

## **Beyond Good And Evil**

By: Friedrich Nietzsche

### Part Six: We Scholars

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At the risk that moralizing will here too prove to be what it has always been - namely an undismayed *montrer ses plaies*, as Balzac says - I should like to venture to combat a harmful and improper displacement of the order of rank between science and philosophy which is today, quite unnoticed and as if with a perfect good conscience, threatening to become established. In my view it is only' from one's experience experience always means bad experience, does it not? - that one can acquire the right to speak on such a higher question of rank: otherwise one will talk like a blind man about colours or like women and artists against science ('oh this wicked science', their modesty and instinct sighs, 'it always exposes the facts!'-). The Declaration of Independence of the man of science, his emancipation from philosophy, is one of the more subtle after-effects of the democratic form and formlessness of life: the self-glorification and presumption of the scholar now stands everywhere in full bloom and in its finest springtime - which does not mean to say that in this case self-praise smells sweetly. 'Away with all masters!' - that is what the plebeian instinct desires here too; and now that science has most successfully resisted theology, whose 'hand maid' it was for too long, it is now, with great high spirits and a plentiful lack of understanding, taking it upon itself to lay down laws for philosophy and for once to play the 'master' - what am I saying? to play the philosopher itself. My memory - the memory of a man of science, if I may say so! is full of arrogant naiveties I have heard about philosophy and philosophers from young scientists and old physicians (not to speak of the most cultured and conceited of all scholars, the philologists and schoolmen, who are both by profession -). Now it was the specialist and jobbing workman who instinctively opposed synthetic undertakings and capacities in general; now the industrious labourer who had got a scent of the *otium* and noble luxury in the philosopher's physical economy and felt wronged and diminished by it. Now it was that colour blindness of the utility man who sees in philosophy nothing but a series of refuted systems and a wasteful expenditure which 'benefits' nobody. Now a fear of disguised mysticism and a rectification of the frontiers of knowledge leaped out; now a disrespect for an individual philosopher which had involuntarily generalized itself into a disrespect for philosophy. Finally, what I found most frequently among young scholars was that behind the arrogant disdain for philosophy there lay the evil after-effect of a philosopher himself, from whom they had, to be sure, withdrawn their allegiance, without, however, having got free from the spell of his disparaging evaluation of other philosophers - the result being a feeling of ill humour towards philosophy in general. (This is the sort of after-effect which, it seems to me, Schopenhauer, for example, has had on Germany in recent years - with his unintelligent rage against Hegel he succeeded in disconnecting the entire last generation of Germans from German culture, which culture was, all things considered, a high point and divinatory refinement of the historical sense: but Schopenhauer himself was in precisely this respect poor, unreceptive and un-German to the point of genius.) In general and broadly speaking, it may have been above all the human, all too human element, in short the poverty of

the most recent philosophy itself, which has been most thoroughly prejudicial to respect for philosophy and has opened the gates to the instinct of the plebeian. For one must admit how completely the whole species of a Heraclitus, a Plato, an Empedocles, and whatever else these royal and splendid hermits of the spirit were called, is lacking in our modern world; and to what degree, in face of such representatives of philosophy as are, thanks to fashion, at present as completely on top as they are completely abysmal (in Germany, for example, the two lions of Berlin, the anarchist Eugen Dühring and the amalgamist Eduard von Hartmann) a worthy man of science is justified in feeling he is of a better species and descent. It is, in particular, the sight of those hotchpotch-philosophers who call themselves 'philosophers of reality' or 'positivists' which is capable of implanting a perilous mistrust in the soul of an ambitious young scholar: these gentlemen are at best scholars and specialists themselves, that fact is palpable! - they are one and all defeated men brought back under the sway of science, who at some time or other demanded more of themselves without having the right to this 'more' and the responsibility that goes with it - and who now honourably, wrathfully, revengefully represent by word and deed the unbelief in the lordly task and lordliness of philosophy. Finally: how could things be otherwise! Science is flourishing today and its good conscience shines in its face, while that to which the whole of modern philosophy has gradually sunk, this remnant of philosophy, arouses distrust and displeasure when it does not arouse mockery and pity. Philosophy reduced to 'theory of knowledge', actually no more than a timid epochism and abstinence doctrine: a philosophy that does not even get over the threshold and painfully denies itself the right of entry - that is philosophy at its last gasp, an end, an agony, something that arouses pity. How could such a philosophy rule!

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The perils in the way of the evolution of the philosopher are in truth so manifold today one may well doubt whether this fruit can still ripen at all. The compass and tower-building of the sciences has grown enormous, and therewith the probability has also grown enormous that the philosopher will become weary while still no more than a learner, or that he will let himself be stopped somewhere and 'specialize': so that he will never reach his proper height, the height from which he can survey, look around and look down. Or that he will reach this height too late, when his best time is past and his best strength spent; or damaged, coarsened, degenerate, so that his view, his total value judgement, no longer means much. Perhaps it is the very refinement of his intellectual conscience which makes him linger on the way and arrive late; he fears he may be seduced into dilettantism, into becoming an insect with a thousand feet and a thousand antennae, he knows too well that one who has lost respect for himself can no longer command, can no longer lead as a man of knowledge either, unless he wants to become a great actor, a philosophical Cagliostro and pied piper of the spirit, in short a mis-leader. This is ultimately a question of taste even if it were not a question of conscience. In addition to this, so as to redouble his difficulties, there is the fact that the philosopher demands of himself a judgement, a Yes or No, not in regard to the sciences but in regard to life and the value of life - that he is reluctant to believe he has a right, to say nothing of a duty, to come to such a judgement, and has to find his way to this right and this faith only through the widest - perhaps most disturbing and shattering - experiences, and often hesitating, doubting, and being struck dumb. Indeed, the mob has long confounded and confused the philosopher with someone else, whether with the man of science or

with the religiously exalted, dead to the senses, 'dead to the world' fanatic and drunkard of God; and today if one hears anyone commended for living 'wisely' or 'like a philosopher', it means hardly more than 'prudently and apart'. Wisdom: that seems to the rabble to be a kind of flight, an artifice and means for getting oneself out of a dangerous game; but the genuine philosopher - as he seems to me, my friends? - lives 'unphilosophically' and 'unwisely', above all imprudently, and bears the burden and duty of a hundred attempts and temptations of life - he risks himself constantly, he plays the dangerous game . . .

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In comparison with a genius, that is to say with a being which either begets or bears, both words taken in their most comprehensive sense - the scholar, the average man of science, always has something of the old maid about him: for, like her, he has no acquaintanceship with the two most valuable functions of mankind. To both of them, indeed, to the scholar and to the old maid, one concedes respectability, by way of compensation as it were - one emphasizes the respectability in these cases - and experiences the same feeling of annoyance at having been constrained to this concession. Let us look more closely: what is the man of science? An ignoble species of man for a start, with the virtues of an ignoble, that is to say subservient, unauthoritative and un-self-sufficient species of man: he possesses industriousness, patient acknowledgement of his proper place in the rank and file, uniformity and moderation in abilities and requirements, he possesses the instinct for his own kind and for that which his own kind have need of, for example that little bit of independence and green pasture without which there is no quiet work, that claim to honour and recognition (which first and foremost presupposes recognizability -), that sunshine of a good name, that constant affirmation of his value and his utility with which his inner distrust, the dregs at the heart of all dependent men and herd animals, have again and again to be overcome. The scholar also possesses, as is only to be expected, the diseases and ill breeding of an ignoble species: he is full of petty envy and has very keen eyes for what is base in those natures to whose heights he is unable to rise. He is trusting, but only like one who sometimes lets himself go but never lets himself flow out - , and it is precisely in the presence of men who do flow out that he becomes the more frosty and reserved - his eye is then like a reluctant smooth lake whose surface is disturbed by no ripple of delight or sympathy. The worst and most dangerous thing of which a scholar is capable comes from the instinct of mediocrity which characterizes his species: from that jesuitism of mediocrity which instinctively works for the destruction of the uncommon man and tries to break or - better still! - relax every bent bow. For relaxing with consideration, with indulgent hand, naturally, relaxing with importunate pity: that is the true art of jesuitism, which has always understood how to introduce itself as the religion of pity.

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However gratefully one may go to welcome an objective spirit - and who has not been sick to death of everything subjective and its accursed ipsissimosity! - in the end one has to learn to be cautious with one's gratitude too and put a stop to the exaggerated way in which the depersonalization of the spirit is today celebrated as redemption and transfiguration, as if it were the end in itself: as is usually the case within the pessimist school, which also has good reason to

accord the highest honours to 'disinterested knowledge'. The objective man who no longer scolds or curses as the pessimist does, the ideal scholar in whom the scientific instinct, after thousandfold total and partial failure, for once comes to full bloom, is certainly one of the most precious instruments there are: but he belongs in the hand of one who is mightier. He is only an instrument, let us say a mirror - he is not an 'end in himself'. And the objective man is in fact a mirror: accustomed to submitting to whatever wants to be known, lacking any other pleasure than that provided by knowledge, by 'mirroring' he waits until something comes along and then gently spreads himself out, so that not even the lightest footsteps and the fluttering of ghostly beings shall be lost on his surface and skin. Whatever still remains to him of his 'own person' seems to him accidental, often capricious, more often disturbing: so completely has he become a passage and reflection of forms and events not his own. He finds it an effort to think about 'himself', and not infrequently he thinks about himself mistakenly; he can easily confuse himself with another, he fails to understand his own needs and is in this respect alone unsubtle and negligent. Perhaps he is troubled by his health or by the pettiness and stuffiness of his wife and friends, or by a lack of companions and company yes, he forces himself to reflect on his troubles: but in vain! Already his thoughts are roaming, off to a more general case, and tomorrow he will know as little how to help himself as he did yesterday. He no longer knows how to take himself seriously, nor does he have the time for it: he is cheerful, not because he has no troubles but because he has no fingers and facility for dealing with his troubles. His habitual going out to welcome everything and every experience, the sunny and ingenuous hospitality with which he accepts all he encounters, his inconsiderate benevolence, his perilous unconcernedness over Yes and No: alas, how often he has to suffer for these his virtues! - and as a human being in general he can all too easily become the *caput mortuum* of these virtues. If love and hatred are demanded of him, I mean love and hatred as God, woman and animal understand them -: he will do what he can and give what he can. But one ought not to be surprised if it is not very much - if he proves spurious, brittle, questionable and soft. His love and his hatred are artificial and more of a *tour de force*, a piece of vanity and exaggeration. For he is genuine only when he can be objective: only in his cheerful totalism can he remain 'nature' and 'natural'. His mirroring soul, for ever polishing itself, no longer knows how to affirm or how to deny; he does not command, neither does he destroy. 'je ne méprise presque rien' - he says with Leibniz: one should not overlook or underestimate the *presque* Nor is he an exemplar; he neither leads nor follows; he sets himself altogether too far off to have any reason to take sides between good and evil. When he was for so long confused with the philosopher, with the Caesarian cultivator and *Gewaltmensch* of culture, he was done much too great honour and what is essential in him was overlooked - he is an instrument, something of a slave, if certainly the sublimest kind of slave, but in himself he is nothing - *presque rien*! The objective man is an instrument, a precious, easily damaged and tarnished measuring instrument and reflecting apparatus which ought to be respected and taken good care of; but he is not an end, a termination and ascent, a complementary man in whom the rest of existence is justified, a conclusion - and even less a beginning, a begetting and first cause, something solid, powerful and based firmly on itself that wants to be master: but rather only a delicate, empty, elegant, flexible mould which has first to wait for some content so as 'to form' itself by it as a rule a man without content, a 'selfless' man. Consequently nothing for women either, in parenthesis.

When a philosopher today gives us to understand that he is not a sceptic - I hope the foregoing account of the objective spirit has brought this out? - all the world is offended to hear it; thereafter he is regarded with a certain dread, there is so much one would like to ask him . . . indeed, among timid listeners, of whom there are nowadays a very great number, he is henceforth considered dangerous. It is as if, in his rejection of scepticism, they seemed to hear some evil, menacing sound from afar, as if some new explosive were being tested somewhere, a dynamite of the spirit, perhaps a newly discovered Russian nihiline, a pessimism bonae voluntatis which does not merely say No, will No, but - dreadful thought! does No. Against this kind of 'good will' - a will to the actual active denial of life - there is today confessedly no better sedative and soporific than scepticism, the gentle, gracious, lulling poppy scepticism; and even Hamlet is prescribed by the doctors of our time against the 'spirit' and its noises under the ground. 'Are our ears not already filled with nasty sounds?' says the sceptic as a friend of sleep and almost as a kind of security police: 'this subterranean No is terrible! Be quiet, you pessimistic moles!' For the sceptic, that delicate creature, is all too easily frightened; his conscience is schooled to wince at every No, indeed even at a hard decisive Yes, and to sense something like a sting. Yes! and No! - that is to him contrary to morality; on the other hand, he likes his virtue to enjoy a noble continence, perhaps by saying after Montaigne 'What do I know?' Or after Socrates: 'I know that I know nothing.' Or: 'Here I do not trust myself, here no door stands open to me.' Or: 'If it did stand open, why go straight in?' Or: 'What is the point of hasty hypotheses? To make no hypothesis at all could well be a part of good taste. Do you absolutely have to go straightening out what is crooked? Absolutely have to stop up every hole with oakum? Is there not plenty of time? Does time not have time? Oh you rogues, are you unable to wait? Uncertainty too has its charms, the sphinx too is a Circe, Circe too was a philosopher.' - Thus does a sceptic console himself; and it is true he stands in need of some consolation. For scepticism is the most spiritual expression of a certain complex physiological condition called in ordinary language nervous debility and sickliness; it arises whenever races or classes long separated from one another are decisively and suddenly crossed. In the new generation, which has as it were inherited varying standards and values in its blood, all is unrest, disorder, doubt, experiment; the most vital forces have a retarding effect, the virtues themselves will not let one another grow and become strong, equilibrium, centre of balance, upright certainty are lacking in body and soul. But that which becomes most profoundly sick and degenerates in such hybrids is the will: they no longer have any conception of independence of decision, of the valiant feeling of pleasure in willing - even in their dreams they doubt the 'freedom of the will'. Our Europe of today, the scene of a senselessly sudden attempt at radical class - and consequently race - mixture, is as a result sceptical from top to bottom, now with that agile scepticism which springs impatiently and greedily from branch to branch, now gloomily like a cloud overcharged with question-marks and often sick to death of its will! Paralysis of will: where does one not find this cripple sitting today! And frequently so dressed up! How seductively dressed up! There is the loveliest false finery available for this disease; and that most of that which appears in the shop windows today as 'objectivity', 'scientificity', 'l'art pour l'art, 'pure will-less knowledge' is merely scepticism and will-paralysis dressed up - for this diagnosis of the European sickness I am willing to go bail. Sickness of will is distributed over Europe unequally: it appears most virulently and abundantly where culture has been longest, indigenous it declines according to the extent to which 'the barbarian' still - or again - asserts his

rights under the loose-fitting garment of Western culture. In present-day France, consequently, as one can as easily deduce as actually see, the will is sickest; and France, which has always possessed a masterly adroitness in transforming even the most fateful crises of its spirit into something charming and seductive, today really demonstrates its cultural ascendancy over Europe as the school and showcase for all the fascinations of scepticism. The strength to will, and to will one thing for a long time, is somewhat stronger already in Germany, and stronger again in the north of Germany than in the centre of Germany; considerably stronger in England, Spain and Corsica, there in association with dullness, here with hardness of head - not to speak of Italy, which is too young to know what it wants and first has to prove whether it is capable of willing - but strongest of all and most astonishing in that huge empire-in-between, where Europe as it were flows back into Asia, in Russia. There the strength to will has for long been stored up and kept in reserve, there the will is waiting menacingly - uncertain whether it is a will to deny or a will to affirm - in readiness to discharge itself, to borrow one of the physicists' favourite words. It may need not only wars in India and Asian involvements to relieve Europe of the greatest danger facing it, but also internal eruptions, the explosion of the empire into small fragments, and above all the introduction of the parliamentary imbecility, including the obligation upon everyone to read his newspaper at breakfast. I do not say this, because I desire it: the reverse would be more after my heart I mean such an increase in the Russian threat that Europe would have to resolve to become equally threatening, namely to acquire a single will by means of a new caste dominating all Europe, a protracted terrible will of its own which could set its objectives thousands of years ahead - so that the long-drawn-out comedy of its petty states and the divided will of its dynasties and democracies should finally come to an end. The time for petty politics is past: the very next century will bring with it the struggle for mastery over the whole earth - the compulsion to grand politics.

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To what extent the new warlike age upon which we Europeans have obviously entered may perhaps also be favourable to the evolution of a new and stronger species of scepticism: on that question I should like for the moment to speak only in a parable which amateurs of German history will easily understand. That unscrupulous enthusiast for tall handsome grenadiers who, as king of Prussia, brought into existence a military and sceptical genius - and therewith at bottom that new type of German which has just triumphantly emerged - the questionable mad father of Frederick the Great, himself had on one point the grasp and lucky clutch of genius: he knew what was then lacking in Germany and which deficiency was a hundred times more alarming and pressing than any deficiency in culture or social polish - his antipathy for the youthful Frederick was the product of a deep instinctual fear. Men were lacking; and he suspected, with the bitterest vexation, that his own son was not enough of a man. In that he was deceived: but who would not have been deceived in his place? He saw his son lapse into the atheism, the esprit, the pleasure-seeking frivolity of ingenious Frenchmen - he saw in the background the great blood-sucker, the spider scepticism, he suspected the incurable wretchedness of a heart which is no longer hard enough for evil or for good, of a broken will which no longer commands, can no longer command. But in the meantime there grew up in his son that more dangerous and harder new species of scepticism - who knows to what extent favoured by precisely the father's hatred and the icy melancholy of a will sent into solitude? - the scepticism of audacious manliness,

which is related most closely to genius for war and conquest and which first entered Germany in the person of the great Frederick. This scepticism despises and yet grasps to itself; it undermines and takes into possession; it does not believe but retains itself; it gives perilous liberty to the spirit but it keeps firm hold on the heart; it is the German form of scepticism which, as a continuation of Frederick-ism intensified into the most spiritual domain, for a long time brought Europe under the dominion of the German spirit and its critical and historical mistrust. Thanks to the indomitably strong and tough masculinity of the great German philologists and critical historians (who, seen aright, were also one and all artists in destruction and disintegration), there became established, gradually and in spite of all the romanticism in music and philosophy, a new conception of the German spirit in which the trait of manly scepticism decisively predominated: whether as intrepidity of eye, as bravery and sternness of dissecting hand, or as tenacious will for perilous voyages of discovery, for North Pole expeditions of the spirit beneath desolate and dangerous skies. There may be good reason for warm-blooded and superficial humanitarians to cross themselves before precisely this spirit: cet esprit fataliste, ironique, mephistophelique Michelet calls it, not without a shudder. But if one wishes to appreciate what a mark of distinction is this fear of the 'man' in the German spirit through which Europe was awoken from its 'dogmatic slumber', one might like to recall the earlier conception which it had to overcome - and how it is not very long since a masculinized woman could, with unbridled presumption, venture to commend the Germans to Europe's sympathy as gentle, good-hearted, weak-willed and poetic dolts. One should at last have a sufficiently profound comprehension of Napoleon's astonishment when he caught sight of Goethe: it betrays what had for centuries been thought was meant by the 'German spirit'. 'Voila un Homme!' - which is to say: 'but that is a man! And I had expected only a German!'

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Supposing, then, that in the image of the philosophers of the future some trait provokes the question whether they will not have to be sceptics in the sense last suggested, this would still designate only something about them - and not them themselves. They might with equal justification let themselves be called critics; and they will certainly be experimenters. Through the name with which I have ventured to baptize them I have already expressly emphasized experiment and the delight in experiment: was this because, as critics body and soul, they like to employ experiment in, a new, perhaps wider, perhaps more dangerous sense? Will they, in their passion for knowledge, have to go further with audacious and painful experiments than the tender and pampered taste of a democratic century can approve of? - There can be no doubt that these coming men will want to dispense least with those serious and not indubious qualities which distinguish the critic from the sceptic: I mean certainty in standards of value, conscious employment of a unity of method, instructed courage, independence and ability to justify oneself; indeed, they confess to taking a pleasure in negating and dissecting and to a certain self-possessed cruelty which knows how to wield the knife with certainty and deftness even when the heart bleeds. They will be harder (and perhaps not always only against themselves) than humane men might wish, they will not consort with 'truth' so as to be 'pleased' by it or 'elevated' and 'inspired' - they will rather be little disposed to believe that truth of all things should be attended by such pleasures. They will smile, these stern spirits, if someone should say in their presence: 'This thought elevates me: how should it not be true?' Or: 'This work delights me: how should it not be beautiful?' Or: 'This artist enlarges me: how should he not be great?' - perhaps they will

have not only a smile but a feeling of genuine disgust for all such fawning enthusiasm, idealism, feminism, hermaphroditism, and he who could penetrate into the secret chambers of their hearts would hardly discover there the intention of reconciling 'Christian feelings' with 'classical taste' and perhaps even with 'modern parliamentarianism' (as such a conciliatory spirit is said to exist even among philosophers in our very uncertain and consequently conciliatory century). Critical discipline and every habit conducive to cleanliness and severity in things of the spirit will be demanded by these philosophers not only of themselves: they could even display them as their kind of decoration - none the less they still do not want to be called critics on that account. It seems to them no small insult to philosophy when it is decreed, as is so happily done today: 'Philosophy itself is criticism and critical science - and nothing whatever besides!' This evaluation of philosophy may enjoy the applause of every positivist in France and Germany (and it might possibly have flattered the heart and taste of Kant: one should recall the titles of his principal works): our new philosophers will still say: critics are the philosophers' instruments and for that reason very far from being philosophers themselves! Even the great Chinaman of Königsberg was only a great critic.

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I insist that philosophical labourers and men of science in general should once and for all cease to be confused with philosophers - that on precisely this point 'to each his own' should be strictly applied, and not much too much given to the former, much too little to the latter. It may be required for the education of a philosopher that he himself has also once stood on all those steps on which his servants, the scientific labourers of philosophy, remain standing - have to remain standing; he himself must perhaps have been critic and sceptic and dogmatist and historian and, in addition, poet and collector and traveller and reader of riddles and moralist and seer and 'free spirit' and practically everything, so as to traverse the whole range of human values and value-feelings and be able to gaze from the heights into every distance, from the depths into every height, from the nook-and-comer into every broad expanse with manifold eyes and a manifold conscience. But all these are only preconditions of his task: this task itself demands something different - it demands that he create values. Those philosophical labourers after the noble exemplar of Kant and Hegel have to take some great fact of evaluation - that is to say, former assessments of value, creations of value which have become dominant and are for a while called 'truths' - and identify them and reduce them to formulas, whether in the realm of logic or of politics (morals) or of art. It is the duty of these scholars to take everything that has hitherto happened and been valued, and make it clear, distinct, intelligible and manageable, to abbreviate everything long, even 'time' itself, and to subdue the entire past: a tremendous and wonderful task in the service of which every subtle pride, every tenacious will can certainly find satisfaction. Actual philosophers, however, are commanders and law givers: they say 'thus it shall be!', it is they who determine the Wherefore and Whither of mankind, and they possess for this task the preliminary work of all the philosophical labourers, of all those who have subdued the past - they reach for the future with creative hand, and everything that is or has been becomes for them a means, an instrument, a hammer. Their 'knowing' is creating, their creating is a law-giving, their will to truth is - will to power. - Are there such philosophers today? Have there been such philosophers? Must there not be such philosophers? . . .

It seems to me more and more that the philosopher, being necessarily a man of tomorrow and the day after tomorrow, has always found himself and bad to find himself in contradiction to his today: his enemy has always been the ideal of today. Hitherto these extraordinary promoters of mankind who have been called philosophers and have seldom felt themselves to be friends of knowledge but, rather, disagreeable fools and dangerous question-marks - have found their task, their hard, unwanted, unavoidable task, but finally the greatness of their task, in being the bad conscience of their age. By laying the knife vivisectionally to the bosom of the very virtues of the age they betrayed what was their own secret: to know a new greatness of man, a new untrodden path to his enlargement. Each time they revealed how much hypocrisy, indolence, letting oneself go and letting oneself fall, how much falsehood was concealed under the most honoured type of their contemporary morality, how much virtue was outlived; each time they said: 'We have to go thither, out yonder, where you today are least at home.' In face of a world of 'modern ideas' which would like to banish everyone into a corner and 'speciality', a philosopher, assuming there could be philosophers today, would be compelled to see the greatness of man, the concept 'greatness', precisely in his spaciousness and multiplicity, in his wholeness in diversity: he would even determine value and rank according to how much and how many things one could endure and take upon oneself, how far one could extend one's responsibility. Today the taste of the age and the virtue of the age weakens and attenuates the will, nothing is so completely timely as weakness of will: consequently, in the philosopher's ideal precisely strength of will, the hardness and capacity for protracted decisions, must constitute part of the concept 'greatness'; with just as much justification as the opposite doctrine and the ideal of a shy, renunciatory, humble, selfless humanity was appropriate to an opposite age, to one such as, like the sixteenth century, suffered from its accumulation of will and the stormiest waters and flood-tides of selfishness. In the age of Socrates, among men of nothing but wearied instincts, among conservative ancient Athenians who let themselves go - 'towards happiness', as they said, towards pleasure, as they behaved - and who at the same time had in their mouth the old pretentious words to which their lives had long ceased to give them any right, irony was perhaps required for greatness of soul, that Socratic malicious certitude of the old physician and plebeian who cut remorselessly into his own flesh as he did into the flesh and heart of the 'noble', with a look which said distinctly enough: 'do not dissemble before me! Here - we are equal!' Today, conversely, when the herd animal alone obtains and bestows honours in Europe, when 'equality of rights' could all too easily change into equality in wrongdoing: I mean into a general war on everything rare, strange, privileged, the higher man, the higher soul, the higher duty,, the higher responsibility, creative fullness of power and mastery - today, being noble, wanting to be by oneself, the ability to be different, independence and the need for self-responsibility pertains to the concept 'greatness'; and the philosopher will betray something of his ideal when he asserts: 'He shall be the greatest who can be the most solitary, the most concealed, the most divergent, the man beyond good and evil, the master of his virtues, the superabundant of will; this shall be called greatness: the ability to be as manifold as whole, as vast as full.' And, to ask it again: is greatness possible today?

What a philosopher is, is hard to learn, because it cannot be taught: one has to 'know' it from experience - or one ought to be sufficiently proud not to know it. But that nowadays all the world talks of things of which it cannot have experience is most and worst evident in respect of philosophers and the philosophical states of mind - very few know them or are permitted to know them, and all popular conceptions of them are false. Thus, for example, that genuinely philosophical combination of a bold exuberant spirituality which runs presto and a dialectical severity and necessity which never takes a false step is to most thinkers and scholars unknown from experience and consequently, if someone should speak of it in their presence, incredible. They imagine every necessity as a state of distress, as a painful compelled conformity and constraint; and thought itself they regard as something slow, hesitant, almost as toil and often as 'worthy of the sweat of the noble' - and not at all as something easy, divine, and a closest relation of high spirits and the dance! 'Thinking' and 'taking something seriously', giving it 'weighty consideration' - to them these things go together: that is the only way they have 'experienced' it. Artists may here have a more subtle scent: they know only too well that it is precisely when they cease to act 'voluntarily' and do everything of necessity that their feeling of freedom, subtlety, fullness of power, creative placing, disposing, shaping reaches its height - in short, that necessity and 'freedom of will' are then one in them. In the last resort there exists an order of rank of states of soul with which the order of rank of problems accords; and the supreme problems repel without mercy everyone who ventures near them without being, through the elevation and power of his spirituality, predestined to their solution. Of what avail is it if nimble commonplace minds or worthy clumsy mechanicals and empiricists crowd up to them, as they so often do today, and with their plebeian ambition approach as it were this 'court of courts'! But coarse feet may never tread such carpets: that has been seen to in the primal law of things; the doors remain shut against such importunates, though they may batter and shatter their heads against them! For every elevated world one has to be born or, expressed more clearly, bred for it: one has a right to philosophy - taking the word in the grand sense - only by virtue of one's origin; one's ancestors, one's 'blood' are the decisive thing here too. Many generations must have worked to prepare for the philosopher; each of his virtues must have been individually acquired, tended, inherited, incorporated, and not only the bold, easy, delicate course and cadence of his thoughts but above all the readiness for great responsibilities, the lofty glance that rules and looks down, the feeling of being segregated from the mob and its duties and virtues, the genial protection and defence of that which is misunderstood and calumniated, be it god or devil, the pleasure in and exercise of grand justice, the art of commanding, the breadth of will, the slow eye which seldom admires, seldom looks upward, seldom loves . . .