Beyond Good And Evil
By: Friedrich Nietzsche

Part Eight: Peoples and Fatherlands

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I have heard, once again for the fast time - Richard Wagner's overture to the Meistersinger: it is a magnificent, overladen, heavy and late art which has the pride to presuppose for its understanding that two centuries of music are still living - it is to the credit of the Germans that such a pride was not misplaced! What forces and juices, what seasons and zones are not mixed together here! Now it seems archaic, now strange, acid and too young - it has fire and spirit and at the same time the loose yellow skin of fruits which ripen too late. It flows broad and full: and suddenly a moment of inexplicable hesitation, as it were a gap between cause and effect, an oppression producing dreams, almost a nightmare - but already the old stream of wellbeing broadens and widens again, the stream of the most manifold wellbeing, of happiness old and new, very much including the happiness of the artist in himself, which he has no desire to conceal, his happy, astonished knowledge of the masterliness of the means he is here employing, new, newly acquired, untried artistic means, as his art seems to betray to us. All in all, no beauty, nothing of the south or of subtle southerly brightness of sky, nothing of gracefulness, no dance, hardly any will to logic; a certain clumsiness, even, which is actually emphasized, as if the artist wanted to say: 'it is intentional'; a cumbersome drapery, something capriciously barbarous and solemn, a fluttering of venerable learned lace and conceits; something German in the best and worst sense of the word, something manifold, formless and inexhaustible in the German fashion; a certain German powerfulness and overfullness of soul which is not afraid to hide itself among the refinements of decay - which perhaps feels itself most at ease there; a true, genuine token of the German soul, which is at once young and aged, over-mellow and still too rich in future. This kind of music best expresses what I consider true of the Germans: they are of the day before yesterday and the day after tomorrow - thy have as yet no today.

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We 'good Europeans': we too have our hours when we permit ourselves a warm-hearted patriotism, a lapse and regression into old loves and narrownesses - I have just given an example of it - hours of national ebullition, of patriotic palpitations and floods of various outmoded feelings. More ponderous spirits than we may have done with what in our case is confined to a few hours and is then over only after a longer period: one takes half a year, another half a life, according to the speed and power with which he digests it and of his 'metabolism'. Indeed, I can imagine dull, sluggish races which, even in our fast-moving Europe, would need half a century to overcome such atavistic attacks of patriotism and cleaving to one's native soil and to be restored to reason, I mean to 'good Europeanism'. And, while digressing on this possibility, I chanced to become the ear-witness of a conversation between two old 'patriots' - it is clear they
were both hard of hearing and thus spoke all the louder. 'He has and knows as much philosophy as a peasant or a fraternity student', said one of them: 'he is still innocent. But what does that matter nowadays! It is the age of the masses: they fall on their faces before anything massive. And in politics likewise. A statesman who builds for them another Tower of Babel, some monstrosity of empire and power, they call "great" - what does it matter if we, more cautious and reserved than they, persist in the old belief that it is the great idea alone which can bestow greatness on a deed or a cause. Suppose a statesman were to put his nation in the position of having henceforth to pursue "grand politics", for which it was ill equipped and badly prepared by nature, so that it had to sacrifice its old and sure virtues for the sake of a new and doubtful mediocrity - suppose a statesman were to condemn his nation to "politicizing" at all, while that nation had hitherto had something better to do and think about and in the depths of its soul still retained a cautious disgust for the restlessness, emptiness and noisy wrangling of those nations which actually do practise politics - suppose such a statesman were to goad the slumbering passions and desires of his nation, turn its former diffidence and desire to stand aside into a stigma and its pre-dilection for foreign things and its secret infiniteness into a fault, devalue its most heartfelt inclinations in its own eyes, reverse its conscience, make its mind narrow and its taste "national" - what! a statesman who did all this, a statesman for whom his nation would have to atone for all future time, assuming it had a future - would such a statesman be great?' 'Undoubtedly!' the other patriot replied vehemently: 'other-wise he would not have been able to do it! Perhaps you may say it was mad to want to do such a thing? But perhaps every-thing great has been merely mad to begin with!' 'Misuse of words!' cried the other: 'strong! strong! strong and mad! Not great!' The old men had obviously grown heated as they thus shouted their 'truths' in one another's faces; I, however, in my happiness and beyond, considered how soon a stronger will become master of the strong; and also that when one nation becomes spiritually shallower there is a compensation for it: another nation becomes deeper.  

Whether that which now distinguishes the European be called 'civilization' or 'humanization' or 'progress'; whether one calls it simply, without implying any praise or blame, the democratic movement in Europe: behind all the moral and political foregrounds indicated by such formulas a great physiological process is taking place and gathering greater and ever greater impetus - the process of the assimilation of all Euro-peans, their growing detachment from the conditions under which races dependent on climate and class originate, their increasing independence of any definite milieu which, through making the same demands for centuries, would like to inscribe itself on soul and body - that is to say, the slow emergence of an essentially supra-national and nomadic type of man which, physiologically speaking, possesses as its typical distinction a maximum of the art and power of adaptation. This process of the becoming European, the tempo of which can be retarded by great relapses but which will perhaps precisely through them gain in vehemence and depth - the still-raging storm and stress of 'national feeling' belongs here, likewise the anarchism now emerging - this process will probably lead to results which its naive propagators and panegyrists, the apostles of 'modern ideas', would be least inclined to anticipate. The same novel conditions which will on average create a levelling and mediocrizing of man - a useful, industrious, highly serviceable and able herd-animal man - are adapted in the highest degree to giving rise to exceptional men of the most dangerous and enticing quality. For while
that power of adapta-tion which continually tries out changing conditions and begins a new labour with every new generation, almost with every new decade, cannot make possible the powerfulness of the type; while the total impression produced by such future Europeans will probably be that of multifarious, garrulous, weak-willed and highly employable workers who need a master, a commander, as they need their daily bread; while, therefore, the democratization of Europe will lead to the production of a type prepared for slavery in the subtlest sense: in individual and exceptional cases the strong man will be found to turn out stronger and richer than has perhaps ever happened before - thanks to the unprejudiced nature of his schooling, thanks to the tremendous multiplicity of practice, art and mask. What I mean to say is that the democratization of Europe is at the same time an involuntary arrangement for the breeding of tyrants - in every sense of that word, including the most spiritual.

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I hear with pleasure that our sun is moving rapidly in the direction of the constellation of Hercules: and I hope that men on the earth will in this matter emulate the sun. And we at their head, we good Europeans!

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There was a time when it was usual to call the Germans 'profound', and this was meant as a term of distinction: now, when the most successful type of the new Germanism thirsts after quite different honours and perhaps feels that anything profound lacks 'dash', it is almost timely and patriotic to doubt whether that commendation of former days was not founded on self-deception: whether German profundity is not at bottom something different and worse - and something which, thanks be to God, one is on the verge of successfully getting rid of. Let us therefore try to learn anew about German profundity: all that is required is a little vivisection of the German soul. - The German soul is above all manifold, of diverse origins, put together and superimposed rather than actually constructed: the reason for that is its source. A German who would make bold to say 'two souls, alas, within my bosom dwell' would err very widely from the truth, more correctly he would fall short of the truth by a large number of souls. As a people of the most tremendous mixture and mingling of races, perhaps even with a preponderance of the pre-Aryan element, as the 'people of the middle' in every sense, the Germans are more incomprehensible, more comprehensive, more full of contradictions, more unknown, more incalculable, more surprising, even more frightening to themselves than other peoples are - they elude definition and are for that reason alone the despair of the French. It is characteristic of the Germans that the question 'what is German?' never dies out among them. Kotzebue certainly knew his Germans well enough: 'we are known' they cried to him jubilantly but Sand too thought she knew them. Jean Paul knew what he was doing when he declared himself incensed by Fichte's mendacious but patriotic flatteries and exaggerations - but it is likely that Goethe thought otherwise of the Germans than Jean Paul did, even though he agreed with him about Fichte. What Goethe really thought of the Germans? - But there were many things round him about which he never expressed himself clearly and his whole life long he knew how to maintain a subtle silence - he had no doubt good reason. What is certain is that it was not 'the Wars of Liberation' which made him look up more cheerfully, any more than it was the French
Revolution - the event on account of which he rethought his Faust, indeed the whole problem of 'man', was the appearance of Napoleon. There exist statements by Goethe in which, as if he was from another country, he condemns with impatient severity that which the Germans take pride in: the celebrated German Gemüt he once defined as 'indulgence of others' weaknesses, and one's own'. Was he wrong? - it is characteristic of the Germans that one is seldom wholly wrong about them. The German soul has corridors and interconnecting corridors in it there are caves, hiding-places, dungeons in it; its disorder possesses much of the fascination of the mysterious; the German is acquainted with the hidden paths to chaos. And as everything loves its symbol, the German loves clouds and all that is obscure, becoming, crepuscular, damp and dismal: the uncertain, unformed, shifting, growing of every kind he feels to be 'profound'. The German himself is not, he is becoming, he is 'developing'. 'Development' is thus the truly German discovery and lucky shot in the great domain of philosophical formulas - a ruling concept which, in concert with German beer and German music, is at work at the Germanization of all Europe. Foreigners are astonished and drawn by the enigmas which the contradictory nature at the bottom of the German soul propounds to them (which Hegel reduced to a system and Richard Wagner finally set to music). 'Good-natured and malicious' - such a juxtaposition, nonsensical in respect of any other people, is unfortunately too often justified in Germany: you have only to live among Swabians for a while! The ponderousness of the German scholar, his social insipidity, gets on frightfully well with an inner rope-walking and easy boldness before which all the gods have learned fear. If you want the 'German soul' demonstrated ad oculos, you have only to look into German taste, into German arts and customs: what boorish indifference to 'taste'! How the noblest and the commonest here stand side by side! How disorderly and wealthy this whole psychical household is! The German drags his soul, he drags everything he experiences. He digests his events badly, he is never 'done' with them; German profundity is often only a sluggish 'digestion'. And just as all chronic invalids, all dyspeptics, have an inclination for comfort, so the German loves 'openness' and 'uprightness': how comfortable it is to be open and upright! Perhaps it is the most dangerous and successful disguise the German knows how to use today, this confiding, accommodating, cards-on-the-table German honesty: it is his real Mephistophelean art, with its aid he can 'still go far'! The German lets himself go, and as he does so he gazes out with true blue empty German eyes - and other countries at once confound him with his dressing-gown! - I meant to say: whatever 'German profundity' may be - and when we are quite by ourselves we shall perhaps permit ourselves to laugh at it? we would do well to hold its appearance and good name in respect henceforth too and not to sell former old reputation as the profound nation too cheaply for Prussian 'dash' and Berlin wit and sand. It is clever for a people to be considered, to get itself considered, profound, clumsy, good-natured, honest, not clever: it might even be - profound! Finally: one ought not to be ashamed of one's own name - it is not for nothing one is called das 'tiousche' Volk, das Täusche-Volk . . .

The 'good old days' are gone, in Mozart they sang themselves out - how fortunate are we that his rococo still speaks to us, that his 'good company', his tender enthusiasm, his child-like delight in chinoiserie and ornament, his politeness of the heart, his longing for the graceful, the enamoured, the dancing, the tearful, his faith in the south may still appeal to some residue in us! Alas, some day it will all be gone - but who can doubt that understanding and taste for Beethoven will be
gone first! - for Beethoven was only the closing cadence of a transition of style and stylistic breach and not, as Mozart was, the closing cadence of a great centuries-old European taste. Beethoven is the intermediary between an old mellow soul that is constantly crumbling and a future over-young soul that is constantly arriving; upon his music there lies that twilight of eternal loss and eternal extravagant hope - the same light in which Europe lay bathed when it dreamed with Rousseau, when it danced around the Revolution's Tree of Liberty and finally almost worshipped before Napoleon. But how quickly this feeling is now fading away, how hard it is today even to know of this feeling - how strange to our ears sounds the language of Rousseau, Schiller, Shelley, Byron, in whom together the same European destiny that in Beethoven knew how to sing found its way into words! - Whatever German music came afterwards belongs to romanticism, that is to say to a movement which was, historically speaking, even briefer, even more fleeting, even more superficial than that great interlude, that transition of Europe from Rousseau to Napoleon and to the rise of democracy. Weber: but what are Freischütz and Oberon to us today! Or Marshner's Hans Heilin and Vampyr! Or even Wagner's Tannhäuser! It is dead, if not yet forgotten, music. All this music of romanticism was, moreover, insufficiently noble, insufficiently musical, to maintain itself anywhere but in the theatre and before the mob; it was from the very first second-rate music to which genuine musicians paid little regard. It was otherwise with Felix Mendelssohn, that halcyon master who was, on account of his lighter, purer, happier soul, speedily honoured and just as speedily forgotten: as the beautiful intermezzo of German music. But as for Schumann, who took things seriously and was also taken seriously from the first - he was the last to found a school - do we not now think it a piece of good fortune, a relief, a liberation that this Schumann-romanticism has been overcome? Schumann, fleeing into the 'Saxon Switzerland' of his soul, his nature half Werther, half Jean Paul, not at all like Beethoven, not at all Byronic! - his music for Manfred is a mistake and misunderstanding to the point of injustice - Schumann, with his taste which was fundamentally a petty taste (that is to say a dangerous inclination, doubly dangerous among Germans, for quiet lyricism and drunkenness of feeling), continually going aside, shyly withdrawing and retiring, a noble effeminate delighting in nothing but anonymous weal and woe, a kind of girl and noli me tangere from the first: this Schumann was already a merely German event in music, no longer a European event, as Beethoven was, as to an even greater extent Mozart had been - in him German music was threatened with its greatest danger, that of losing the voice for the coal of Europe and sinking into a merely national affair.

- What a torment books written in German are for him who has a third ear! How disgustedly he stands beside the slowly turning swamp of sounds without resonance, of rhythms that do not dance, which the Germans call a 'book'! Not to mention the German who reads books! How lazily, how reluctantly, how badly he reads! How many Germans know, or think they ought to know, that there is art in every good sentence - art that must be grasped if the sentence is to be understood! A misunderstanding of its tempo, for example: and the sentence itself is misunderstood! That one must be in no doubt about the syllables that determine the rhythm, that one should feel the disruption of a too-severe symmetry as intentional and as something attractive, that one should lend a refined and patient ear to every staccato, every rubato, that one
should divine the meaning in the sequence of vowels and diphthongs and how delicately and richly they can colour and recolour one another through the order in which they come: who among book-reading Germans has sufficient goodwill to acknowledge such demands and duties and to listen to so much art and intention in language? In the end one simply 'has no ear for it': and so the greatest contrasts in style go unheard and the subtlest artistry is squandered as if on the deaf. These were my thoughts when I noticed how two masters of the art of prose were clumsily and unsuspectingly confused with one another: one from whom words fall cold and hesitantly as from the roof of a damp cavern - he calculates on the heavy dullness of their sound and echo - and another who handles his language like a supple blade and feels from his arm down to his toes the perilous delight of the quivering, over-sharp steel that wants to bite, hiss, cut

How little German style has to do with sound and the ears is shown by the fact that precisely our good musicians write badly. The German does not read aloud, does not read for the ear, but merely with his eyes: he has put his ears away in the drawer. In antiquity, when a man read - which he did very seldom - he read to himself aloud, and indeed in a loud voice; it was a matter for surprise if someone read quietly, and people secretly asked themselves why he did so. In a loud voice: that is to say, with all the crescendos, inflections, variations of tone and changes of tempo in which the ancient public world took pleasure. In those days the rules of written style were the same as those of spoken style; and these rules depended in part on the astonishing development, the refined requirements of ear and larynx, in part on the strength, endurance and power of ancient lungs. A period is, in the sense in which the ancients understood it, above all a physio-logical whole, inasmuch as it is composed by a single breath. Periods such as appear with Demosthenes or Cicero, rising twice and sinking twice and all within a single breath: these are delights for men of antiquity, who knew from their own schooling how to value the virtue in them, the rarity and difficulty of the delivery of such a period - the have really no right to the grand period, we moderns, we who are short of breath in every sense! For these ancients were one and all themselves dilettantes in rhetoric, consequently connoisseurs, consequently critics - and so they drove their orators to extremes; in the same way as, in the last century, when all Italians and Italiennes knew how to sing, virtuosity in singing (and therewith also the art of melody -) attained its height with them. In Germany, however, there was (until very recently, when a kind of platform eloquence began shyly and heavily to flap its young wings) really but one species of public and ,fairly artistic oratory: that from the pulpit. The preacher was the only one in Germany who knew what a syllable, what a word weighs, how a sentence strikes, rises, falls, runs, runs to an end, he alone had a conscience in his ears, often enough a bad conscience: for there is no lack of reasons why it is precisely the German who rarely achieves proficiency in oratory, or almost always achieves it too late. The masterpiece of German prose is therefore, as is to be expected, the masterpiece of its great preacher: the Bible has been the best German book hitherto. Compared with Luther's Bible almost everything else is merely 'literature' - a thing that has not grown up in Germany and therefore has not taken and does not take root in German hearts: as the Bible has done.
There are two kinds of genius: the kind which above all begets and wants to beget, and the kind which likes to be fructified and to give birth. And likewise there are among peoples of genius those upon whom has fallen the woman's problem of pregnancy and the secret task of forming, maturing, perfecting - the Greeks, for example, were a people of this kind, and so were the French -; and others who have to fructify and become the cause of new orders of life - like the Jews, the Romans and, to ask it in all modesty, the Germans? - peoples tormented and enraptured by unknown fevers and irresistibly driven outside themselves, enamoured of and lusting after foreign races (after those which 'want to be fructified') and at the same time hungry for dominion, like everything which knows itself full of generative power and consequently 'by the grace of God'. These two kinds of genius seek one another, as man and woman do; but they also misunderstand one another - as man and woman do.

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Every people has its own tartuffery and calls it its virtues. The best that one is one does not know - one cannot know.

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What Europe owes to the Jews? - Many things, good and bad, and above all one thing that is at once of the best and the worst: the grand style in morality, the dreadfulness and majesty of infinite demands, infinite significances, the whole romanticism and sublimity of moral questionabilities - and consequently precisely the most attractive, insidious and choicest part of those iridescences and seductions to life with whose afterglow the sky of our European culture, its evening sky, is now aflame - and perhaps burning itself up. We artists among the spectators and philosophers are - grateful to the Jews for this.

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If a people is suffering and wants to suffer from nationalistic nervous fever and political ambition, it must be expected that all sorts of clouds and disturbances - in short, little attacks of stupidity - will pass over its spirit into the bargain: among present-day Germans, for example, now the anti-French stupidity, now the anti-Jewish, now the anti-Polish, now the Christian-romantic, now the Wagnerian, now the Teutonic, now the Prussian (just look at those miserable historians, those Sybels and Treitschkes, with their thickly bandaged heads -), and whatever else these little obfuscations of the German spirit and conscience may be called. May it be forgiven me that I too, during a daring brief sojourn in a highly infected area, did not remain wholly free of the disease and began, like the rest of the world, to entertain ideas about things that were none of my business: first symptom of the political infection. About the Jews, for example: listen. - I have never met a German who was favourably inclined towards the Jews; and however unconditionally all cautious and politic men may have repudiated real anti-Jewism, even this caution and policy is not directed against this class of feeling itself but only against its
dangerous immoderation, and especially against the distasteful and shameful way in which this immoderate feeling is expressed – one must not deceive oneself about that. That Germany has an ample sufficiency of Jews, that the German stomach, German blood has difficulty (and will continue to have difficulty for a long time to come) in absorbing even this quantum of ‘Jew’ – as the Italians, the French, the English have absorbed them through possessing a stronger digestion –: this is the clear declaration and language of a universal instinct to which one must pay heed, in accordance with which one must act. ‘Let in no more Jews! And close especially the doors to the East (also to Austria)!’ – thus commands the instinct of a people whose type is still weak and undetermined, so that it could easily be effaced, easily extinguished by a stronger race. The Jews, however, are beyond all doubt the strongest, toughest and purest race at present living in Europe; they know how to prevail even under the worst conditions (better even than under favourable ones), by means of virtues which one would like to stamp as vices – thanks above all to a resolute faith which does not need to be ashamed before ‘modem ideas.’; they change, when they change, only in the way in which the Russian Empire makes its conquests – an empire that has time and is not of yesterday –: namely, according to the principle ‘as slowly as possible’! A thinker who has the future of Europe on his conscience will, in all the designs he makes for this future, take the Jews into account as he will take the Russians, as the immediately surest and most probable factors in the great game and struggle of forces. That which is called a ‘nation’ in Europe today and is actually more of a res facto than nata (indeed sometimes positively resembles a res ficta et picta) is in any case something growing, young, easily disruptable, not yet a race, let alone such an aere perennius as the Jewish type is: these ‘nations’ should certainly avoid all hot-headed rivalry and hostility very carefully! That the Jews could, if they wanted – or if they were compelled, as the anti-Semites seem to want – even now predominate, indeed quite literally rule over Europe, is certain; that they are not planning and working towards that is equally certain. In the meantime they are, rather, wanting and wishing, even with some importunity, to be absorbed and assimilated by and into Europe, they are longing to be finally settled, permitted, respected somewhere and to put an end to the nomadic life, to the ‘Wandering Jew’ –; one ought to pay heed to this inclination and impulse (which is perhaps even a sign that the Jewish instincts are becoming milder) and go out to meet it: for which it would perhaps be a good idea to eject the anti-Semitic ranters from the country. Go out to meet it with all caution, with selectivity; much as the English nobility do. It is plain that the stronger and already more firmly formed types of the new Germanism could enter into relations with them with the least hesitation; the aristocratic officer of the March, for example: it would be interesting in many ways to see whether the genius of money and patience (and above all a little mind and spirituality, of which there is a plentiful lack in the persons above mentioned –) could not be added and bred into the hereditary art of commanding and obeying, in both of which the abovementioned land is today classic. But here it is fitting that I should break off my cheerful Germanomaniac address: for already I am touching on what is to me serious, on the ‘European problem’ as I understand it, on the breeding of a new ruling caste for Europe.

They are no philosophical race – these English: Bacon signifies an attack on the philosophical spirit in general, Hobbes, Hume and Locke a debasement and devaluation of the concept ‘philosopher’ for more than a century. It was against Hume that Kant rose up; it was Locke of
whom Schelling had a right to say: je méprise Locke'; in their struggle against the English-
mechanistic stultification of the world, Hegel and Schopenhauer were (with Goethe) of one
accord: those two hostile brother geniuses who strove apart towards the antithetical poles of the
German spirit and in doing so wronged one another as only brothers wrong one another. - What
is lacking in England and always has been lacking was realized well enough by that semi-actor
and rhetorician, the tasteless muddlehead Carlyle, who tried to conceal behind passionate
grimaces what he knew about himself: namely what was lacking in Carlyle - real power of
spirituality, real depth of spiritual insight, in short philosophy. - It is characteristic of such an
unphilosophical race that they should cling firmly to Christianity: they need its discipline if they
are to become 'moral' and humane. The Englishman, gloomier, more sensual, stronger of will
and more brutal than the German - is for just that reason, as the more vulgar of the two, also
more pious than the German: he is in greater need of Christianity. To finer nostrils even this
English Christianity possesses a true English by-scent of the spleen and alcoholic excess against
which it is with good reason employed as an antidote - the subtler poison against the coarser: and
indeed a subtle poisoning is in the case of coarse peoples already a certain progress, a step
towards spiritualization. English coarseness and peasant seriousness still finds its most tolerable
disguise in Christian gestures and in praying and psalm-singing: more correctly, it is best
interpreted and given a new meaning by those things; and as for those drunken and dissolute
cattle who formerly learned to grunt morally under the constraint of Methodism and more
recently as the 'Salvation Army', a spasm of penitence may really be the highest achievement of
'man' in which they can be raised: that much may fairly be conceded. But what offends in
even the most humane Englishman is, to speak metaphorically (and not metaphorically), his lack
of music: he has in the movements of his soul and body no rhythm and dance, indeed not even
the desire for rhythm and dance, for 'music'. Listen to him speak; watch the most beautiful
Englishwomen walk - in no land on earth are there more beautiful doves and swans - finally:
listen to them sing! But I ask too much . . .

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There are truths which are recognized best by mediocre minds because they are most suited to
them, there are truths which possess charm and seductive powers only for mediocre spirits one is
brought up against this perhaps disagreeable proposition just at the moment because the spirit of
respectable but mediocre Englishmen - I name Darwin, John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer - is
starting to gain ascendancy in the midregion of European taste. Who indeed would doubt that it
is useful for such spirits to dominate for a while? It would be a mistake to regard exalted spirits
who fly off on their own as especially well adapted to identifying, assembling and making
deductions from a host of little common facts - as exceptions they are, rather, from the first in no
very favourable position with respect to the 'rules'. After all, they have more to do than merely
know something new - namely to be something new, to signify something new, to represent new
values! The gulf between knowing and being able is perhaps wider, also more uncanny, than one
thinks: the man who is able in the grand style, the creator, might possibly have to be ignorant
while, on the other hand, for scientific discoveries such as Darwin's a certain narrowness, aridity
and industrious conscientiousness, something English in short, may not be an unfavourable
disposition. - Finally, let us not forget that the English, with their profound averageness, have
once before brought about a collective depression of the European spirit: that which is called
Even now France is still the seat of Europe's most spiritual and refined culture and the leading school of taste: but one has to know how to find this 'France of taste'. He who belongs to it keeps himself well hidden - it may be only a small number in whom it lives and moves, and they, perhaps, men whose legs are not of the strongest, some of them fatalists, gloomy, sick, some of them spoilt and artificial, such men as have an ambition to hide themselves. One thing they all have in common: they shut their ears to the raving stupidity and the noisy yapping of the democratic bourgeois. Indeed, it is a coarse and stupid France that trundles in the foreground today - it recently celebrated, at Victor Hugo's funeral, a veritable orgy of tastelessness and at the same time self-admiration. Something else too they have in common: a great will to resist spiritual Germanization - and an even greater inability to do so! Perhaps Schopenhauer has now become more at home and indigenous in this France of the spirit, which is also a France of pessimism, than he ever was in Germany; not to speak of Heinrich Heine, who has long since entered into the flesh and blood of the more refined and demanding lyric poets of Paris, or of Hegel, who today, in the shape of Taine - that is to say, in that of the first of living historians exercises an almost tyrannical influence. As for Richard Wagner, however: the more French music learns to shape itself according to the actual needs of the âme moderne, the more will it 'Wagnerize', that one can safely predict - it is doing so sufficiently already! There are nevertheless three things which, despite all voluntary and involuntary Germanization and vulgarization of taste, the French can still today exhibit with pride as their inheritance and possession and as an indelible mark of their ancient cultural superiority in Europe. Firstly, the capacity for artistic passions, for devotion to 'form', for which, together with a thousand others, the term fart pour fart has been devised - it has been present in France for three hundred years and, thanks to their respect for the 'small number', has again and again made possible a kind of literary chamber music not to be found anywhere else in Europe -. The second thing by which the French can argue their superiority to the rest of Europe is their ancient, manifold, moralistic culture, by virtue of which one finds on average even in little romanciers of the newspapers and chance boulevardiers de Paris a psychological sensitivity and curiosity of which in Germany, for example, they have no conception (not to speak of having the thing itself!). The Germans lack the couple of centuries of moralistic labour needed for this, a labour which, as aforesaid, France did not spare itself; he who calls the Germans 'naive' on that account commends them for a fault. (As antithesis to German inexperience and innocence in voluptate psychologica, which is not too
distantly related to the boringness of German company - and as the most successful expression
of a genuine French curiosity and inventiveness in this domain of delicate thrills, one should
observe Henri Beyle, that remarkable anticipator and forerunner who ran with a Napoleonic
tempo through his Europe, through several centuries of the European soul, as a detector and
discoverer of his soul - it needed two generations to overtake him, to divine once more some of
the riddles which tormented and delighted him, this strange Epicurean and question-mark who
was France's last great psychologist -.) There is yet a third claim to superiority: in the French
nature there exists a half-achieved synthesis of north and south which makes them understand
many things and urges them to do many things which an Englishman will never understand.
Their temperament, periodically turning towards the south and away from the south, in which the
Provençal and Ligurian blood from time to time foams over, preserves them from dreary
northern grey-on-grey and sunless concept-ghouliness and anaemia - the disease of our
German taste against whose excess one has at just this moment very resolutely prescribed blood
and iron, that is to say 'grand politics' (in accordance with a dangerous therapeutic which has
certainly taught me how to wait but has not yet taught me how to hope -). Even now there exists
in France an understanding in advance and welcome for those rarer and rarely contented men
who are too comprehensive to find their satisfaction in any kind of patriotism and know how to
love the south in the north and the north in the south - for the born Midlanders, the 'good
Europeans'. - It was for them that Bizet made music, that last genius to perceive a new beauty
and a new seduction - who has discovered a region of the south in music.

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Against German music I feel all sorts of precautions should be taken. Suppose one loves the
south as I love it, as a great school of convalescence, for all the diseases of senses and spirit, as a
tremendous abundance of sun and transfiguration by sun, spreading itself over an autonomous
existence which believes in itself: well, such a person will learn to be somewhat on guard against
German music because, by spoiling his taste again, it will also spoil his health again. Such a
southerner, not by descent but by faith, must, if he dreams of the future of music, also dream of
the redemption of music from the north and have in his ears the prelude to a deeper, mightier,
perhaps wicked and more mysterious music, a supra-German music which does not fade, turn
yellow, turn pale at the sight of the blue voluptuous sea and the luminous sky of the
Mediterranean, as all German music does; a supra-European music which holds its own even
before the brown sunsets of the desert, whose soul is kindred to the palm-tree and knows how to
roam and be at home among great beautiful solitary beasts of prey .... I could imagine a music
whose rarest magic would consist in this, that it no longer knew anything of good and evil,
except that perhaps some sailor's homesickness, some golden shadow and delicate weakness
would now and then flit across it: an art that would see fleeing towards it from a great distance
the colours of a declining, now almost incomprehensible moral world, and would be hospitable
and deep enough to receive such late fugitives.

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Thanks to the morbid estrangement which the lunacy of nationality has produced and continues
to produce between the peoples of Europe, thanks likewise to the shortsighted and hasty-handed
politicians who are with its aid on top today and have not the slightest notion to what extent the
politics of disintegration they pursue must necessarily be only an interlude - thanks to all this,
and to much else that is altogether unmentionable today, the most unambiguous signs are now
being overlooked, or arbitrarily and lyingly misinterpreted, which declare that Europe wants to
become one. In all the more profound and comprehensive men of this century the general
tendency of the mysterious workings of their souls has really been to prepare the way to this new
synthesis and to anticipate experimentally the European of the future: only in their foregrounds,
or in hours of weakness, in old age perhaps, were they among the 'men of the fatherland' - they
were only taking a rest from themselves when they became 'patriots'. I think of men such as
Napoleon, Goethe, Beethoven, Stendhal, Heinrich Heine, Schopenhauer; I must not be blamed if
I also include Richard Wagner among them: one should not let oneself be misled about him by
his own misunderstandings geniuses of his sort seldom have the right to understand themselves -
and even less, to be sure, by the unseemly noise with which he is opposed and resisted today in
France: the fact none the less remains that French lute romanticism of the forties and Richard
Wagner belong most closely and intimately together. They are related, fundamentally related, in
all the heights and depths of their needs: it is Europe, the one Europe, whose soul forces its way
longingly up and out through their manifold and impetuous art - whither? into a new light?
towards a new sun? But who could express precisely what all these masters of new means of
speech themselves did not know how to express clearly? What is certain is that they were
tormented by the same storm and stress, that they sought in the same way, these last great
seekers! One and all dominated by literature up to their eyes and ears - the first artists formed
and cultivated by world literature - most of them even writers and poets themselves and
mediators and minglers of the arts and senses (as a musician Wagner belongs among painters, as
a poet among musicians, as an artist as such among actors); one and all fanatics for expression
'at any cost' - I call particular attention to Delacroix, Wagner's closest relation - one and all
great discoverers in the realm of the sublime, also of the ugly and horrible, even greater
discoverers in effects, in display, in the art of the shop window, one and all talents far beyond
their genius - virtuosos through and through, with uncanny access to everything that seduces,
lures, constrains, overwhelms, born enemies of logic and straight lines, constantly hankering
after the strange, the exotic, the monstrous, the crooked, the self-contradictory; as human beings
Tantaluses of the will, plebeians risen in the world who knew themselves incapable, in their lives
and in their works, of a noble tempo, a lento - think of Balzac, for instance - unbridled workers,
almost destroying themselves through work; antinomians, fomenters of moral disorder,
ambitious, insatiable men without balance or enjoyment; one and all collapsing and sinking at
last before the Christian Cross (and with every right: for who among them would have been
profound or primary enough for a philosophy of anti-christ) - on the whole an audacious-daring,
splendidly violent, high-flying type of higher men who bore others up with them and whose lot
it was to teach their century - and it is the century of the mob! - the concept 'higher man' . . . .
Let the German friends of Richard Wagner deliberate whether there is in Wagnerian art anything
simply German, or whether it is not precisely its distinction that it derives from supra-German
sources and impulses: in considering which it should not be underestimated how indispensable
Paris was for the cultivation of his type, how the depth of his instinct drew him precisely thither
at the most decisive time, and how his whole manner of appearance and self-apostolate could
perfect itself only by his seeing its French socialist model. Perhaps a subtler comparison will
reveal that, to the credit of Richard Wagner's German nature, he fashioned stronger, more daring,
more severe and more elevated things than a nineteenth-century Frenchman could have done—thanks to the circumstance that we Germans are still closer to barbarism than the French—; perhaps the most remarkable thing Wagner created is even inaccessible, inimitable to the entire, so late Latin race for ever and not only for the present: the figure of Siegfried, that very free human being who may indeed be much too free, too hard, too cheerful, too healthy, too anti-Catholic for the taste of peoples of an ancient, mellow culture. He may even have been a sin against romanticism, this anti-Romantic Siegfried: well, Wagner amply atoned for this sin in his old, melancholy days when—anticipating a taste which has since become political—he began, with the religious vehemence characteristic of him, if not to walk at any rate to preach the road to Rome. — That these last words shall not be misunderstood I shall call to my aid a few powerful rhymes which will reveal what I mean to less refined ears too—what I object to in 'late Wagner' and his Parsifal music:

Is this still German?
From German heart this sultry ululating?
Of German body this self-lacerating?
German, this altar-priest prostration,
This incense-perfumed stimulation?
German this reeling, stumbling, tumbling,
This muddy booming bim-bam-bumbling,
This nunnish ogling, Ave-hour-bell chiming,
This false-ecstatic higher-than-heaven climbing?
— Is this still German?
Reflect! And then your answer frame:
For what you hear is Rome—Rome's faith in all but name!