

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

*The Anti-Christ, Ecce
Homo, Twilight of the
Idols, and Other
Writings*

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there! How barren it is, how lukewarm the spirituality has become! It would be a profound misunderstanding if you were to cite German scholarship as a counter-example – and proof positive that you have not read a single word I have written. For the past seventeen years I have been tireless in exposing the *dispiriting* influence of our present-day research industry. The tremendous scope of scholarship condemns every individual to a severe helotism these days, which is the main reason why people with fuller, richer, *more profound* dispositions cannot find an appropriate education *or educator* any more. There is nothing our culture suffers from *more* than the surfeit of arrogant do-nothings and fragments of humanity. Entirely in *spite* of themselves, our universities are the real hothouses for this sort of atrophy of the spiritual instincts. And the whole of Europe is aware of this – nobody is fooled by power politics . . . Germany is increasingly viewed as the *lowlands* of Europe. – I am still *looking* for a German who I can be serious with in my own way, – and even more for one I can be cheerful with! *Twilight of the Idols*: oh, is there anyone these days who can understand *the sort of seriousness* a hermit is recovering from here! – Our cheerfulness is the most incomprehensible thing about us . . .

4

After even a cursory assessment it is obvious not only that German culture is in decline, but that there are plenty of good reasons why this is the case. Ultimately, nobody can give more than they have – this is true for individuals and this is true for peoples as well. If you invest all your energy in economics, world commerce, parliamentarianism, military engagements, power and power politics, – if you take the quantum of intelligence, seriousness, will, and self-overcoming that you embody and expend it all in this *one* direction, then there won't be any left for the other direction. Culture and the state – let us be honest with ourselves here – these are adversaries: '*Kultur-Staat*' is just a modern idea. The one lives off the other, the one flourishes at the expense of the other. All the great ages of culture have been ages of political decline: anything great in the cultural sense is apolitical, even *anti-political*. – Goethe's heart leapt up at the phenomenon of Napoleon, – it sank back *down* with the 'Wars of Liberation' . . . Just as Germany is emerging as a great power, France's significance is changing to that of a *cultural power*. Even today, much of

what is new and serious, much of what is new and imbued with a sense of spiritual *passion* is migrating to Paris; the question of pessimism, for instance, the question of Wagner, almost all psychological and artistic questions get taken up there with incomparably greater finesse and care than in Germany, – the Germans are altogether *incapable* of this type of seriousness. – In the history of European culture, the rise of the '*Reich*' means one thing above all else: *a shift in emphasis*. Everyone already knows: in what matters most (which is still culture), the Germans have dropped out of the picture. People ask: do you Germans have a single spirit of European stature to show for yourselves these days? someone like your Goethe, your Hegel, your Heinrich Heine, your Schopenhauer? – The fact that there is not a single German philosopher any more is a never-ending source of amazement. –

5

The whole system of higher education in Germany has lost what matters most: the *goal* as well as the *means* to the goal. The fact that education, that *development* – and *not* 'the *Reich*' – is itself a goal, the fact that you need *educators* – and *not* schoolteachers or university scholars – to reach this goal, people have forgotten this . . . We need educators *who are themselves educated*, thoughtful, noble spirits, proven at every moment, proven by words and silences, the products of cultures that have grown ripe and sweet, – *not* the scholarly morons that schools and universities offer young people these days as 'higher wet nurses'. The *first* precondition of education is educators, and these are *lacking*, apart from exceptional exceptions: which is why German culture is in decline. – My distinguished friend Jakob Burckhardt in Basle is one of these rarest of exceptions: he is chiefly responsible for Basle's pre-eminence in humaneness. – German 'higher schooling' is in fact a brutal form of training that tries to process a horde of young men as quickly as possible for use – *and abuse* – in the civil service. 'Higher education' and *horde* – these are in contradiction from the outset. Any higher education is only for the exceptions: you have to be privileged to have the right to such a high privilege. Nothing great or beautiful could ever be common property: *pulchrum est paucorum hominum*.³¹ – What are the *conditions* for the decline of German culture? That 'higher education' is not a *privilege* any more – the democratization

³¹ Beauty is for the few.

is gone for developing a group of modest and self-sufficient types, Chinese types: and this would have been reasonable, this would have been nothing short of necessary. And what did we do? – We did everything possible to nip even the prerequisites for this move in the bud, – the instincts that let workers find their level, that let workers *be themselves*, have been smashed to the ground by the most irresponsible negligence. Workers were enlisted for the military, they were given the right to organize, the political right to vote: is it any wonder that workers today feel their existence to be desperate (expressed morally – to be an *injustice*)? But what do people *want*? We ask once more: what do they *will*? If you will an end, you have to will the means too: if you want slaves, then it is stupid to train them to be masters. –

41

‘What I do *not* mean by freedom . . .’⁶³ – In times like these, giving in to your instincts is just one more disaster. The instincts contradict, disturb, destroy each other; I even define *modernity* as physiological self-contradiction. A rational education would have *paralysed* at least one of these instinct systems with iron pressure so that another could gain force, become strong, take control. Today the individual would first need to be made possible by being *cut down and pruned*: possible here means *complete* . . . And the opposite is what happens: the people who make the most passionate demands for independence, free development, and *laissez aller*⁶⁴ are the very ones for whom no reins *would be too firm* – this is true *in politics*, this is true in art. But that is a symptom of *degeneration*: our modern concept of ‘freedom’ is one more proof of the degeneration of the instincts. –

42

Where belief is necessary. – Nothing is more rare among moralists and saints than honesty; they might say the opposite, they might even *believe* it. Because if a belief is more useful, effective, convincing than *conscious* hypocrisy, hypocrisy will instinctively and immediately become *innocence*:

⁶³ A play on the first line of Max von Schenkendorf's poem ‘Freedom’ (1813), which reads ‘the freedom I mean’.

⁶⁴ Letting go.

first principle for understanding great saints. Even with philosophers (another type of saint), their whole craft involves allowing only certain truths: namely the ones that their craft is publicly *sanctioned* to offer, – in Kantian terms, the truths of *practical* reason. They know what they *have to prove*; when it comes to this, they *are* practical, – they recognize each other by their agreement about ‘truths’. – ‘You should not lie’ – this means: *beware*, my dear philosopher, of telling the truth . . .

43

A word in the conservative's ear. – What people did not use to know, what people these days do know, can know –, a *regressive development* or turnaround in any way, shape, or form is absolutely impossible. This is something that we physiologists, at least, do know. But all priests and moralists have believed that it was possible, – they *wanted* to set humanity back – *to cut humanity down* – to an *earlier* level of virtue. Morality was always a Procrustean bed. Even politicians have imitated the preachers of virtue on this point: there are parties even today that dream about a world of crabs, where everything *walks backwards*. But no one is free to be a crab. It is no use: we *have to go forwards*, and I mean *step by step further into decadence* (– this is *my* definition of modern ‘progress’ . . .). You can *inhibit* this development and even dam up the degeneration through inhibition, gather it together, make it more violent and *sudden*: but that is all you can do. –

44

My idea of genius. – Great human beings are like the dynamite of great ages, representing the accumulation of enormous force; they always presuppose, historically and physiologically, that extensive protection, collection, accumulation, and storage procedures have taken place on their behalf, – that an explosion has not taken place for a long time. If the tension has reached too high a level, the most accidental stimulus will be enough to bring a ‘genius’, a ‘deed’, a great destiny into the world. And the environment, the age, the ‘Zeitgeist’, ‘public opinion’ – none of these matter! – Take the case of Napoleon. Revolutionary France (and pre-revolutionary France to an even greater extent) would have produced the opposite type of a Napoleon: in fact it *did*. And because Napoleon was

217

216

different, the heir to a civilization that was stronger, longer, and older than what was dying off in France, he became master, he *was* the only master there. Great human beings are necessary, the age in which they appear is accidental: they almost always become masters of these ages, because they are stronger and older and represent a greater accumulation. The relationship between a genius and his age is like the relation between strong and weak or old and young: the age is always much younger, flimsier, and less self-assured, much more immature and childish. — The fact that people in present-day France think about this *much differently* (and in Germany too: but this does not matter), the fact that the theory of the *milieu*, a true neurotics' theory, has become sacrosanct and almost scientific, that it has even caught on with physiologists, all this 'smells bad', this is a bad train of thought. — People in England hold these theories too, but no one is going to get depressed about that. For the English, there are only two ways of putting up with geniuses and 'great human beings': either *democratically* like Buckle, or *religiously* like Carlyle. — Great human beings and ages are extraordinarily *dangerous*: sterility and every type of exhaustion follows in their wake. A great human being is an end; a great age, the Renaissance, for instance, is an end. Genius — in works, in deeds — is necessarily wasteful and extravagant: its greatness is in *giving itself away* . . . The instinct for self-preservation gets disconnected, as it were; the overwhelming pressure of the out-flowing forces does not allow for any sort of oversight or caution. This is called 'sacrifice'; people praise 'heroism' because of a hero's indifference to his own well-being, his devotion to an idea, a great cause, a fatherland: but this is all a misunderstanding . . . A hero pours out, pours over, consumes himself, does not spare himself, — fatalistically, disastrously, involuntarily, as a river is involuntary when it overflows its banks. But because people owe a lot to these sorts of explosions, they have given them a lot in return, for instance, a *higher type of morality* . . . That is, in fact, the way human gratitude works: it *misunderstands* its benefactors.

45

The criminal and what is related to him. — The criminal type, this is a strong type of person under unfavourable conditions, a strong person made ill. He needs a wilderness, a nature and form of existence that is somehow freer and more dangerous; this is where all the arms and armour of a strong person's instincts *rightfully belong*. His *virtues* are ostracized by society;

his liveliest drives quickly fuse with depressive affects, with suspicion, fear, dishonour. But this is almost the *recipe* for physiological degeneration. When somebody is forced into secrecy and suspense, forced to be cautious and sly for a long time just to do what he does best and likes to do most, he will become anaemic; and because he only ever experiences danger, persecution, and disaster from his instincts, even his feeling turns against these instincts — he feels them fatalistically. It is in society, our tame, mediocre, emasculated society, that a natural person from out of the mountains or the adventures of the sea necessarily degenerates into a criminal. Or almost necessarily: there are cases where a person like this proves stronger than society: the Corsican Napoleon is the most famous case. Dostoevsky's testimony is significant for the problem at hand — Dostoevsky, by the way, the only psychologist who had anything to teach me: he is one of the best strokes of luck in my life, even better than discovering Stendhal. This *profound* human being (who was right ten times over for giving little value to the superficial Germans) lived among Siberian convicts for a long time, completely hardened criminals with no chance of ever returning to society; and he found them very different from what he had expected — they were cut from the best, hardest, most valuable wood that grows out of any Russian soil. If we generalize from the case of the criminal: we can imagine beings who, for some reason, lack public approval, who know that they are not seen as beneficial or useful, — that Chandala⁶⁵ feeling that you are not seen as equal but as excluded, — unworthy, polluted. All creatures like this have a subterranean hue to their thoughts and actions; everything about them is paler than in people whose beings are touched by daylight. But almost all forms of existence that we think well of today used to live in this half-funereal atmosphere: the scientific character, the artist, the genius, the free spirit, the actor, the merchant, the great discoverer . . . As long as *priests* are considered the highest type, *every* valuable type of person was devalued . . . The time will come — I promise — when the priest will be considered the *lowest* type, *our* Chandala, the most insincere, the most indecent type of person . . . Look how even today, under the mildest regimen of manners that has ever ruled the earth (or at least Europe), every deviation, every long, all too long *stay below*, every unusual or opaque form of existence, brings you closer to the type perfected in the criminal. All innovators of the spirit have at some

⁶⁵ Untouchable.

point had that pale and fatalistic sign of the Chandala on their foreheads: not because they were seen this way, but rather because they themselves felt a terrible gap separating them from everything conventional and honourable. Almost every genius has experienced the 'Catilinarian existence' as one aspect of his development: a hateful, vengeful, rebellious feeling against everything that already *is*, that has stopped *becoming* . . . Catiline – the pre-existing form of *every* Caesar. –

46

*Here the view is free.*⁶⁶ – It can be loftiness of the soul when a philosopher is silent; it can be love when he contradicts himself; it can be a courtesy of the knower to tell a lie. It took subtlety to say: *il est indigne des grand cœurs de répandre le trouble, qu'ils ressentent*⁶⁷: only it must be added that it can also be greatness of soul not to be afraid in front of *what is most unworthy*. A woman who loves will sacrifice her honour; a knower who 'loves' may, perhaps, sacrifice his humanity; a god who loved became a Jew . . .

47

Beauty is no accident. – Even the beauty of a race or family, the grace and goodness in all its gestures, have been worked on: beauty, like genius, is the final result of the accumulated labour of generations. You need to have made considerable sacrifices for good taste; you need to have done many things, left many things undone for its sake (seventeenth-century France is admirable in both respects); good taste needs to have provided you with a principle of selection for company, location, clothing, sexual satisfaction; beauty needs to have been given preference over advantage, habit, opinion, inertia. The highest guiding principle: you cannot 'let yourself go', even in front of yourself. – Good things are inordinately expensive: and it is always the case that the one who *has* them is different from the one who *acquires* them. All good things are inherited: anything that is not inherited is imperfect, a beginning . . . Cicero registered his surprise at seeing how the men and boys of contemporary Athens were far and away more beautiful than the women: but look at how much work

⁶⁶ This line is taken from the final scene of Goethe, *Faust*, Part II.
⁶⁷ It is unworthy of great hearts to share the agitation that they feel.

220

and exertion in the service of beauty Athenian males had demanded of themselves for centuries! – Make no mistake about the method at work here: a simple discipline of feeling and thought amounts to practically nothing (– this is the great misunderstanding of German education, which is totally illusory): you first need to persuade the *body*. Strict adherence to significant and refined gestures and an obligation to live only with people who do not 'let themselves go' is more than enough to become significant and refined: two or three generations later and everything is already *internalized*. It is crucial for the fate of individuals as well as peoples that culture begin in the *right* place – *not* in the 'soul' (which was the disastrous superstition of priests and half-priests): the right place is the body, gestures, diet, physiology, *everything else* follows from this . . . This is why the Greeks are the *first cultural event* in history – they knew, they *did*, what needed to be done; Christianity, which despised the body, has been the greatest disaster for humanity so far. –

48

Progress, in my sense. – I talk about a 'return to nature' too, although it is not really a going-back as much as a *coming-towards* – towards a high, free, even terrible nature and naturalness, the sort of nature that plays, that *can* play, with great tasks . . . To speak *allegorically*: Napoleon was a piece of 'return to nature', as I understand it (*in rebus tacticis*,⁶⁸ for instance, or even better: *strategically*, as soldiers know). – But Rousseau – what did *he* really want to return to? Rousseau, this first modern person, idealist and rabble rolled into one; who needed moral 'dignity' in order to stand the sight of himself; sick from unrestrained vanity and unrestrained self-contempt. Even this deformity of a person who lay himself down on the threshold of a new age wanted to 'return to nature' – but once again: what did Rousseau want to return to? – I still hate Rousseau in the Revolution; it is the world-historical expression of this duality of idealist and rabble. I do not really care about the bloody farce played out in this Revolution, its 'immorality': what I hate is its Rousseauian *mortality* – the so-called 'truths' that give the Revolution its lasting effectiveness, attracting everything flat and mediocre. The doctrine of equality! . . . But no poison is more poisonous than this: because it *seems* as if justice itself

⁶⁸ In tactical matters.

221

is preaching here, while in fact it is the *end* of justice . . . 'Equality for the equal, inequality for the unequal' – that is what justice would *really* say: along with its corollary, 'never make the unequal equal'. – But the doctrine of equality was ushered in with such horror and bloodletting that this 'modern idea' *par excellence* acquired a type of glory and radiance, so that even the most noble spirits were seduced to the Revolution as a piece of *theatre*. But at the end of the day, this is no reason to keep treating it with respect. – I see only one person who perceived it correctly: with *disgust* – Goethe . . .

49

Goethe – not a German event but a European one: a magnificent attempt to overcome the eighteenth century by returning to nature, by coming *towards* the naturalness of the Renaissance, a type of self-overcoming on the part of that century. – He carried its strongest instincts within himself: sensibility, nature-idolatry, anti-historicism, idealism, as well as its unreality and revolutionary tendency (which, in the end, is only a form of unreality). He made use of history, science, antiquity, and Spinoza too, but above all he made use of practical activity; he adapted himself to resolutely closed horizons; he did not remove himself from life, he put himself squarely in the middle of it; he did not despair, and he took as much as he could on himself, to himself, in himself. What he wanted was *totality*; he fought against the separation of reason, sensibility, feeling, will (– preached in the most forbiddingly scholastic way by *Kant*, Goethe's antipode), he disciplined himself to wholeness, he *created* himself . . . In the middle of an age inclined to unreality, Goethe was a convinced realist: he said yes to everything related to him, – his greatest experience was of that *ens realissimum*⁶⁹ that went by the name of Napoleon. Goethe conceived of a strong, highly educated, self-respecting human being, skilled in all things physical and able to keep himself in check, who could dare to allow himself the entire expanse and wealth of naturalness, who is strong enough for this freedom; a person who is tolerant out of strength and not weakness because he knows how to take advantage of things that would destroy an average nature; a person lacking all prohibitions except for *weakness*, whether it is called a vice or a virtue . . . A spirit like this who

⁶⁹ The most real thing.

222

has become *free* stands in the middle of the world with a cheerful and trusting fatalism in the *belief* that only the individual is reprehensible, that everything is redeemed and affirmed in the whole – *he does not negate any more* . . . But a belief like this is the highest of all possible beliefs: I have christened it with the name *Dionysus*. –

50

You could say that in some ways Goethe and the nineteenth century shared the same aspirations: a universality in understanding, in approving, an attitude of letting everything come close to you, a bold realism, a respect for everything objective. How is it that the overall result of the nineteenth century was not a Goethe but a chaos, a nihilistic sigh, a loss of all bearings, an instinct of fatigue that *in praxi* keeps trying to *fall back into the eighteenth century*? (– as romanticism of feeling, for instance, as altruism and hyper-sentimentality, as feminism in taste, as socialism in politics.) Isn't the nineteenth century (and particularly as it is on its way out) just an intensified, *brutalized* eighteenth century, which is to say a *decadent* century? So that Goethe was just a passing interlude, lovely but to no avail, and not just for Germany but for all of Europe as well? – but you misunderstand great human beings if you look at them from the pathetic perspective of public utility. Perhaps *not* knowing how to make use of them is just *another aspect of greatness* . . .

51

Goethe is the last German I have any respect for; he would have felt three things that I feel, – and we are also in agreement about the 'cross' . . .⁷⁰ I am often asked why I bother writing in *German*: my worst readers are in my homeland. But who says that I even *want* to be read these days? – To create things that stand the test of time; striving for a little immortality in form, *in substance* – I have never been modest enough to demand less of myself. I am the first German to have mastered the aphorism; and aphorisms are the forms of 'eternity'; my ambition is to say in ten sentences what other people say in a book, – what other people do *not* say in a book . . .

I have given humanity the most profound book in its possession, my *Zarathustra*: soon I will give it its most independent. –

⁷⁰ See Goethe, *Venetian Epigrams* 66.

223

late at night – I arrived in Turin on the afternoon of the 21st, my *proven* place, my residence from then on. I took the same apartment that I had in the spring, via Carlo Alberto 6, III, across from the enormous Palazzo Carignano where Vittorio Emanuele was born, with a view of the Piazza Carlo Alberto and the hills beyond. I went back to work without delay: only the last quarter of the work was left to be done. Great victory on 30 September; the conclusion of the *Revaluation*; the leisure of a god walking along the river Po. That same day, I wrote the Preface to *Twilight of the Idols*: I had corrected the manuscript for it in September, as my recuperation. – I never experienced an autumn like this before, I never thought anything like this could happen on earth, – a Claude Lorrain projected out to infinity, every day having the same tremendous perfection. –

THE CASE OF WAGNER

A Musician's Problem

I

To be fair to this work, you need to suffer from the destiny of music as if it were an open wound. – *What* do I suffer from when I suffer from the destiny of music? From the fact that music has been robbed of its world-transfiguring, affirmative character – that it has become decadent and is not the flute of Dionysus any more. . . . But if you experience the problems of music as if they were your *own* problems, your *own* tale of woe, you will find this text very considerate and unusually mild. In cases like this, to be cheerful and to have a sense of humour about yourself too – *ridendo dicere severum*,⁷³ where the *verum dicere*⁷⁴ would justify any hardness – is humaneness itself. Who really doubts that I, old artilleryman that I am, had it in me to use my *heavy* guns against Wagner? – I held back everything decisive in this matter, – I loved Wagner. – Ultimately, the meaning and pathway of my task entailed an attack on a subtler 'unknown', one whose identity will not be readily apparent, – oh, I have 'unknowns' to expose of a very different kind than some Cagliostro of music – even more, of course, an attack on a German nation that keeps getting *lazier*, losing its instinct in spiritual matters and becoming more and more *honest*, a nation with an enviable appetite that keeps nourishing itself on oppositions, swallowing

⁷³ Saying what is sombre through what is laughable.

⁷⁴ Speaking the truth.

'faith' as well as science, 'Christian love' as well as anti-Semitism, the will to power (to '*Reich*') as well as the *évangile des humbles*,⁷⁵ and all this without any indigestion. . . . This failure to take sides when presented with opposites! This neutrality and 'selflessness' of the stomach! This sense of justice of the German *palate* that gives everything equal rights, – that likes everything it tastes. . . . There is no doubt about it, Germans are idealists. . . . The last time I visited Germany, I found the German taste busy conferring equal rights on Wagner and the *Trumpeter of Säckingen*,⁷⁶ in Leipzig, I *personally* witnessed the founding of a Liszt Society in honour of one of the most authentic and German musicians (in the old sense of the word 'German', not just an imperial German), the master *Heinrich Schütz*, with the goal of cultivating and disseminating *sly* church music⁷⁷. . . . There is no doubt about it, Germans are idealists. . . .

2

But at this point, nothing should stop me from becoming blunt and telling the Germans a couple of harsh truths: *who else would do it?* – I am talking about their indecency in *historiis*. It is not just that German historians have entirely lost the *greater perspective* on the workings and value of culture, that they are all political (or ecclesiastical –) clowns: they have actually *banned* this greater perspective. First you need to be 'German', you need to have 'breeding', then you can make decisions about all values and un-values in *historiis* – you determine them. . . . 'German' is an argument, '*Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles*'⁷⁸ is a principle, the Teutons represent the 'moral world order' in history; in relation to the *imperium romanum* they are the bearers of freedom, in relation to the eighteenth century they bring back morality, the 'categorical imperative'. . . . There is a German, imperial way of writing history, I am afraid there is even an anti-Semitic way, – there is a *courly* way of writing history and Herr von Treitschke is not ashamed. . . . An idiotic judgment in *historiis*, a claim made by Vischer – an aesthetic Swabian, fortunately a deceased one – recently made the rounds of the German newspapers as a 'truth' that every German *has to assent to*: 'The Renaissance and the Reformation, only together do they form a whole – aesthetic rebirth and ethical

⁷⁵ Gospel of the humble.

⁷⁶ Epic poem by Josef Viktor Scheffel. ⁷⁷ A pun on 'Liszt': *lising* is German for sly.

⁷⁸ '*Germany, Germany above everything*', the first line of the German national anthem.

rebirth.' – I do not have any patience for this sort of assertion, and I feel the need, I even feel it is my duty, to tell the Germans just what they have on their conscience. They have all the great cultural crimes of the past four hundred years on their conscience! . . . And always for the same reason, their innermost cowardice in the face of reality, which is also cowardice in the face of the truth; untruthfulness that has become instinctive for them, their 'idealism' . . . The Germans have robbed Europe of the harvest, the meaning, of the last great age, the age of the Renaissance, at a moment when a higher order of values, the noble, life-affirming values, the values that guarantee the future, had triumphed; they had triumphed, moreover, at the very spot where the opposing values reside, the values of decline – they had even triumphed in the instincts of those who reside there! Luther, this disaster of a monk, re-established the church and – what is a thousand times worse – Christianity, just when it had been defeated . . . Christianity, this denial of the will to life made into a religion! . . . Luther, an impossible monk who attacked the church because of his own 'impossibility' and – consequently! – restored it . . . The Catholics would have good reason to celebrate Luther festivals, to write Luther plays . . . Luther – and the 'moral rebirth!' The whole of psychology can go to hell! – There is no doubt about it, Germans are idealists. – Twice already, just when an honest, unequivocal, perfectly scientific way of thinking had been achieved, and with incredible courage and self-overcoming, the Germans knew how to find a secret path back to the old 'ideal', ways of reconciling truth and the 'ideal', basically formulas for a right to reject science, a right to lie. Leibniz and Kant – these two great bumps in the path to Europe's sense of intellectual integrity! – Finally, when a *force majeure*⁷⁹ of genius and will became visible on the bridge between two centuries of decadence, one strong enough to make Europe into a unity, a political and economic unity for the purpose of world governance, the Germans with their 'Wars of Liberation' cheated Europe out of the meaning, the miracle of meaning, in the existence of Napoleon. – As a result, they have everything that has happened on their conscience, everything that is the case today, the most anti-cultural sickness and unreason there is, nationalism, this *névrose nationale*⁸⁰ that Europe is sick from, this immortalizing of Europe's provincial character, of petty politics. They have even robbed Europe of its sense, its rationality – they have steered it into a dead end. – Does anyone

79 Superior force.

80 National neurosis.

except me know a way out of this dead end? . . . A task big enough to reunite peoples? . . .

3

– And finally, why shouldn't I voice my suspicions? In my case too, the Germans will do everything they can to take an incredible destiny and give birth to a mouse. They have been compromising themselves up to now as far as I am concerned, and I doubt whether they will do any better in the future. – Oh, to be a *bad* prophet here! . . . My natural readers and listeners now are the Russians, Scandinavians, and French, – will it always be this way? – Germans are only ever inscribed in the annals of epistemology under equivocal names, they have only ever produced 'unconscious' counterfeits (– Fichte, Schelling, Schopenhauer, Hegel, Schlieiermacher deserve this epithet as much as Kant and Leibniz, they are all just *Schlieiermachers*⁸¹ –): they will never have the honour of being able to consider the first honest spirit in the history of spirit, the spirit in which truth comes to pass judgment over four thousand years of counterfeit, as united with the German spirit. The 'German spirit' is *my* bad air: I have trouble breathing when I am around the instinctive uncleanness in *psychologics* that is revealed in a German's every word, every expression. They never went through a seventeenth century of hard self-examination as the French did – a La Rochefoucauld, a Descartes has a hundred times more integrity than the best of the Germans, – they have not produced a psychologist to this day. But psychology is almost the measure of the *cleanliness* or *uncleanliness* of a race . . . And how can you be expected to be *profound* if you are not even clean? With Germans, as with women, you never plumb their depths – *they do not have any*: that is all. But this means that they are not even shallow. – What is considered 'deep' in Germany is precisely this sort of instinctive uncleanness with respect to oneself: people do not even *want* to be clear about themselves. Can I suggest 'German' as an international coinage for *this* psychological depravity? – For instance, right now the German emperor calls it his 'Christian duty' to free the slaves in Africa: but among ourselves, we *other* Europeans just call it 'being German' . . . Have the Germans produced a single deep book? They do not even have an idea of what counts as depth in a book. I have met scholars who consider Kant deep; I am afraid that in the Prussian

81 A metaphysical pun: *Schlieiermacher* means veil-maker.