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NIETZSCHE'S PHILOSOPHY IN THE LIGHT OF CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

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LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

WHEN AT THE BEGINNING of the year 1889 the news of Nietzsche's mental breakdown began to spread from Turin and Basle, many of those who, distributed throughout Europe, already possessed a measure of understanding for the fateful greatness of this man, may have repeated to themselves Ophelia's lamentation:

"O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!"

And of the characterizations contained in the following verses, mourning the terrible misfortune that so highminded an intellect, "blasted by ecstasy", should now disharmonize like bells out of tune, many fit Nietzsche exactly,—prominent among them the words in which the grieving heroine epitomizes her praise: "The observ'd of all observers." We would use the word "fascinating" instead, and indeed, in all the world literature and the history of the human mind, we seek in vain for a personality more fascinating than that of the hermit of Sils Maria. Yet it is a fascination closely related to the one emanating through the centuries from that great character created by Shakespeare, the melancholy prince of Denmark.

Nietzsche, the thinker and writer, "the mould of form" as Ophelia would call him, was a personality of phenomenal cultural plenitude and complexity, summing up all that is essentially European, a personality that had absorbed a lot from the past which in more or less conscious imitation and succession it reminded, repeated, in a mythical manner projected forth into the presence; and I have no doubt that the great lover of masquerade was well aware of the trait so like Hamlet in the tragic play of life he presented—I am tempted to say: he enacted. As far as I, the reader and "observer" of the next following generation immersing with deep emotion, am concerned, I sensed this relationship early and at the same time I experienced those confused sensations which especially for the young heart carry something so novel, so exciting and so engrossing: the mixture of veneration and pity. I have never

ceased to experience it. It is the tragic pity for an overloaded, overcharged soul which was only called to knowledge, not really born to it and, like Hamlet, was destroyed by it; for a dainty, fine, good soul for which love was a necessity, which inclined toward noble friendship and was never meant for loneliness, and which yet was condemned to just this: the most profound, the most frigid loneliness, the aloneness of the criminal; for a spirituality at first deeply pious, entirely prone to reverence, bound to religious tradition, which was dragged by fate practically by the hair into a wild and intoxicated prophesy of barbaric resplendent force, of stifled conscience, of evil, a state devoid of all piety and raging against its very own nature.

One must take a look at the origin of this mind, investigate the influences at work on forming his personality, without his nature ever having resented them as the least bit improper,—in order to perceive the improbable adventurousness of his life's span, its complete unpredictability. Born in 1844 amidst central German rusticity, four years before the attempt of a middle-class revolution in Germany, Nietzsche on both his mother's and his father's side stems from respected ministers' families. Ironically, there is in existence a paper written by his grandfather on "The Eternal Duration of Christianity, A Reassurance during the Present Foment". His father was something like a courtier, tutor of the Prussian princesses, and owed his ministry to the benevolence of Frederic William IV. Appreciation of aristocratic form, strict morality, sense of honor, minute love of order thus were naturally a part of his home. After the early death of his father the boy lived in the religious, church-going and royalist civil service city of Naumburg. He is described as "phenomenally well-mannered", a notorious paragon of courteous solemness and of a pious pathos that procures for him the name of "the little minister". Well-known is the characteristic anecdote, how, during a cloudburst, he stalks home from school, measured and dignified,—because school regulations impress upon the children proper conduct in the street. His senior high-school education he concludes brilliantly in the famous discipline of the monastery of Schulpforta. He inclines

toward theology, and also toward music, but then decides on classical philology and studies that subject in Leipzig under a strict systematist by name of Ritschl. He succeeds so well that, no sooner has he completed his obligatory service in the artillery, he is called, practically an adolescent still, to the academic chair, and this in the serious and religious, patricianly governed city of Basle.

One receives the impression of a highly gifted noble normalcy, apparently assuring a career of correctness on an aristocratic level. Instead of that, what a drift into trackless wastes! What a getting lost in death-dealing wastelands! The expression "to get lost", which has become a moral and spiritual judgement, originated with the explorer's language and describes the situation where in the uncharted unknown, the traveler loses all sense of where he is, in which direction to seek subsistence, where he is doomed. It sounds like Philistinism to use this expression for the man who certainly was not only the greatest philosopher of the late 19th century, but also one of the most fearless heroes of all times in the realm of thought. But Jakob Burckhardt, to whom Nietzsche looked up as to a father, was no Philistine, and yet already at an early date he detected the inclination, more, the determination, to travel false trails and to become mortally confused in the mental outlook of his younger friend and wisely separated from him, dropped him with something like indifference which was really the kind of self-protection we also observe in Goethe.

What was it that drove Nietzsche into the uncharted wastes of thought, that whipped him upward into those heights in torture and made him die an agonizing death upon the cross of thought? It was his fate—and that fate was his genius. But this genius has yet another name. That name is: disease—this word not understood in the vague and generalized sense otherwise easily associated with the concept of genius, but in so specific and clinical an understanding that the observer once again braves the suspicion of being a duffer and the reproach that he would minimize with it the creative life work of a mind who changed the entire atmosphere of his time as an artist in

the use of language, as a thinker and as a psychologist. That would be a misunderstanding. It has often been said before, and I say it again: disease is a purely formal phenomenon; the important point is with what it is combined, in what it fulfills itself. The point is *who* is afflicted with the disease: an average numskull in whose case the disease of course lacks any spiritual and cultural aspect, or a Nietzsche, a Dostoevski. The medicinal pathological side is *one* side of the truth, its naturalistic one so to speak, and anyone devoted to truth as a whole and determined to observe it unconditionally, will never for reasons of mental prudishness disavow any point of view from which it can be regarded. The physician Moebius has been widely criticised for writing a book in which he set forth the story of Nietzsche's development as the story of a progressive paralysis from an expert's point of view. I have never been able to join in the indignation over this. In his own manner, the man says nothing but the undeniable truth.

In the year 1865, at the age of 21, Nietzsche tells a curious tale to his friend and fellow student Paul Deussen, the later famous Sanskrit and Vedanta scholar. Alone, the young man had gone on an excursion to Cologne and there had engaged a public porter to show him the sights of the city. All afternoon they are under way and finally, toward evening, Nietzsche asks his guide to show him a recommendable restaurant. This chap however, who for me has assumed the guise of quite a sinister messenger, takes him to a bordello. The adolescent boy, pure as a maiden, all spirit, all learning, all pious diffidence, suddenly finds himself, so he relates, surrounded by half a dozen figures in flitter and gauze who look at him expectantly. Straight through their midst, the young musician, philologist and admirer of Schopenhauer walks over to a piano he espies at the rear of the fiendish salon and which he sees as (these are his words) "the only ensouled being in the group" and strikes a few chords. This breaks his fascination, his petrification, and he regains the open, he is able to flee.

The next day he was surely laughing when he told his friends of this experience. What an impression it made on him he never

became conscious of. Yet it was no more and no less than what psychologists call a "trauma," a shock the ever growing after effects of which, never again relinquishing his imagination, testify to the susceptibility of the saint to sin. In the fourth part of "Zarathustra," written twenty years later, there is to be found, in the chapter "Amongst Daughters of the Desert," an orientalizing poem whose frightful jocosity with torturously bad taste betrays a repressed sensualism and its needs whilst normal inhibitions are already crumbling. In this poem of the "cute little girl-friends and girl-cats, Dudu and Suleika," a painfully humorous erotical fancy, the "flutter and flitter skirts" of those professional ladies of Cologne appear again, still preserved. The "figures in flitter and gauze" of those days evidently served as models for the delectable daughters of the desert; and from their time it is not long, it is only four years, to the Basle clinic where the patient states specifically for the record that in earlier years he had twice infected himself. For the first of these misfortunes, the medical history of Jena records the year 1866. That is to say that one year after he fled from that house in Cologne, he returns, this time without diabolic guidance, to such a place and there contracts—some say: deliberately, as a self-punishment—the malady which is to sap, but also enormously intensify his life—more, which is to stimulate, in part for good, in part for evil, an entire epoch of history.

The motive power which after a few years makes him yearn to leave his academic office in Basle, is a mixture of growing sickliness and a craving for liberty which fundamentally are the same thing. At an early age already the young admirer of Richard Wagner and Schopenhauer proclaimed art and philosophy as the true guiding spirits of life—in opposition to history of which philology, the subject he was teaching, was a part. He turns his back on it, gets himself pensioned off because of illness and from then on without any ties lives in international spots in Italy, Southern France, the Swiss Alps; there he writes his books, splendid of style, glittering with audacious insults against his time, psychologically ever more radical, gleaming with ever more intense, white-hot light. In a letter he calls him-

self "a man who desires nothing more than daily to lose some comforting faith, who seeks and finds his happiness in this everyday greater liberation of the spirit. It may be that I *want* to be a freethinker ever more than I am *able* to be one!"—That is a confession, made very early, as early as 1876; it is the anticipation of his fate, of his breakdown; the prescience of a man who will be driven to take upon himself more cruel realizations than his heart will be able to stand and who will offer to the world the spectacle of a profoundly moving self-crucifixion.

He might well have written under his life's work, as did the well-known painter, "In doloribus pinxi." With that he would have spoken the truth in more senses than one, in the spiritual as well as in the physical one. In 1880 he confesses to the physician Dr. Eiser: "My existence is a terrible burden: I should have thrown it off long ago, were it not that just in this state of suffering and of almost absolute abnegation I make the most instructive tests and experiments in the spiritual and ethical field. . . . Continuous pain, for several hours of the day a feeling closely akin to seasickness, a partial paralysis during which I have difficulties in speaking, furious attacks for a change (the last one forced me to vomit for three days and three nights, I was craving death) . . . If I could only describe to you the *continuousness* of this sensation, the constant pain and pressure in my head, on my eyes, and that feeling as though I were paralyzed from head to toe!" It is hard to understand his seemingly complete ignorance—and that of his physicians as well!—of the nature and source of these sufferings. Slowly he gains the assurance that they originate in the brain, and in this he believes himself subject to a hereditary illness: his father, he observes, perished from "softening of the brain,"—which is certainly not true; the minister Nietzsche died as a result of a mere accident, of a brain injury caused by a fall. But that total ignorance, or the dissimulation of knowledge, concerning the origin of his illness can be explained only by the fact that this illness was intertwined and connected with his genius, that the latter unfolded with it,—and that for a great

psychologist *everything* can serve as an object for unmasking apperception, only not his own genius.

It is much rather a target for astounded admiration, exorbitant self-exaltation, extreme hybridity. Full of naïvety Nietzsche glorifies the enrapturing other side of his suffering, these euphoric impoundages and overcompensations which belong to the picture. He does this most magnificently in the already almost uninhibited late work "Ecce Homo," there where he praises the physically and mentally inordinately intensified state in which he created his Zarathustra poem in an incredibly short time. That particular page is a masterpiece of style, linguistically a veritable tour de force, comparable only to passages like the magnificent analysis of the Meistersinger prelude in "Beyond Good and Evil" or the Dionysiacal presentation of the cosmos at the end of the "Will to Power." "Does anybody," he asks in "Ecce Homo," "at the end of the 19th century have any idea of what the poets of powerful eras called inspiration? If not I'll describe it." And now he launches into a description of revelations, ecstasies, elevations, whisperings, divine feelings of force and power he cannot but look upon as an atavism, a demonic throw-back belonging to other "more powerful" stages of human existence closer to God and beyond the limitations imposed upon our weakly reasonable time by its psychic possibilities. And yet "in truth"—but what is truth: his experience, or medical science?—all he describes is an injurious paroxism of excitement, tauntingly preceding the paralitical collapse.

Everybody will admit that it is a hectic excess of self-esteem testifying to his slipping reason when Nietzsche calls his "Zarathustra" an achievement measured by which the entire remainder of all human activities appears poor and confined, when he claims that a Goethe, a Shakespeare, a Dante would never for a moment be able even to draw a breath in the heights of this book, and that the genius and the goodness of all great souls put together would never be capable of producing as much as one single oration of Zarathustra. Of course it must be a great delight to write down sentiments of this kind, but I find it

illicit. And then again it may be that I am only stating my own limitations when I go further and confess that for me the relationship between Nietzsche and his Zarathustra creation anyway seems to be one of blind overestimation. Because of its Biblical attitude it has become the most "popular" of his books, but it is not his best by far. Nietzsche was above all a great critic and philosopher of civilization, a European proser and essayist of highest quality who came from Schopenhauer's school; his genius was at its height at the time of "Beyond Good and Evil" and of the "Genealogy of Morals". Many a poet may amount to less than such a critic, but it was this very lesserness, which Nietzsche lacked except in certain admirable lyrical moments, and it never sufficed for an extensive work of creative originality. This faceless and formless monster, this winged giant Zarathustra with the rose crown of laughter on his unrecognizable head, with his "Grow hard!" and his caperer's legs is no creation, he is rhetorical, impassioned linguistic wit, tortured voice and dubious prophecy, a wraith of helpless grandeur, often touching and mostly painful to watch—an unman wavering at the borders of the ridiculous.

When I say this, I remember the desperate cruelty with which Nietzsche spoke of many, really of all things he revered: of Wagner, of music in general, of morals, of Christianity—I nearly said: also of all things German,—and how apparently even with his most furiously critical attacks against these values and powers which he always respected deep within his innermost self, he never had the feeling of really impairing them, but rather seemed to feel that the most awful insults he hurled at them, were essentially a form of ovation. He said such things about Wagner that we cannot believe our eyes when suddenly in "Ecce Homo" we find mentioned the "holy hour" of Richard Wagner's death in Venice. How is it, we ask with tears in our eyes, that this hour of death all of a sudden is a "holy" one, if Wagner was the foul histrionic, the debauched debaucher, Nietzsche a hundred times described him?—To his friend the musician Peter Gast he excuses himself for his continuous controversy with Christianity: he calls it the best bit of idealistic

life he had ever known. After all, he says, he is descendent from generations of christian ministers and believes that "never in his heart has he vilified Christianity." No, but with his voice at a frenetic pitch he has called it "the one immortal stain of dishonor upon humanity"—not without at the same time making fun of the contention that the ancient German in any way was pre-educated or predestined for Christianity: The lazy, but warlike and rapacious bearskin-loafer, the sensuously frigid hunting addict and beer tippler who had barely progressed as far as a halfway decent Red Indian's religion and no more than ten hundred years ago had slaughtered human beings on sacrificial stones—what affinity could he have for the highest type of moral subtlety sharpened by rabbinical intellect, for the oriental finesse of Christianity!—His assignment of values is precise and amusing. To his autobiography the "Antichrist" gives the most christian of all titles "Ecce Homo." And last scribblings of insanity he signs "The Crucified".

One can say that Nietzsche's relation to the preferred objects of his criticism was fundamentally that of passion: a passion basically neither negative nor positive, for one continually changes over into the other. Shortly before the end of his mental life he writes a page about "Tristan," vibrating with enthusiasm. On the other hand already at the time of his apparently unconditional Wagner-devotion, just before writing the festival address "Richard Wagner in Bayreuth" for the public, he made remarks about "Lohengrin" to intimate friends in Basle—remarks of such aloof perspicacity that across one and a half decenniums they presaged the "Case of Wagner." There is *no* breach in Nietzsche's relationship to Wagner, no matter what one may say. The world always wants to see a breach in the work and life of great men. It found such a breach with Tolstoi where everything is iron consistency, where all late symptoms are pre-formed in the early ones. It found such a breach with Wagner himself, in whose development reigns the same unshakable continuity and logic. It is no different with Nietzsche. No matter how much his primarily aphoristic writings gambol in a thousand colorful facets, no matter how many

superficial contradictions can be shown in him—he was all there from the very beginning, was always the same; and the writings of the youthful professor, the "Thoughts Out of Season," the "Birth of Tragedy," the essay "The Philosopher" of 1873, not only contain the seeds of his later doctrinary message, but this message, a *joyful* one as he believes, is already contained in them, finished and complete. The things that change are only the accentuation, growing ever more frenetical, the key of his voice, growing ever more shrill, the gesticulation, growing ever more grotesque and frightful. The thing that changes is the mode of writing which, extremely musical always, from the dignified discipline and restraint of German humanistic tradition, somewhat colored by medieval Franconian scientism, slowly degenerates into an awesomely mundane and hectically humorous super-feuilletonism, decorating itself at last with the cosmic jester's cap and bells.

But the completely unified and compact character of Nietzsche's life work cannot be sufficiently stressed. Following Schopenhauer whose disciple he remained even after he had long denied the master, throughout his life he really only variated, extended, impressed upon his readers one single omnipresent thought which, initially appearing with all soundness and undeniably justified in its contemporary criticism, in course of time falls prey to a maenadic debasement to the point where Nietzsche's story can actually be called the story of the degeneration of this thought.

What is this thought?—In order to understand it, we must take it apart down to its ingredients, to the component parts clashing within it. Listed in casual disorder, they are: Life, civilization ("Kultur"), consciousness or cognizance, art, nobleness, morals, instinct. The concept of *civilization* predominates in this complex of ideas. It is positioned almost equal to life itself: civilization, that is the nobleness of life, and combined with it as its sources and premises are art and instinct, whilst as mortal enemies and destroyers of civilization or "Kultur" and life there figure consciousness and cognizance, science and finally morals—that same morality which as preserver of truth assassi-

nates life, because life essentially bases on semblance, art, deception, perspective, illusion and because error is the father of all that lives.

From Schopenhauer he inherited the sentence that "life as a pure concept, viewed as such or reproduced by art, is a significant drama," i. e., the sentence that life may be justified only as an aesthetic phenomenon. Life is art and semblance, no more, and therefore higher than the truth (which is a matter of morals) stands wisdom (as an affair of "Kultur" and of life)—a tragic, ironical kind of wisdom, limiting science on the basis of artistic instinct, for the sake of civilization, and defending the ultimate value, life, on two sides: against the pessimism of those who slander life and propagate the hereafter or the Nirvana—and against the optimism of those who travel in rationalism and world betterment, who prattle about the earthly happiness of all, about justice, and prepare the socialist insurrection of slaves. This tragic wisdom, blessing life in all its untruthfulness, hardness and cruelty, Nietzsche baptized with the name of Dionysos.

The name of the intoxicated god first appears in his early, aesthetic mystical paper on the "Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music," in which the Dionysian element as an artistic state of the soul is opposed to the artistic principle of Apolline distancy and objectivity, very similar to the way in which Schiller in his famous essay juxtaposes the "Naive" to the "Sentimentalic." Here for the first time is coined the expression "theoretical man," and the inimical position against Socrates, the archetype of this theoretical man, is taken up: against Socrates, the despiser of instinct, the glorifier of conscience, who taught that only what is conscious can be good, the enemy of Dionysos and the murderer of tragedy. According to Nietzsche, he originated a civilization of Alexandrine scientificality, pale, scholarly, alien to mythos, alien to life, a civilization in which optimism and faith in the rational reign supreme, the practical and theoretical utilitarianism which, like democracy itself, is a symptom of declining power and physiological fatigue. The human being of this Socratic, anti-tragical civilization, the

theoretical man, no longer desires to have anything *entirely,* with all the natural cruelty of the world, debilitated as he is by looking at things optimistically. But, so young Nietzsche insists on convincing himself, the time of the Socratic human being is over. A new generation, heroic, temerarious, contemptuous of all weakly doctrines enters upon the stage, the Dionysian spirit is perceived as slowly awakening in our present world, the world of 1870; out of the Dionysian profundities of the German spirit, of German music, of German philosophy, the tragical drama is reborn.

Later he poked a desperate kind of fun at his onetime faith in the German spirit—and at everything he read into it, i. e., himself. Indeed, his entire self is already contained in this prelude to his philosophy, as yet mildly humanitarian, as yet extravagantly and romantically intoned; and the world perspective as well, the embracing gaze upon the entire occidental civilization is already there, even though for the time being he is primarily concerned with the German civilization in whose high destiny he believes, but which he sees in gravest danger of forfeiting this destiny because of Bismarck's establishing his power state, because of politics, democratic leveling down to mediocrity and smug satiation with victory. His splendid diatribe against the senile and merry book of the theologian David Strauss, "The Old and the New Faith," is the most direct example of this criticism against a Philistinism of saturation, threatening to deprive the German spirit of all depth. And there is something deeply moving in the way the young thinker already here throws prophetic glances ahead to his own fate that seems to lie before him like an open book of tragedy. I am referring to the passage where he taunts the ethical cowardice of the vulgar illuminator Strauss who, he says, takes good care not to derive any *moral percepts for life* from his Darwinism, from the bellum omnium contra omnes and from the prerogative of the mightier, but rather only disports himself in strong sallies against preachers and miracles, for which one can always obtain the Philistine's partisanship. He himself, that he already knows deep down within him, will do the ultimate and

not even shy from insanity in order to obtain the Philistine's *opposition.*

It is the second one of the "Thoughts Out of Season," entitled "On the Usefulness and the Disadvantage of Historiology for Life," in which that fundamental thought of his life which I mentioned above is pre-formed most perfectly, even though still draped in a special critical guise. This admirable treatise fundamentally is nothing but one great variation of the Hamlet passage on the "native hue of resolution," that "is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought." The title is incorrect in as far as there is hardly any mention of the usefulness of historiology—all the more however of its disadvantages for life, the dear, holy aesthetically justified life. The 19th century has been called the historical era, and indeed this century was the first to create and develop that sense of history of which former civilizations, just *because* they were civilizations, artistically unified systems of life, knew little or nothing. Nietzsche goes so far as to speak of a "historical disease," laming life and its spontaneity. Education, that today meant historical education. But the Greeks had known no historical education of any kind, and one would probably hesitate to call the Greeks uneducated. Historiology for the sake of pure apperception, not conducted for the purpose of advancing life and without the counterbalance of "plastic giftedness," creative uninhibitedness, is murderous, is death. A historical phenomenon in a state of apperception—is dead. A scientifically cognized religion, e. g., is doomed, it is at an end. The historically critical treatment of Christianity, Nietzsche says with conservative apprehension, dissolves it into pure knowledge of things christian. In examining religion from the point of view of history, he says, "there come to light things which necessarily destroy the reverential mood of illusion in which alone everything desirous of living can remain alive." Only in love, adumbrated by the illusion of love, does man *create.* Historiology would have to be treated as a work of art in order to creatively contribute to civilization—but that would be contrary to the analytical and inartistic trend of the time. Historiology exorcises our instincts. Educated, or miseducated,

by it, man no longer is able to "drop the rains" and to act naively, confiding in the "divine animal." Historiology always underestimates what is growing into the future and paralyzes action which must ever injure respectful reverences. What it teaches and creates, is *justice*. But life is not in need of justice, it is in need of injustice, it is essentially unjust. "A great deal of strength is required," Nietzsche says (and it is doubtful whether he credits himself with this strength) "to be able to live and forget to what extent living and being unjust are one." Yet everything depends on the ability to forget. He wants the unhistorical: the art and strength of being able to *forget* and to confine himself within a limited horizon—a demand more easily made than fulfilled, we might add. For we are born within a limited horizon; to confine ourselves within it artificially is an aesthetic masquerade and a denial of fate from which something genuine and worth while can hardly derive. But, very beautifully and nobly, Nietzsche wants to go *beyond* the mere historical, to divert the gaze away from the things that are in the process of growing, toward those which give our existence its eternal and sentient character, toward art and religion. The enemy is science, for it sees and knows only historiology and the process of growing, nothing sentient, eternal; it despises forgetfulness as the death of knowledge and seeks to raise all limitations of our horizon. But everything that lives requires a protective atmosphere, a mysterious nebulous impassable ring and an enveloping illusion. A life dominated by science is much less of a life than one dominated not by knowledge, but rather by instincts and by *powerful phantasmata*.

In reading of "powerful phantasmata" today we think of Sorel and his book "Sur la Violence," in which syndicalism and fascism are still one and which declares the mythos of the mass to be the indispensible motor of history, entirely independent of truth or untruth. We also ask ourselves, whether it would not be better to keep the masses in respect of reason and truth and at the same time to honor their demand for justice—than to implant the mythos of the mass and to let mobs dominated by "powerful phantasmata" loose on humanity. Who is

doing that today and for what purpose? Certainly not for that of promoting civilization.—But Nietzsche knows nothing of masses and wants to know nothing of them. "Let them go to the devil," he says, "and the statistics too!" He wants and proclaims an era in which people wisely refrain, against and beyond the historical way of thinking, from any constructional interpretation of the process of life or of human history as well, in which they do not regard the masses at all any more, but rather the great individuals, whose greatness makes them contemporaries regardless of time and who discourse in the spirit high above the bustling historical throng of nonentities. The goal of humanity, he says, lies not at its end, but in its highest representatives. That is his individualism: an aesthetic genius cult and hero worship which he has taken from Schopenhauer, together with the insistence that happiness is impossible and a *heroic* life is the only thing worthy and possible for the individual. Transformed by Nietzsche and together with his adoration of the powerful and beautiful life, this results in a heroical aestheticism, as whose protective diety he proclaims the god of tragedy, Dionysos. It is just this Dionysian aestheticism which makes of the later Nietzsche the greatest critic and psychologist of morals known to the history of the human mind.

He is a born psychologist, psychology is his archpassion: apperception and psychology, these are fundamentally one and the same passion, and it characterizes the entire inner contradictiousness of this great and suffering spirit that he, who values life far above apperception, is so completely and hopelessly caught in psychology. He is already a psychologist only on the basis of Schopenhauer's findings that not the intellect produces will, but vice versa, that not the intellect is the primary and dominating element, but the will, to which the intellect entertains a relationship of no more than servitude. The intellect as a servile tool of will: that is the font of all psychology, a psychology of casting suspicions and tearing off masks, and Nietzsche as attorney general of life, throws himself into the arms of moral psychology, he suspects all "good" urges of originating from bad ones and proclaims the "evil" ones as those

which ennoble and exalt life. That is "The Revaluation of All Values."

What used to be called Socratism, "the theoretical man," conscious sentiency, historical disease, now is called simply "morals," particularly "christian morals" which is revealed as something out and out poisonous, rancorous and inimical to life—and now we must not forget that Nietzsche's criticism of morals is in part something impersonal, something belonging quite generally to his time. It is the time about the turn of the century, the time of the first running attack of the European intellectuals against the hypocritical morals of the Victorian, the bourgeois era. Into this picture Nietzsche's furious battle against morals fits to a certain degree and often with astounding family resemblance. It is astonishing to note the close relationship between some of Nietzsche's aperçus and the attacks, by no means nothing but vain, with which approximately at the same time Oscar Wilde, the English aesthetic, shocked his public and made it laugh. When Wilde declares: "For, try as we may, we cannot get behind the appearance of things to reality. And the terrible reason may be that there is no reality in things apart from their appearances;" when he speaks of the "truth of masks" and of the "decay of lies," when he exclaims: "To me beauty is the wonder of wonders. It is only shallow people who do not judge by appearances. The true mystery of the world is the visible, not the invisible;" when he calls truth something so personal that never two spirits can do justice to the same truth, when he says: "Every impulse that we strive to strangle broods in the mind, and poisons us. . . . The only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it;" and: "Don't be led astray into the paths of virtue!"—then all this might very well stand in Nietzsche's writings. And when on the other hand one reads of the latter: "Seriousness, this unmistakable sign of the more laborious metabolism."—"In art the lie sanctifies itself and the will to deceive has the clear conscience on its side."—"We are basically inclined to maintain that the most incorrect judgements are the most indispensible."—"It is no more than a moral prejudice that the truth is worth more than

the semblance."—then there is not one among these sentences which could not appear in one of Oscar's comedies and get a laugh in St. James's Theater. When somebody wanted to praise Wilde very highly, they compared his plays to Sheridan's "The School for Scandal". Much of Nietzsche seems to originate with this school.

Of course the juxtaposition of Nietzsche with Wilde has something almost sacrilegious, for the latter was a dandy; the German philosopher however was something like a saint of immoralism. And yet, with the more or less deliberate martyrium of his life's end, the penal institution of Reading, Wilde's dandyism assumes a touch of holiness which would have aroused Nietzsche's entire sympathy. What reconciled him with Socrates was the cup of hemlock, the end, the sacrificial death, and he believes that the impression of this on Greek youth and on Plato cannot be overestimated. And he left the personality of Jesus of Nazareth untouched by his hatred of historical Christianity, again for the sake of the end, of the cross which he loved with all his heart and toward which he himself was striding deliberately.

His life was intoxication and suffering—a highly artistic state, mythologically speaking the union of Dionysos with the Crucified. Swinging the thyrsus he ecstatically glorified the strong and beautiful, the amorally triumphant life and defended it against any stunting by intellectualism—and at the same time he paid tribute to suffering as none other. "It determines the *order of rank,*" he says, "how deeply a man can suffer." Those are not the words of an anti-moralist. Nor is there a trace of anti-moralism in it when he writes: "As far as torture and renunciation are concerned, the life of my last years can measure up to that of any ascetic at any time." For he does not write this in search of compassion, but rather with pride: "I *want,*" he says, "to have it as hard as any man can possibly have it." He made things hard for himself, hard up to sanctity, for Schopenhauer's saint ultimately always remained the highest type for him, and the "heroic life," that is the life of the saint. What defines the saint? That he does not one of all

the things he would like to do, and all the things he does not like to do. That is the way in which Nietzsche lived: "Renouncing everything I revered, renouncing reverence itself . . . Thou must become master over thyself, master also over thine own virtues." That is the act of "vaulting above the self" Novalis mentions somewhere and which, he thinks, is everywhere the supreme one. Now this "act" (an expression of showmen and acrobats) in Nietzsche's pen has not a whit of anything exuberantly able and saltatorial. Everything "choreographic" in his attitude is velleity and disagreeable in the extreme. It is much rather a bloody kind of self-mutilation, self-torment, moralism. His very concept of truth is ascetic: for to him truth is what hurts, and he would be suspicious of any truth that would cause him a pleasant sensation. "Among the forces," he says, "raised by our morals was truthfulness: the latter finally turns on morals, discovers its teleology, its *prejudiced* manner of observation." His "Immoralism" thus is the self-cancellation of morality for the sake of truthfulness. But that this in a way is exaggeration and luxuriation of morals he hints at by speaking of an inherited treasure of morality which could well afford to waste and throw out of the window a great deal without thereby becoming noticeably impoverished.

All this stands behind the atrocities and intoxicated messages of power, force, cruelty and political deception into which his thought of life as a work of art and of an unreflected civilization dominated by instinct, degenerates splendidly in his later writings. When at one time a Swiss critic, of the daily paper "Bund" in Bern, wrote that Nietzsche was entering a plea for the abolition of all decent sentiments, the philosopher was completely flabbergasted by being so utterly misunderstood. "Much obliged!" he said scornfully. For everything he had said he had intended to be very noble and humane, in the sense of a higher, more profound, prouder, *more beautiful* humanity, and he "had not really meant any harm" as it were, at any rate nothing evil, although a lot of wickedness. For everything that has depth, is wicked; life itself is profoundly wicked, it has not been thought up by morality, it knows nothing of "truth," but bases on sem-

blance and artistic lie, it mocks virtue, for its essence is ruthlessness and exploitation,—and, Nietzsche says, there is a pessimism of power, an intellectual predilection for what is hard, horrible, wicked, problematical in our existence arising from well-being, from a fullness of existence. This "well-being", this "fullness of existence" the diseased Euphorian ascribes to himself and takes it upon himself to proclaim the sides of life so far negated, especially negated by Christianity, as those most worthy of affirmation. Life above all! Why? That he never said. He never gave the reason why life should be something worthy of being adored unconditionally and preserved above all else, but only declared that life stood higher than apperception, *for* with life apperception destroyed itself. Apperception presupposed life for its existence and therefore had in it the interest of self-preservation. It thus seems that there must be life, in order that there may be something to apperceive. But it does seem to us as though this train of logic did not suffice to motivate his enthusiastic guardianship of life. If he would see in it the creation of a god, then we should have to respect his piety, even though personally we might find little cause to fall flat on our faces before the exploded cosmos of modern physics. But instead he sees in it a massive and senseless spawn of the will to power, and it is just its senselessness and its colossal immorality which is to give us cause for ecstatic admiration. His devotee's exclamation is not "Hosiana!" but "Evoe!" and this cry sounds extremely broken and tortured. It is supposed to deny that there is something more than biological in man which does not completely expend itself in its interest in life, the possibility of backing away from this interest, a critical detachment which perhaps is what Nietzsche calls "morals" and which indeed will never seriously harm that lovable life—for that it is much too irredeemable—but which nevertheless might serve as a feeble corrective and acuation of conscience, a function only Christianity has always exercised. "There is no fixed basis outside of life," Nietzsche says, "from where one might reflect on existence, no superior authority before which life could be *ashamed*." Really not? We have the feeling that such an authority does exist, and let it not be mor-

ality, then it is simply the human spirit in an absolute sense of the word, humaneness proper as critical ability, irony and liberty, combined with the word of judgement. "There is no superior judge above life"? But somehow nature and life go beyond themselves in man, in him they lose their innocence, they take on *spirit*—and spirit is the self-criticism of life. This humane Something within us has a doubtful look of compassion for a "healthful doctrine" of life that in sober days still goes against the historical disease, but later degenerates into a maenadic rage against truth, morals, religion, human kindness, against everything that might serve to tolerably domesticate that ferocious life.

As far as I can see, there are two mistakes which warp Nietzsche's thinking and lead to his downfall. The first one is a complete, we must assume: a deliberate, misperception of the power relationship between instinct and intellect on earth, just as though the latter were the dangerously dominating element, and highest time it were to save instinct from its threat. If one considers how completely will, urge and interest dominate and hold down intellect, reason and the sense of justice in the great majority of people, the opinion becomes absurd that intellect must be overcome by instinct. This opinion can be explained only historically, on the strength of a momentary philosophical situation, as a correction of rationalistic satiety, and immediately it requires counter-correction. As though it were necessary to defend life against the spirit! As though there were the slightest danger that conditions on earth could ever become too spiritualized! The simplest generosity should constrain us to shield and protect the weak little flame of reason, of spirit, of justice, instead of taking the part of power and instinct-governed life and parading a corybantic overestimation of its "negated" side, of crime,—the moronic effect of which we living today have just experienced. Nietzsche acts—and in so doing he has caused a great deal of trouble—as though it were our moral consciousness which, like Mephistopheles, raises an icy, satanic fist against life. As far as I am concerned, I see nothing particularly satanic in the thought (a thought long known to

mystics) that one day life might be eliminated by the power of the human spirit, an achievement which is still a long, an interminably long way off. The danger of life eliminating itself on this planet by perfecting the atom bomb is considerably more urgent. But that too is improbable. Life is a cat with nine lives, and so is humanity.

The second one of Nietzsche's errors is the utterly false relationship he establishes between life and morals when he treats of them as opposites. The truth is that they belong together. Ethics support life, and a man with good morals is an upright citizen of life,—perhaps a little boring, but extremely useful. The real opposites are ethics and *aesthetics*. Not morality, but beauty is linked to death, as many poets have said and sung,—and Nietzsche should not know it? "When Socrates and Plato started talking about truth and justice," he says somewhere, "they were not Greeks any longer, but Jews—or I don't know what." Well, thanks to their morality the Jews have proven themselves to be good and persevering children of life. They, together with their religion, their faith in a just God, have survived thousands of years, whereas the dissolute little nation of aesthetes and artists, the Greeks, very quickly disappeared from the stage of history.

But Nietzsche, far from any racial anti-semitism, does indeed see in Jewry the cradle of Christianity and in the latter, justly but with revulsion, the germ of democracy, the French Revolution and the hateful "modern ideas" which his shattering word brands as herd animal morals. "Shopkeepers, Christians, cows, women, Englishmen and other democrats" he says, for he sees the origin of the "modern ideas" in England (the French, he claims, were only their soldiers), and what he despises and curses in these ideas is their utilitarianism and their eudaemonism, the fact that they raise peace and happiness on earth as the highest objects of desire—whereas it is just such vile and weakly values the noble, the tragic, the heroic man kicks under his feet. The latter is necessarily a warrior, hard against himself and others, ready to sacrifice himself and others. The primary reproach he throws at Christianity is the fact that it raised the

individual to such importance that one could no longer *sacrifice* it. But, he says, the breed persists only through human sacrifice and Christianity is the opposing principle against natural selection. It has actually dragged down and debilitated the power, the responsibility, the high duty to sacrifice human beings and for thousands of years, until the arrival of Nietzsche, has prevented the development of that energy of greatness which "by breeding, and on the other hand by destroying millions of misfits, forms future man and does not perish from the never before existing misery he creates." Who was it that recently had the strength to take upon himself this responsibility, impudently thought himself capable of this greatness and unfalteringly fulfilled this high duty of sacrificing hecatombs of human beings? A crapule of megalomaniacal petty bourgeois, at the sight of whom Nietzsche would immediately have gone down with an extreme case of megrim and all its accompanying symptoms.

He did not live to see it. Nor did he live to see a war after the old-fashioned one of 1870 with its Chassepot and needle rifles and therefore he can, with all his hatred of the christian and democratic philanthropy of happiness, luxuriate in glorifications of war that appear to us today like the talk of an excited adolescent. That the good cause justifies war, is much too moral for him: it is the good war that justifies *any* cause. "The scale of values by which the various forms of society are judged today," he writes, "is completely identical with the one which assigns a higher value to *peace* than to war: but this judgement is antibiological, is itself a spawn of life's decadence . . . Life is a consequence of war, society itself a means for war." Never a thought that perhaps it might not be a bad idea to try and make something else of society than a means for war. Society is a product of nature which, just as life itself, bases on immoral premises; to assail these premises is equivalent to a treacherous attempt on life. "One has renounced the great life," he exclaims, "when one has renounced war." Renounced life and civilization; for in order to be refreshed, the latter requires thorough relapses into barbarism, and it is a vain whimsey to expect anything more in the nature of civilization and greatness from

humanity, once it has forgotten how to make war. He is contemptuous of all nationalistic stupidity. But this contempt apparently is an esoteric prerogative of a few individuals, for he describes outbreaks of nationalistic power-lusting and sacrificial frenzy with a kind of rapture which leaves no doubt that he wants to preserve for the nations, the masses, that "powerful phantasma" of nationalism.

An insert is necessary here. We have made the experience that under certain circumstances, unconditional pacifism can be a more than questionable, a deceitful and villainous thing. During long years, throughout Europe and the world it was nothing but the mask for fascist sympathies, and true friends of peace felt the peace of Munich, which in 1938 the democracies made with fascism, ostensibly to save the nations from war, to have been the lowest point of European history. The war against Hitler, or rather the mere readiness for it that would have sufficed, was ardently desired by these friends of peace. But if we picture to ourselves—and the picture rises inexorably before our eyes!—what perdition in every sense of the word is created even by a war fought in the interest of humanity, what loss of all sense for ethics, what a release of greedily egotistical and antisocial urges; if, taught by what we have already experienced, we form an approximate conception of what the world will look like—would look like—after the next, the third world war—then Nietzsche's rodomontades on the selective function of war that preserves civilization appear to us like the phantasies of an inexperienced novice, the son of a long period of peace and safety with "gilt-edged securities," a period that begins to be bored with itself.

Besides, since with astonishing prophetic prescience he predicts a sequence of monstrous wars and explosions, even the classical period of war, "to which men of the future will look with envy and reverence," the humanitarian deterioration and castration of humanity does not yet seem to be so dangerously advanced, and one cannot see why on top of this humanity still has to be philosophically incited to the selective massacre. Does this philosophy want to eliminate the moral scruples standing

in the way of the coming atrocities? Does it want to put humanity in training for its magnificent future? But it does this in a voluptuous manner which, far from calling forth our moral protest as intended, rather makes us sick and sorry for the noble spirit, here sensuously raging against himself. It goes painfully beyond mere education for manliness, when medieval forms of torture are enumerated, described and recommended with a titillation that has left its traces in contemporary German literature. It borders on the vile when "to console fraglings" the lesser susceptibility to physical pain of lower cases, e. g., the Negroes, is cited as a consideration. And then, when the song of the "Blond Beast" is intoned, "of the rejoicing monster," the type of man who "returns from the horrid performance of murder, arson, rape, torture,—exuberant as after a student's prank," then the picture of infantile sadism is complete and our soul squirms with pain.

It was the romantic Novalis, thus a spirit kindred to Nietzsche's, who gave the most striking criticism of this mental attitude. "The ideal of ethics," he says, "has no more dangerous competitor than the ideal of the utmost power, of the mightiest life, which has also been called (fundamentally very correctly, but very incorrectly interpreted) the ideal of aesthetic greatness. It is the maximum of the barbarian, and unfortunately in these times of degenerating civilization; it has found very many adherents precisely among the greatest weaklings. This ideal makes man into an animal-spirit, a mixture whose brutal wit is just the thing that has a brutal attraction for weaklings."

No one can say it better. Did Nietzsche know this passage? We cannot doubt that he did. But he did not let it disturb him in his intoxicated, consciously intoxicated and therefore not serious provocations of the "ideal of ethics." What Novalis calls the ideal of aesthetic greatness, the maximum of the barbarian, man as an animal spirit, is Nietzsche's superman, and he describes him as the "secretion of an excess in luxuriance of humanity, in the person of which a more powerful strain, a higher type of human being steps forth, who has different conditions of engendrure and preservation than average man."

These are the future masters of the earth, this is the ornate type of tyrant, whom to engender democracy is just right and who accordingly must use it as his tool, must introduce his new kind of morals by Machiavellistically linking to the extant law of ethics, by using its very words. For this frightful utopia of greatness, power and beauty would much rather lie than speak the truth,—it takes more intelligence and will power. The superman is that man "in whom the specific qualities of life—injustice, lie, exploitation are strongest."

It would be the greatest inhumanity, to counter all these shrill and tortured challenges with scorn and slight—and mere stupidity, to counter them with moral indignation. We are face to face with a Hamlet-like fate, a tragic destiny of apperception unbearably deep, one that inspires reverence and compassion. "I believe," Nietzsche says somewhere, "I have correctly guessed a few elements from the soul of highest man—*it may be that everyone* who guesses him correctly, *is destroyed.*" He was destroyed by it, and the atrocities of his teaching are too frequently pervaded by infinitely moving, lyrical sorrow, by profound glances of love, by sounds of melancholy yearning for the dew of love to quicken the arid, rainless land of his solitude, for scorn and revulsion to dare and emerge before such an Ecce Homo manifestation. But our reverence does find itself in something of a tight spot when that "socialism of the subjugated caste" which Nietzsche a hundred times scorned and branded as a poisonous hater of higher life, proves to us that his superman is nothing but the idealization of the fascist Fuehrer, and that he himself with all his philosophizing was a pacemaker, participating creator and prompter of ideas to European—to world fascism. Incidentally, I am inclined here to reverse cause and effect and not to believe that Nietzsche created fascism, but rather that fascism created him—that is to say: basically remote from politics and innocently spiritual, he functioned as an infinitely sensitive instrument of expression and registration, with his philosopheme of power he presaged the dawning imperialism and as a quivering floatstick indicated the fascist era

of the West in which we are living and shall continue to live for a long time to come, despite the military victory over fascism.

As a thinker who with his entire being seceded in the very beginning from the bourgeois world, he seems to have affirmed the fascist component of the post-bourgeois time and to have negated the socialist one, because the latter was the moral one and because he confused morals in general with bourgeois morals. But in his sensitiveness he was never able to withdraw from the influence of the socialist element on the future, and it is this fact which the socialists who denounce him as a fascist pur sang, do not understand. It is not as simple as all that,—despite everything that can be said for this simplification. One thing is true: his heroic contempt of happiness which was something extremely personal and politically of little use, seduced him to see the contemptible desire for the "green-pasture happiness of the herd animals" in every aspiration to do away with the most dishonoring social and economic evils, the avoidable misery on earth. It is not without reason that his word of the "dangerous life" was translated into the Italian and became a part of fascist slang. Everything he said in ultimate surexcitation against morals, humaneness, compassion, Christianity and for beautiful infamy, for war, for wickedness, was unfortunately well suited for taking its place in the trashy ideology of fascism, and aberrations like his "Morality for Physicians" with the precept of killing sick persons and castrating inferior individuals, his insistence on the necessity of slavery, added to this some of his race-hygenic precepts for selection, breeding and marriage, actually, even though perhaps without scientific reference to him, entered into the theory and the practice of National Socialism. If the word: "By the fruit of their deeds ye shall know them!" is true, then Nietzsche is in a bad way. With Spengler, his clever ape, the master-man of Nietzsche's dream has become the modern "realistic man of grand style," the rapacious and profit-greedy man who makes his way over dead bodies, the financial magnate, the war industrialist, the German industrial general manager financing fascism—in short, with Spengler, Nietzsche in one stupidly re-

stricted sense becomes the philosophical patron of imperialism—of which in reality he understood nothing at all. How otherwise could he have at every step shown his contempt for the peddler's and shopkeeper's spirit he considers as pacifistic, and in opposition to it have glorified the heroic one, the spirit of the soldier? The alliance between industrialism and militarism, their political unity in which imperialism consists, and the fact that it is the spirit of profit-making which creates wars, these things his "aristocratic radicalism" never even saw.

We should not let ourselves be deceived: Fascism as a trick to capture the masses, as the ultimate vulgarity and the most miserably anti-cultural loggerheadedness that ever made history, is foreign to the very depths of that man's spirit for whom everything centered around the query: "What is noble?"; fascism lies completely beyond his power of imagination, and that the German middle-class should have confused the Nazi assault with Nietzsche's dreams of a barbarism to renew civilization, was the clumsiest of all misunderstandings. I am not speaking of his contemptuous disregard of all nationalism, of his hatred for the "Reich" and the stultifying German power politics, his qualities as a European, his mocking scorn of antisemitism and the entire racial swindle. But I do repeat that the socialist flavor in his vision of the post-bourgeois life is just as strong as the one we might call fascist. What is it after all when Zarathustra exclaims: "I beseech you, my bretheren, remain true to earth! No longer bury your heads in the sand of heavenly things, but carry it freely, a head of this earth, creating the sense of earth! . . . Guide our dissipated virtue back to earth as I do—yea, back to life and love: that it may give a sense to the earth, a human sense!"? It means the will to pervade the material element with the human one, it means materialism of the spirit, it is socialism.

Here and there his concept of civilization shows a strongly socialist, certainly no longer a bourgeois coloring. He stands against the cleavage between educated and uneducated, and his youthful discipleship of Wagner signifies this above all: the end of the Renaissance civilization, that great age of the bour-

geoisie, an art for high and low, no more highest delights that would not be common to the hearts of all.

It does not testify of enmity against the workers, it testifies of the contrary, when he says: "The working men should learn to feel like soldiers: a recompensation, a salary, but not payment. They shall one day live like the middle-class does now, but *above* them, distinguishing itself by its lack of needs, the *higher* caste, i. e., poorer and simpler, but possessed of the power." And he gave odd instructions on how to make private property more moral: "Let all ways of collecting *small* fortunes by work be kept open," he says, "but prevent the effortless, the sudden enrichment, withdraw all branches of transport and commerce favorable to the amassing of *large* fortunes, thus particularly finances, from the hands of private individuals and companies—and consider those who possess too much as well as those who possess nothing as public enemies." The man who possesses nothing as a dangerous beast in the eyes of the philosophical small capitalist: that is Schopenhauer's idea. How dangerous is the man who possesses too much, is something Nietzsche learnt and added himself.

Around 1875, i. e., more than 70 years ago, he prophesied, not with much enthusiasm, but simply as a consequence of victorious democracy, a European League of Nations "in which each individual people, its frontiers drawn according to geographical suitability, has the position of a Swiss canton and its separate rights." At that time the perspective is as yet purely European. In the course of the following decennium it expands into the global and the universal. He mentions the unified economic administration of the earth as unavoidable in the future. He calls for as many international powers as possible—"to practise world perspective." His faith in Europe wavers. "Fundamentally the Europeans imagine that they now represent the higher type of human being on earth. Asiatic man is a hundred times more magnificent than European man." On the other hand he does believe it possible that in the world of the future the spiritual influence might rest in the hands of the typical European, a synthesis of the European past in the

highest, most spiritual type. "The mastery over the earth—Anglo-Saxon. The German element a good ferment, it does not know how to rule." Then again he foresees the intergrowth of the German and the Slavic races and Germany as a pre-Slavic station in history, preparing the way for a Panslavic Europe. The rise of Russia as a world power is entirely clear to him: "The power shared by Slavs and Anglo-Saxons and Europe in the role of Greece under the domination of Rome."

For an excursion into world politics, made by a mind who is essentially concerned only with the cultural task to produce the philosopher, the artist and the saint, these are striking results. Across approximately a century he sees just about what we see who live today. For the world, a newly forming concept of the world, is unity, and wherever, in whatever direction so enormous a sensibility turns and gropes forward, it senses the new, the coming and registers it. Purely intuitively, Nietzsche presages results of modern physics by fighting against the mechanistical interpretation of the world, by denying the existence of a causally determined world, of the classic "natural laws," of the repetition of identical cases. "There is no second time." Nor is there any computability on the basis of which a specific cause must be followed by a specific effect. The interpretation of an occurrence according to cause and effect is false. What does occur is a struggle between two elements unequal in power, a new arrangement of forces; and the new state of fact is something fundamentally different from the old one, by no means its effect. Dynamic therefore, instead of logical and mechanic. Nietzsche's "Intuition in the field of natural science," to paraphrase Helmholtz' words about Goethe, have a spiritual tendency, they want to achieve something, they fit into his philosopheme of power, his anti-rationalism and serve him to raise life above the law,—because the law itself already has something "moral" in it. But whatever this tendency, in the face of natural science, for which the "law" meanwhile has been reduced to mere probability and which has lost its faith in the concept of causality to a great degree, Nietzsche was proven right.

As does every other thought he has conceived, his ideas on physics take him right out of the bourgeois world of classical rationality into a new one wherein by his provenance he is himself the most alien guest. A socialism that refuses to credit him with this fact, excites the supposition that it belongs to the bourgeoisie much more than it is itself conscious of. We must drop the evaluation of Nietzsche as an aphorist without a central core: his philosophy as well as that of Schopenhauer is a completely organized system, developed from one single fundamental, all-pervading thought. But then of course this fundamental and initial thought is of a radical aesthetic nature, by which fact alone his perception and thinking must grow into irreconcilable opposition to all socialism. In the last analysis there are only two mental and inner attitudes: the aesthetic and the moral one, and socialism is a strictly moral way of looking at the world. Nietzsche on the other hand is the most complete and irredeemable aesthete known to the history of the human mind, and his premise containing his Dionysian pessimism: i. e., that life can be justified only as an aesthetic phenomenon, is most exactly correct of him, his life, his work as a thinker and a poet—only as an aesthetic phenomenon can it be justified, understood, venerated; consciously, down to the self-mythologization of the last moments and into insanity, this life is an artistic show, not only in its wonderful expression, but also in its innermost essence—a lyrical and tragical drama of the utmost fascination.

It is strange enough, though quite comprehensible, that aestheticism was the first guise in which the European spirit rebelled against the comprehensive morals of the bourgeois era. It was not without reason that I named Nietzsche and Wilde in one breath—they belong together as rebels and specifically as rebels in the name of beauty, even though with the German breaker of law tablets the revolt may go incalculably deeper and may cost incalculably more in suffering, renunciation, self-conquest. Indeed I have read in the writings of socialist critics, especially of Russian ones, that the aesthetic aperçus and judgements of Nietzsche's often were admirably fine, but that in

matters of moral politics he was a barbarian. This distinction is naive, for Nietzsche's glorification of the barbaric is nothing but an excess of his aesthetic intoxication, but it is of course true that this betrays a propinquity we have every reason to consider thoughtfully: just that propinquity of aestheticism and barbary. Toward the end of the 19th century, this sinister proximity was not yet perceived, felt, feared—otherwise Georg Brandes, a Jew and liberal writer, could not have discovered the "aristocratic radicalism" of the German philosopher as a new point of detail and have read propaganda lectures on it: a proof of the sense of security still extant at that time, the insouciance of the bourgeois era touching to its end,—a proof however also that the skilled Danish critic did not take Nietzsche's barbarism seriously, not at face value, that he understood it cum grano salis, in which he was very right.

From Nietzsche's aestheticism, which is a raging abnegation of the spirit in favor of the beautiful, strong and infamous life, i. e., the self-denial of a man who suffers deeply from life, there flows into his philosophical outpourings something unreal, irresponsible, undependable and passionately playful, an element of deepest irony that must foil the understanding of the more simple reader. Not only is it art what he offers—it is an art also to read him, and nothing clumsy and straightforward is admissible, every kind of artfulness, irony, reserve is required in reading him. Who takes Nietzsche at face value, takes him literally, who believes him, is lost. With him in truth it is the same as with Seneca whom he calls a man to whom one should lend his ear, but never "trust and faith." Is it necessary to cite examples? The reader of the "Case of Wagner", e. g., does not believe his eyes when, in a letter of the year 1888 addressed to the musician Carl Fuchs he reads: "You must not take seriously what I say about Bizet; as I am, Bizet for me is a thousand times of no account. But as an ironical antithesis against Wagner it is extremely effective." This is what remains, speaking "between you and me," of the enthralled eulogy on "Carmen" in the "Case of Wagner." This is startling, but only the least of it. In another letter to the same recipient he gives advice how

best to write about himself as a psychologist, author, immoralist: not judging with Yes and No, but characterizing with spiritual neutrality. "It is *not* at all necessary, not even *desirable,* to take my part in so doing: on the contrary, a dose of curiosity, as before a strange flower, with a bit of ironical opposition, would seem to me to be an incomparably *more intelligent* approach toward me.—Excuse me! I just wrote a few naivetiés—a little recipe to get adroitly out of something *impossible.*"

Has any author ever *cautioned* against himself in a stranger manner? "Anti-liberal to the point of meanness" he calls himself. Anti-liberal *because of* meanness, because of an urge for provocation, would be more correct. When in 1888 the emperor of the hundred days, Frederic III, the liberal married to an English princess, dies, Nietzsche is moved and depressed like all German liberals. "He was after all a small glimmer of *free* thought, Germany's last hope. Now begins the Stoecker regime:—I draw the consequences and already *know* that now my 'Will to Power' will first be confiscated in Germany . . ." Well, nothing is confiscated. As yet the spirit of the liberal era is too strong, everything may be said in Germany. In Nietzsche's mourning for Frederic however something quite plain, simple, unparadoxical, one may say: the truth, crops up unexpectedly: the natural love of the spiritual human being, of the writer, for *freedom* which is the very breath of his life—and all of a sudden the entire aesthetical phantasmagoria of slavery, war, brute force, magnificent cruelty stands somewhere far removed in the light of irresponsible play acting and colorful theory.

All his life he maledicted the "theoretical man," but he himself is this theoretical man par excellence and in the purest form; his thinking is absolute geniality, unpragmatical in the extreme, devoid of any pedagogical responsibility, profoundly unpolitical; it is in truth *without* any relation to life, that beloved, defended life raised above every other value, and never did he worry in the least about how his teachings might look in practical, political reality. The ten thousand doctrinaires of the irrational who, under his shadow, mushroomed out of the ground all over Germany did not do this either. Small wonder!

For nothing could be essentially better suited to the German nature than his aesthetic theorization. Also against the Germans, those vitiators of European history, as he calls them, he flung his sulphurate critical flashes of lightning and eventually he gave them credit for no good whatsoever. But who, in the last analysis, was more German than he, who was it that once more exemplarily demonstrated to the Germans everything by which they have become a terror and a scourge for the world and have ruined themselves: the romantic passion, the urge eternally to unfold the ego into the limitless without a definite object, the will that is free because it has no aim and strays into the infinite? Drunkenness and the inclination to suicide are what he called the characteristic vices of the Germans. Their points of danger lay in everything that fetters the powers of reason and releases the passions; "for the German's emotion is directed against his own advantage and self-destructive like that of the drunkard. Enthusiasm proper is worth less in Germany than in other places, for it is arid."—What does Zarathustra call himself? "Knower of self—hangman of self."

In more than one sense Nietzsche has become historical. He has made history, frightful history, nor did he exaggerate when he called himself "a fatality." He has aesthetically exaggerated his loneliness. He belongs, in an extremely German form, it is true, to a movement general throughout the West, which counts names like Kierkegaard, Bergson, and many others among its adherents and is a rebellion in the history of the human mind against the classical rationalist faith of the 18th and 19th centuries. It has achieved its object—or has only not yet fulfilled it in as far as its necessary continuation is the reconstitution of human reason on a new basis, the conquest of a new concept of humanitarianism which has gained added depth compared to the smug, shallow one of the bourgeois time.

The defence of instinct against reason and consciousness was a temporal correction. The permanent, eternally necessary correction remains the one exercised on life by the spirit or, if one so wants, by morals. How bound in time, how theoretical too, how inexperienced does Nietzsche's romanticizing about

wickedness appear to us today! We have learnt to know it in all its miserableness and are no longer aesthetic enough to fear professing our faith in good, to be ashamed of so commonplace concepts and guiding examples as truth, liberty, justice. The aestheticism under whose banner the free spirits rose against bourgeois morals, in the last analysis belongs to the bourgeois era itself, and to transcend this means stepping out of an aesthetic era into a moral and social one. An aesthetic philosophy of life is fundamentally incapable of mastering the problems we are called upon to solve—no matter how much Nietzsche's genius has contributed to the creation of the new atmosphere. At one time he presumes that in the coming world of his vision, the religious forces might still be strong enough to produce an aesthetic religion a la Buddha which would glide across the differences between the denominations—and science would have nothing against a new ideal. "But," he adds carefully, "it will not be general love of man!" And what if it would be just this?—It would not have to be the optimistic idyllic love for "humankind" to which the 18th century vowed gentle tears and to which, by the way, civilization owes enormous progress. When Nietzsche proclaims: "God is dead"—a decision which for him meant the hardest of all sacrifices—in whose honor, in whose exaltation did he do so other than of man? If he was, if he was able to be, an atheist, then he was one, no matter how pastoral and sentimental the word sounds, because of his love for humankind. He must accept being called a humanist, just as he must suffer having his criticism of morals understood as a last form of the enlightenment. The superdenominational religiousness he mentions I cannot conceive of other than tied to the idea of mankind, as a religiously based and tinted humanism which, deeply experienced, would have passed through a great deal and would accept all knowledge of what is infernal and demonic into its tribute to the human mystery.

Religion is reverence, reverence first of all for the mystery that is man. When a new order, new ties, the adaptation of human society to the requirements of a fateful moment in the history of the world are at stake, then decisions of conferences,

technical measures and juridical institutions are certainly of little avail and World Government remains a rational Utopia. It is necessary first of all to change the spiritual climate, to create a new feeling for the difficulties and the nobleness of human sentiency, an all pervading, fundamental philosophy from which no one exempts himself, which everyone deep within himself acknowledges as his supreme judge. Toward its creation and stabilization the poet and artist, working imperceptibly downward into breadth from on top, can contribute to some extent. But these things are not taught and made, they are experienced in suffering.

That philosophy is no cold abstraction, but experience, suffering and sacrificial deed for humanity, was Nietzsche's knowledge and example. In the course of it, he was driven upward into the icy wastes of grotesque error, but the future was in truth the land of his love, and for posterity, as for us, whose youth is incalculably indebted to him, he will stand, a figure full of delicate and venerable tragedy and enveloped by the flashing summer lightning that heralds the dawn of a new time.