should. But the credit for this failure belongs least of all to the barking of the writers who attack him. First, because few people have the patience to read them. And second, because anyone who does read them is sent straight to Schopenhauer himself. After all, who would let a donkey-driver stop him from riding a fine horse, no matter how much the man praises his donkey?

Anyone who has seen how foolishly Nature acts in our time will have to think of some way to help her. His job will be to introduce Schopenhauer to the free spirits and to the people who suffer from this age. He should turn them into streams that feed a great flood, a

flood that will one day sweep away all the clumsy ways Nature still uses her philosophers. Such people will see that the very same obstacles block two things: the influence of a great philosophy, and the birth of a great philosopher. So they will aim to prepare for Schopenhauer to be born again, which means for the philosophical genius to be born again. What really stood in the way of his teaching spreading further in the past, and what stands in the way of the philosopher being reborn in the future, is the twisted state of human nature as it is now. All the great people still to come will have to struggle endlessly to free themselves from it. The world they are born into is covered over with a thick coat of pretence. This includes not only religious beliefs, but also slippery, trick-like ideas such as "progress," "education for everyone," "nationalism," and "the modern state." Almost all our big general words have a fake shiny surface on them. Because of this, people in the future, who will see more clearly, will bitterly blame our age for growing up bent and stunted, no matter how loudly we brag about how "healthy" we are. Schopenhauer says that the beauty of ancient Greek vases comes from how simply they show what they mean and what they are for. The same is true of all ancient tools and objects. If Nature herself made storage jars, lamps, tables, chairs, helmets, shields, breastplates and things like that, they would look just like these. And it follows that anyone who looks at how we all handle our art, politics, religion and education, not to mention our vases, will find in them a wild, overdone and random way of expressing things. Nothing is worse for the rise of a genius than these monstrous things. They cannot be seen or found, yet they are like lead weights hanging on his hand when he tries to put it to the plough and do his work. He can only throw these weights off by force, and so his greatest work will always carry some mark of that struggle.

I have been thinking about the conditions that, at the very best, keep a born philosopher from being crushed by the twisted ways of his age. I am surprised to find that they are partly the same conditions Schopenhauer himself grew up in. It is true there were plenty of bad influences working against him. The evil times came dangerously close to him in the form of his mother, who was vain and showy. But his father, a proud man with a free, republican spirit, rescued him from her. His father gave him the first quality a philosopher needs: a rough and strong manliness. His father was neither a government official nor a scholar. He travelled a lot in foreign countries with his son. This was a great help to someone who needed to know people rather than books, and to honour truth above the state. Over time Schopenhauer got used to the special habits of different nations. He felt just as much at home in England, France and Italy, and he felt quite a lot of sympathy for the Spanish character. On the whole, he did not think it was an honour to be born in Germany, and I am not sure the new political situation would have changed his mind. He said quite openly that the state had only one purpose: to give protection at home and abroad, and even protection against its own "protectors." He believed that giving the state any other purpose would put its true purpose in danger. That is why, to the shock of all the so-called liberals, he left his money to the families of the Prussian soldiers who died in 1848 fighting to keep order. From now on, understanding the state and its duties only in this one simple way may more and more be seen as a sign of a superior mind. That is because a man who has a burning passion for philosophy will no longer have time for a burning passion for politics. He will wisely stay away from reading newspapers or working for a political party. Still, he will not hesitate for a moment to take his place in the army if his country is truly in need. All states are badly run when people other than politicians busy themselves with politics, and such states deserve to be ruined by their political amateurs.

Schopenhauer had another big advantage. He had never been trained to be a professor. Instead, for a while, and against his will, he worked as a clerk for a merchant, and all through his early years he breathed the freer air of a big trading company. A scholar can never become a philosopher. Even Kant could not. He stayed like a caterpillar in its cocoon until the end, never fully turning into a butterfly, even though he had a natural power of genius. Anyone who thinks I am being unfair to Kant by saying this does not know what a philosopher is. A philosopher is not only a great thinker, but also a real human being. And how could a real human being grow out of a scholar? Think of a man who lets ideas, opinions, events and books stand between himself and the actual things of the world, a man who is born for history in the widest sense. Such a man will never see anything directly, all at once, and he will never himself be something that can be "seen all at once." Yet a philosopher should have both of these powers, because he has to take most of his teaching from inside himself, and he himself has to be a copy and a short summary of the whole world. If a man looks at himself through a curtain of other people's opinions, it is no wonder he sees nothing but those opinions. And that is exactly how professors see and live. But Schopenhauer had the rare luck of seeing genius not only inside himself, but also outside himself, in Goethe. This double reflection, like seeing the same thing in two mirrors, taught him everything about what learned people aim for and what their culture is. From this experience he knew how the free, strong man, the one all artistic culture was waiting for, has to come into being. After seeing that, could he really want to spend his time on so-called "art" in the learned, two-faced way of modern people? He had seen something higher than that: a terrifying, otherworldly scene of judgment, in which all of life, even the highest and most complete life, was put on the scales and found too light. He had seen the saint as the judge of all existence. We cannot say how early in life Schopenhauer came to this view, or when he started holding it so strongly that

all his writings became an attempt to reflect it, like a mirror. We know that he had this great vision as a young man, and we can easily believe he had it as a child. Everything he learned later from life and from books, from every field of knowledge, was for him only a way to add colour and expression to it. Even Kant's philosophy was, for him, a wonderful tool of speech for expressing his vision more clearly, or so he thought. The Buddhist and Christian myths sometimes served the same purpose. He had one task and a thousand ways to carry it out. He had one meaning, and countless picture-symbols to express it.

One of the great blessings of his life was that he really could live for such a task. His motto was the Latin phrase "vitam impendere vero," which means "to devote one's life to the truth." None of life's practical needs could shake his decision. And we know how splendidly he repaid his father for making this possible. In Germany, the thinking man usually carries on his scholarly studies at the cost of his honesty. He acts like a "careful fool," hunting for a good job and honours. He is cautious and eager to please, and he sucks up to powerful people above him. Nothing offended the scholars more than the fact that Schopenhauer was not like them.

VIII.

These are a few of the conditions that allow a philosophical genius to at least come to light in our time, in spite of everything working against him. He needs a manly, strong character. He needs to learn early on what people are really like. He needs to be free from a scholarly education and from narrow-minded patriotism. He needs to be free from having to earn a living or depend on the state. In short, he needs freedom, and again freedom. This is the same wonderful and dangerous air in which the Greek philosophers grew up. Someone may blame him for being a bad citizen, just as the historian Niebuhr blamed Plato. Let that person do so, and let him be a good citizen

himself. Then both he and Plato will be right at the same time! Someone else may call this great freedom arrogance. He is right too, because he himself could not use such freedom properly even if he wanted it, and he would surely go too far with it. In truth, this freedom is a heavy burden of guilt. It can only be paid for with great deeds. Every ordinary person on earth has the right to look suspiciously at such gifts. And may heaven protect him from having such gifts, which really means being loaded with such terrible duties! His freedom and his loneliness would destroy him. Boredom would turn him into a fool, and a harmful fool at that.

A father might perhaps learn something from this that he can use in raising his own son, though we should not expect fathers to want only philosophers as sons. Fathers will probably always be against their sons becoming philosophers, and will call it plain stubbornness and wrong-headedness. Socrates was sacrificed to the anger of fathers, accused of "corrupting the young." Plato even thought a whole new ideal state was needed, so that the growth of philosophers would not depend on the foolishness of fathers. At the moment it looks as if Plato really achieved something. The modern state considers it one of its duties to encourage philosophy, and it tries to give a number of men at once the kind of freedom a philosopher needs. But in history, Plato has been very unlucky. Whenever something was built that actually matched his plans, it always turned out, when you looked closely, to be a goblin-child, a monstrous baby swapped in by fairies. Just compare the Church-run state of the Middle Ages with the rule of the "God-born king" that Plato dreamed of! The modern state is as far away as possible from the idea of the Philosopher-king. ("Thank heaven for that!" the Christian will say.) But we must ask ourselves whether the state takes this "encouragement of philosophy" in Plato's sense. I mean, does it take it as seriously and honestly as if its highest goal were to produce more Platos? Philosophers usually seem to appear in

their time by chance. Does the state make it its deliberate job to turn this chance into something certain, and to help Nature here as well?

Experience teaches us something better, or rather something worse. It says that nothing blocks the birth and growth of Nature's true philosopher so much as the bad philosophers made "to order." A pitiful obstacle, isn't it? And it is the same one that Schopenhauer pointed out in his famous essay on state-paid professor philosophy. I come back to this point because people must be forced to take it seriously and be pushed into action by it. I think all writing is useless if it does not contain such a push to act. And anyway, it is a good thing to apply Schopenhauer's timeless ideas once again to the people of our own day. Some kind-hearted person might think that everything in Germany has changed for the better since his fierce attacks. Sadly, his work is incomplete on this side too, unimportant as this side may be.

The "freedom" that the state, as I said, gives to certain people for the sake of philosophy is not really freedom at all. It is a job that pays the person who holds it. The "support of philosophy" means that today there are a number of people whom the state allows to earn their living from philosophy. The old wise men of Greece, on the other hand, were not paid by the state. At most they were given a gift, as Zeno was, who received a golden crown and a monument in the Ceramicus, a district of Athens. I cannot say in general whether truth is helped when someone shows people how to make a living from her. Everything depends on the character of the person who shows the way. I can imagine a man saying to the people around him, with a certain pride, "Take care of me, because I have something better to do, namely, to take care of you." We should not be angry when Plato and Schopenhauer speak in such a proud, lofty way. And so they could rightly have been university philosophers, just as Plato, for example, was a philosopher at a king's court for a while without lowering the dignity of philosophy. But in Kant we see the usual obedient profess-

or, with no nobility in the way he dealt with the state. So when state-paid professor philosophy was once attacked, he could not defend it. There may be people like Schopenhauer and Plato who could justify it. But I fear they will never get the chance, because the state would never dare to give such people these jobs. The simple reason is that every state is afraid of them and will only favour philosophers it does not fear. The state clearly has a special fear of philosophy. So it will try to bring in more philosophers, to give the impression that philosophy is on its side, because it has on its side those people who have the title of philosopher without the power. But suppose someone came along who really meant to cut into everything, the state included, right to the bone, with the knife of truth. Then the state, which cares about its own survival above everything else, has every right to drive him out as an enemy, just as it bans a religion that sets itself up as the state's judge. Anyone who agrees to be a state philosopher must also agree to be seen as giving up the search for truth in all its hidden hiding places. In any case, as long as he enjoys his job, he must accept something as higher than truth, and that is the state. And not only the state, but everything the state needs in order to exist: a fixed form of religion, a social order, a standing army. Over all these things hangs a sign that says, in Latin, "noli me tangere", which means "do not touch me." Can a university philosopher ever keep clearly in mind the whole range of these duties and limits? I do not know. If a man has done so and still stays a state official, he is a false friend to truth. And if he has not done so, I think he is no friend to truth either.

But general thoughts like these always have the weakest effect on people. Most people will be happy just to shrug their shoulders and say, "As if anything great and pure has ever been able to survive on this earth without giving in a little to human coarseness! Would you rather the state hunted down philosophers than paid them for official work?" I will not answer this last question. I will only say that these

"concessions", these ways philosophy gives in to the state, go rather far at the moment. First, the state chooses its own philosophical servants, as many as its schools and universities need. So it claims to be able to tell good philosophers from bad ones. It even assumes there must be enough good ones to fill all the teaching posts. The state decides not only how good they are but how many of them there are. Second, it ties the people it has chosen to a fixed place and a fixed task among particular people. They must teach every student who wants to be taught, every day, at set hours. The question is whether a philosopher can promise, with a clear conscience, to have something to teach every single day to anyone who wants to listen. Won't he have to pretend to know more than he really does? Won't he have to speak, in front of strangers, about things he could only safely mention to his closest friends? And above all, doesn't he give up the precious freedom to follow his genius whenever and wherever it calls him, simply because he is bound to think at set times about a set subject? And in front of young people, too! Isn't that kind of thinking, by its very nature, weak and robbed of its strength? And suppose one day he felt that he had no ideas just then, and yet he still had to be in his place and look as if he were thinking! What then?

"But," someone will say, "he is not really a thinker. He is mostly a storehouse of thought, a man who knows a great deal about all the philosophies of the past. He can always tell his students something about them that they don't already know." In fact, this is the third favour that philosophy grants to the state, and it is the most dangerous one. It happens when philosophy is forced to show up dressed as book-learning, and more exactly as knowledge of the history of philosophy. The genius looks at life with pure and loving eyes, the way a poet does, and he can never dig too deeply into it. Nothing disgusts him more than having to rummage through countless strange and twisted opinions. Studying the history of the past in a scholarly way

was never the job of a true philosopher, not in India and not in Greece. A professor of philosophy who spends his time on such things must, at best, be happy to hear people say of him, "He is a skilled scholar, an expert on old things, a student of ancient languages, a historian." But they will never say, "He is a philosopher." I said "at best," because a scholar can tell that most of the learned books written by university philosophers are poorly done. They show no real scientific skill, and they are usually terribly boring. For example, who will clear away the fog of forgetfulness, like the mist from the ancient river of forgetting, that has been wrapped around the history of Greek philosophy by the dull, and not even very scientific, books of Ritter, Brandis and Zeller? Speaking for myself, I would rather read Diogenes Laertius than Zeller. At least in Diogenes the spirit of the old philosophers is still alive, while in Zeller there is neither that spirit nor any other. And in the end, what does the history of philosophy matter to our young people? Is the huge jumble of opinions supposed to scare them away from having any opinions of their own? Or are they supposed to learn to join the choir that cheers about how enormous our progress has been? Are they supposed to learn to hate philosophy, or maybe to look down on it? You might expect that last one, if you know the torture students go through for their philosophy exams. They have to cram into their poor heads the craziest attempts of the human mind along with the greatest and deepest ones. There is only one way of judging a philosophy that is really possible and actually proves anything: to see whether you can live by it. That has never been taught at the universities. All they teach there is judging words, and more words. Imagine a young mind without much experience of life being stuffed with fifty systems, all in the form of words, plus fifty criticisms of them, all mixed up together. What a tangled jungle he will turn into! How much he will come to despise a philosophical education! Of course, it is not an education in philosophy at all. It is training in the skill of passing a philosophy

exam. And the usual result is that the worn-out student sighs, as if saying a prayer, "Thank God I am not a philosopher, but a Christian and a good citizen!"

What if that cry were exactly what the state was aiming for all along? What if this so-called "education," this leading towards philosophy, were really just a leading away from philosophy? We have good reason to ask. But if that is so, there is one thing to be afraid of: that the young may one day discover why philosophy is being mistreated like this. They might ask, "Is the highest goal of all, producing a philosophical genius, nothing but an excuse? Is the real goal perhaps to stop such a genius from ever appearing? Has Reason been turned into Unreason?" And then, too bad for the whole machine of political and professorial tricks!

Will this soon become widely known? I don't know. But in any case, state-paid professor philosophy has sunk into a general mood of doubt and despair. Part of the reason is how weak the people who hold the teaching posts are right now. If Schopenhauer had to write his essay on state-paid professor philosophy today, he wouldn't need a heavy club anymore; he could win the fight with a reed. These professors are the heirs and followers of those sloppy thinkers whose crazy heads Schopenhauer once hit. Their childish natures and tiny builds remind you of the Indian saying: "People are born according to their deeds: deaf, dumb, misshapen." Those fathers deserved such sons, "according to their deeds," as the saying goes. So the students will no doubt soon manage without the philosophy taught at their university, just as people who never went to university already manage without it. You can test this against your own experience. When I was a student, for example, I found the university philosophers to be very ordinary men indeed. They had gathered up a few conclusions from the other sciences, and in their free time they read the newspapers and went to concerts. Their fellow professors treated them with

polite, barely hidden contempt. They were known for knowing very little, but for never being short of murky phrases to hide their ignorance. They liked those foggy areas where no one could walk for long and still see clearly. One of them said about the natural sciences, "Not one of them can fully explain to me where matter comes from; so why should I care about any of them?" Another said about history, "It tells nothing new to a man with ideas." In fact, they always found reasons why it was more philosophical to know nothing than to learn anything. If they did let themselves be pulled into learning, a secret instinct made them run away from the real sciences and set up a dim little kingdom in the gaps and uncertain spots between them. They "led the way" in the sciences only in the sense that a hunted animal "leads the way" for the hunters chasing behind it. Lately they have amused themselves by claiming they are simply the guards on the border of the sciences. Kant's teaching is useful to them here, and they busily build an empty kind of doubting on top of it, which before long nobody will pay any attention to. Now and then one of them will climb up to a little theory of his own about the ultimate nature of things, usually along with headaches, dizziness and nosebleeds. After their usual failed trips into the clouds and the fog, some tough-minded young student of the real sciences will pull them back down by their coat-tails. Then their faces will take on the look they wear so often now: the hurt dignity of someone who has been caught out. They have lost their cheerful self-confidence, and not one of them will dare to take a single step further for the sake of his philosophy. Some of them used to believe their systems could invent new religions or bring old ones back. They have given up such grand claims now, and have mostly become mild, confused people. They have none of the boldness of the Roman poet Lucretius, only a few spiteful complaints about the "dead weight that lies on the minds of mankind"! Nobody can even learn logic from them anymore. And since they clearly know how limited their abilities are, they have stopped holding the formal

debates that were common in the old days. There is much more care and modesty, more logic and inventiveness, in a word, more real philosophical method, in the work of the specialized sciences than in so-called "philosophy." Everyone will agree with the calm words of Bagehot about today's system-builders: "Countless unproven abstract principles have been eagerly grabbed by hopeful people, and then carefully stretched out into books and theories that were supposed to explain the whole world. But the world runs completely against these abstractions, and it has to, because they demand that it move in opposite directions at once. The sheer size of a system attracts the young and impresses the careless; but educated people are very doubtful about it. They are happy to receive hints and suggestions, and even the smallest real truth is always welcome. But a big book of philosophy that reasons everything out from first principles should be treated with great suspicion. Who isn't almost certain in advance that its starting points will be a strange mix of truth and error, and so it won't be worth spending your life reasoning out where they lead?" The philosophers, especially in Germany, used to sink so deep into abstract thought that they were always in danger of banging their heads against a beam. But there is a whole herd of 'flappers' around them, like the servants in Gulliver's Travels on the island of Laputa, who gently tap the dreamy thinkers on the eyes or elsewhere just in time. Sometimes the taps are too hard. Then these despisers of the earthly world forget themselves and hit back, but the one they swing at always gets away. "Fool, you don't see the beam," says the flapper. And often the philosopher does see the beam, and calms down. These flappers are the natural sciences and history. Little by little they have so frightened the German dream-making that has long taken philosophy's place, that the dreamer would be only too happy to stop trying to walk on his own. But when the dreamers suddenly fall into the arms of the sciences, or try to tie them to leading-strings so that they themselves can be led along, the sciences slap at them as hard as they

can, as if to say: "That's all we need, for a fake philosopher like this to put his dirty hands on us, the natural sciences and history! Get rid of him!" Then the dreamers jump back, not knowing where to turn or whom to ask for directions. They wanted to have a bit of knowledge about the physical world behind them, maybe in the form of psychology based on observation (like the followers of Herbart), or perhaps a bit of history. Then at least they could put on a public show of acting scientifically, even though deep down they may wish all philosophy and all science would go to the devil.

[2] From Physics and Politics, chapter 5. Nietzsche changed the order of the sentences, and it doesn't seem to help his own argument while it does hurt Bagehot's. I have put them back in the original order. (Translator's note.)

But let's agree that this crowd of bad philosophers is ridiculous. And who would deny it? The real question is how much harm they also do. They do harm precisely because they make philosophy itself look ridiculous. As long as the state keeps giving its official approval to this fake, copycat thinking, the lasting effect of a true philosophy will be wiped out, or at least kept within narrow limits. Nothing does this better than the curse of being laughed at, which the people who are supposed to stand for this great cause have brought on themselves. That mockery ends up attacking the cause itself. So I think it would help culture if philosophy lost its political and academic standing. That would free the state and the university from a job they simply cannot do: deciding which philosophy is true and which is false. Let the philosophers grow up wild. Forbid them any hope of an official post or a place in public life. Stop offering them bribes. No, go further: persecute them and treat them badly. You will see an amazing result. These poor ghosts of thinkers will run away in fear and look for shelter wherever they can find it. One will become a priest, another a schoolteacher. Another will sneak into a job as a newspaper edit-

or. Another will write textbooks for girls' schools. The wisest of them will go and plough the fields, and the vainest will go off to the royal court. Suddenly everything will be empty, as if the birds had all flown from their nest. Because it is easy to get rid of bad philosophers: you only have to stop paying them. And that is a better plan than the state openly supporting any philosophy at all, whatever it may be, just because it suits the state's purposes.

The state never cares about truth. It only cares about truth that is useful to it. Or, to put it better, it cares about anything that is useful to it, whether that thing is truth, half-truth, or error. A partnership between the state and philosophy only makes sense if philosophy can promise to be useful to the state with no conditions, and to put the state's well-being above truth. Of course, it would be a fine and noble thing for the state to have truth working for it as a paid servant. But the state knows very well that truth, by its very nature, takes no pay and serves no master. So the servant the state ends up with is just a "false truth": an actor in a mask. This actor cannot do the job that only real truth could do, which is to confirm that the state is valuable and sacred. In the Middle Ages, when a prince wanted to be crowned by the Pope but could not get the Pope to agree, he appointed a rival pope, an "antipope," to do the job for him. That trick may work up to a point. But it does not work when the modern state appoints an "anti-philosophy" to make itself look legitimate. Because true philosophy is still against it, just as much as before, or even more. I seriously believe it is in the state's own interest to have nothing more to do with philosophy, to ask nothing of it, and to let it go its own way as much as possible. Without this hands-off attitude, philosophy may become dangerous and troublesome to the state, and the state will then have to persecute it. The only interest the state can have in the university is in training citizens who are obedient and useful. And it should think twice before putting that obedience and usefulness at

risk by making young men pass an exam in philosophy. Making philosophy into a scary monster may be a great way to frighten lazy and incapable students away from studying it. But this advantage is not big enough to make up for the danger that such pressure may stir up among the bolder and more rebellious minds. These young people find out about forbidden books. They start to criticize their teachers. And in the end they come to understand what state-paid professor philosophy and its exams are really for. And that's not even counting the doubts that may grow in the minds of young students of religion. Because of those doubts, such students are starting to die out in Germany, like the wild mountain goats in the Tyrol.

I know what objections the state could have raised against all this back when the lovely crop of Hegel's ideas was turning golden in every field. But now hail has destroyed that crop, and with it everyone's hopes. Nothing it promised has come true, and all the barns are empty. So there are no more objections to raise. Instead, people simply reject philosophy itself. The state now has the power to reject it. In Hegel's time it only wished it had that power, and that makes a big difference. The state no longer needs philosophy's stamp of approval, so philosophy has become useless to it. The state will gain by no longer paying its professors, or, as I think will soon happen, by only pretending to pay them. But it matters even more that the university should see the benefit of this too. At least, I believe the real sciences must see that it is in their own interest to cut all ties with fake science. On top of that, the universities' good name is too much at risk for them not to welcome a break from methods that even scholars think little of. The outside world has good reason to look down on universities as widely as it does. People accuse them of being cowardly: the small people fear the great ones, and the great ones fear public opinion. People say the universities do not lead the higher thinking of the age but limp slowly behind it, and that they no longer

hold on to the basic ideas of the accepted sciences. Grammar, for example, is studied harder than ever, yet nobody sees that people need strict training in how to speak and write. The doors to ancient India are being opened, and yet the scholars understand the most lasting works of the Indians, their philosophies, no better than an animal understands playing the harp. And this is even though Schopenhauer believes that knowing Indian philosophy is one of the greatest advantages our century has. Ancient Greece and Rome are the favourite playground these days, but their effect is no longer noble and character-building. You can see this in the students, who are certainly not models anyone should copy. Where can you find today the spirit of Friedrich August Wolf? Franz Passow said of him that he seemed a loyal, humane spirit, with enough power to set half the world on fire. Instead, a newspaper-style spirit is growing in the university, often calling itself philosophy. There is the smooth way of speaking, which is really just makeup for words. There are Goethe's Faust and Lessing's Nathan the Wise always quoted on people's lips. There is the tone and the outlook of our worst literary magazines. And lately there has been a lot of chatter about our holy German music, and people demanding lectures on Schiller and Goethe. All of this is a sign that the spirit of the university is starting to get mixed up with the spirit of the age. So it would seem very valuable to set up a higher court outside the universities, to protect them and to judge them when it comes to culture. As soon as philosophy can cut itself loose from the universities and be cleaned of every unworthy motive and every pretence, it will be able to become that kind of court. It will do its work without money or honours from the state, free from the spirit of the age and free from any fear of it. In fact it will be the judge of the so-called culture all around it, as Schopenhauer was. And in this way the thinker can also be useful to the university: by refusing to be part of it, and criticising it from a distance. That distance will give him dignity.

But in the end, what do the life of a state or the progress of universities matter compared with the life of philosophy on earth? To say plainly what I mean: it is endlessly more important that a true thinker should appear on earth than that a state or a university should keep going. The dignity of philosophy can grow as people bow more to public opinion and as freedom comes under greater threat. It was at its highest during the violent upheavals that marked the fall of the Roman Republic, and in the time of the Empire, when the very words "philosophy" and "history" became, as the Latin saying goes, "names hated by rulers." Brutus shows the dignity of philosophy better than Plato does. He lived in a time when moral questions stopped being matters of easy, familiar sayings. Philosophy is not much respected now. We might well ask why no great soldier or statesman has taken it up. The answer is that what he met, under the name of philosophy, was a thin ghost: the careful, timid wisdom of the learned professor. So philosophy soon came to look ridiculous to him. It should have looked terrifying. People who are called to positions of power ought to know the heroic force that springs from it. An American can tell them what a centre of mighty forces a great thinker can be on this earth. "Watch out when the great God lets a thinker loose on this planet," says Emerson.[3] "Then everything is in danger. It is like when a fire has broken out in a great city, and nobody knows what is safe or where it will stop. There is no piece of science that cannot be attacked from the side tomorrow. There is no literary reputation, not even the so-called eternal famous names, that cannot be looked at again and condemned.... The things people treasure right now are treasured because of the ideas that have appeared on the edge of their minds, and those ideas produce the present order of things the way a tree produces its apples. A new level of culture would instantly turn the whole system of human activity upside down." If thinkers like that are dangerous, it is clear why our university thinkers are not. Their thoughts blossom as quietly in the shade of tradition "as any tree ever

bore its apples." They scare nobody. Like the strong man Samson, who carried off the city gates of Gaza, they could do something mighty, but they carry away no gates at all. To all their little reflections one can give the same answer Diogenes gave when someone praised a certain philosopher: "What great result can he show, when he has practised philosophy for so long and yet has never hurt anybody?" Yes, state-paid professor philosophy should have these words carved on its monument: "It has hurt nobody." But that is the kind of praise you give an old woman, not a goddess of truth. And it is no surprise that people who know this goddess only as an old woman are less manly because of it, and are naturally ignored by the men who really hold power.

[3] From his essay "Circles."

If this is how things stand in our time, then the dignity of philosophy is being trampled in the mud, and philosophy herself seems to have become ridiculous or unimportant. All her true friends have a duty to speak out against this change. At the very least, they must show that it is only her false servants, dressed up as thinkers, who are ridiculous and unimportant. Or better still, they must prove by their own actions that the love of truth itself carries awe and power.

Schopenhauer proved this with his life, and he will go on proving it, more and more, as time goes by.

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