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NIETZSCHE

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NIETZSCHE

BY

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To

L. J. HENDERSON

EDITOR'S PREFACE

THE present biographical series, initiated by the volume on Nietzsche by Crane Brinton, has no intention of offering to the public once again the biographies of men which appear with almost monotonous regularity — Napoleon, Cavour, Gladstone, Marx. It proposes instead to present the lives of men for whom there is no biography, or no adequate biography in English. At the same time these biographies will deal with men who left a significant impress on their age, men who may properly be considered as "Makers of Modern Europe."

Contributors will be invited to keep steadily before them the view that serious historical biography involves constantly the relation of its subject to his historical context. They will expose in adequate detail the problems with which the statesman dealt, the significant contributions which the thinker made. They will address themselves constantly to the question: "What was the significance of this man for his epoch?"

The conception and development of the present series owes much to the counsel of others and especially of those here mentioned. I have consulted repeatedly various ones of my colleagues at Harvard, and have had the helpful advice of Professor Charles K. Webster of the University of London, Professors Carl L. Becker and Philip E. Mosely of Cornell, Professors Arthur M. Wilson of Dartmouth and Chester W. Clark of the University of Iowa, and Drs. Edgar P. Dean and Robert G. Woolbert of the Council on Foreign Relations. In this, as in

my other projects, I have enjoyed the stimulating interest of my wife and have been saved from many errors by her detached and candid criticism.

DONALD C. MCKAY

JOHN WINTHROP HOUSE
HARVARD UNIVERSITY
January 16, 1941

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

I WISH to make quite clear that this study of Nietzsche does not attempt to analyze his work from the point of view of a professional philosopher, nor to estimate his place in the long line of such philosophers. That is a task for which I am not prepared. This study is rather an attempt to place Nietzsche's work in the more general currents of "opinion" in our time. It is a study of Nietzsche as *politique et moraliste*. Begun before Munich, finished after the defeat of France, it must bear some marks of contemporary events. Nazi commentators on Nietzsche are not agreeable and conciliating writers. There is, at least to an American brought up before the Four Years' War, something very unpleasant about the Nazis, and especially about Nazi intellectuals. Abusive epithets like "barbarous," "uncivilized," "insane," "arrogant," "brutal," all carry many of the right overtones: you cannot fairly use nice words, nor even neutral words dear to semanticists, about the group that has made contemporary Germany. Yet I confess I have not been able to find what seems to me just the right word for the Nazis: the nearest I can come is the metaphor with which I close Chapter VIII. I have not, then, written *sine ira et studio*. On the other hand, I hope that I have not indulged in the now once more popular sport of Hun-baiting. This book is not meant to indict the German nation.

I owe much to odds and ends of conversations with many of my friends, whom I cannot in these pages do more than thank as a group. I should like, however, to acknowledge more

specifically numerous debts. To the Macmillan Company I am grateful for their generous permission to quote liberally from the authorized English translation of Nietzsche's works, edited by Dr. Oscar Levy. Dr. Fritz Epstein, Professor Seelye Bixler, and Professor S. B. Fay have drawn my attention to specific phases of Nietzsche's life and influence which might otherwise have escaped me. My editors, Donald McKay and Dumas Malone, have been most helpful. Mrs. Ruth Harris has been kind enough to read the whole manuscript, and make suggestions from which I have profited greatly. Mrs. Harriet Dorman has prepared the manuscript, read the proof, and made valuable suggestions. Professor A. O. Lovejoy has consented to my using in Chapter VIII large parts of my article on "The National Socialists' Use of Nietzsche," which appeared in the *Journal of the History of Ideas* in April, 1940; he has also helped me greatly in shaping the mass of material on Nietzsche to be found in Nazi writings. To all these I am especially grateful.

CRANE BRINTON

DUNSTER HOUSE
HARVARD UNIVERSITY
November 7, 1940

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ILLUSTRATIONS

NIETZSCHE IN HIS LAST YEAR OF LIFE *frontispiece*

Thanks to photography, we have as good a record of Nietzsche's appearance as one might expect of a member of a German middle-class family in the late nineteenth century. He did not, however, become a subject for artists until the decade of his great fame, the 1890's, by which time he was insane and bedridden. Elizabeth allowed several artists to have access to her brother at Jena and Weimar. In 1899 one of these, Dr. Hans Olde, made this now familiar drawing, showing the sick Nietzsche gazing sightlessly at the setting sun. There are several better-known engravings from this drawing, in which only Nietzsche's head or head and shoulders are shown.

NIETZSCHE AT SIXTEEN 22

This is the familiar photograph which all good German families have taken of the son at his confirmation.

RICHARD AND COSIMA WAGNER 46

The famous couple posed at about the period when Nietzsche first made their acquaintance — an acquaintance which very rapidly became friendship.

ELIZABETH NIETZSCHE 112

This is Elizabeth on the edge of middle age, just before she married Bernhard Förster. She did not assume the name by which she is known to students of Nietzsche, Frau Förster-Nietzsche, until the 1890's, when her husband was dead and her brother famous.

NIETZSCHE IN UNIFORM 170

This photograph was taken in the fall of 1868, about the time of Nietzsche's appointment to the professorship at Basle.

HITLER AT THE NIETZSCHE-ARCHIV IN WEIMAR 208

Elizabeth did all she could to associate both Hitler and Mussolini with the memory of her brother. The photographer has here, perhaps symbolically, cut Nietzsche's bust in half. The *Fuehrer* is there in full.

INTRODUCTION

MIGHT, even in this world, must not be allowed to make right. Ever since Socrates so readily refuted the unsubtle arguments of Thrasymachus, the best people, and certainly the best philosophers, have in general agreed that Truth is great even though it does not prevail. Yet successful might forces itself on the serious, and indeed indignant, attention of the firmest believers in the ultimate victory of Truth and Right. Successful might, perhaps unfortunately, is never comic. Hitler's mustache, which looked funny on the crank who failed in the Beer-hall *Putsch*, now looks menacing on the victorious Fuehrer. Similarly with Hitler's ideas. *Mein Kampf*, that hash of racial superstitions, contorted history, odds and ends of a soap-box orator's culture, crude and cunning rhetorical violence, and several sorts of neuroses, seemed to most educated people only a few years ago hardly worthy of serious criticism. Today, if *Mein Kampf* still seems to the unconverted no masterpiece of literature or of philosophy, even the unconverted must admit that Hitler's book is an important part of a National Socialist canon now established as the faith of millions.

Not all of that canon is derived from culturally disreputable sources. *Mein Kampf* itself, if it owes much to bad ethnologists like Gobineau and to fakers like the anti-Semites, could hardly have been written without the aid of two of the great names in the cultural heritage of the West—Richard Wagner and Friedrich Nietzsche. About both men there has always been controversy: neither is a serene and Olympian figure like

Goethe, forever safe in any list of the Hundred Best. But both are respectable in a way that most of the other contributors to Nazi holy writings are not respectable. Both have followings outside Germany. The Nietzscheans, if not so numerous nor so noisy as the Wagnerites, have been quite as worshipful.¹

That a subtle and most literate philosopher and an earth-shaking composer, both of them enshrined among the beautiful — and therefore — good, should help make the faith professed by Dr. Goebbels is not the only bit of irony to stare at the skeptical student of National Socialism. It is a fact, perhaps too obvious and too often remarked to be worth much as irony, that a striking proportion of the names of those who have built up the canon of the National Socialist faith in the German race are not German. The Comte de Gobineau, Paul de Lagarde, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, Treitschke, Nietzsche do not sound very German. Indeed, these French, English, and Slavic names must ring discordantly through Valhalla. The men who bore them make a strange band, as disparate as any that ever made a faith; and if they have come in death to that most Germanic heaven, they must add appreciably to the pleasurable confusion of its traditional *mêlée*. Nietzsche, whose memory on German earth — and not only German — is now among the most honored of them all, has certainly fought his share, if not rather more than his share; but one doubts whether he is happy among his fellow Supermen. Indeed, since in Valhalla words presumably kill no more finally than do swords, he must be

¹Mr. Peter Viereck first brought to the attention of Americans the Nazi canonization of Wagner *as a thinker and prophet*. His articles in *Common Sense* for November and December, 1939, are being expanded into a book to be published shortly.

most unhappy — unless there is in Valhalla also a Sils-Maria.

For Nietzsche, living, got on very badly with flesh-and-blood Germans. He loved to badger them, to attack their most assured superiorities.

I shall never admit that a German *can* understand what music is. Those musicians who are called German, the greatest and most famous foremost, are all foreigners, either Slavs, Croats, Italians, Dutchmen — or Jews: or else, like Heinrich Schütz, Bach and Händel, they are Germans of a strong race which is now extinct.²

He had no use whatever for theories of race superiority, which he regarded as mere swindles. He wrote of himself as a “good European,” and he lived most of his adult life in Switzerland and Italy.

And yet the writings of this man are in high honor in National Socialist Germany. They do not burn his books there: they print them by the thousands in popular editions. Their reasons on the whole are consistent with their doctrines, and worth investigating. Nietzsche's career, in life and in death, is one of the most curious in modern intellectual history. It is a career which may help us understand better what goes on in the minds of the intellectual leaders of National Socialism. For these revolutionary preachers of the deed, these lovers of blood and soil, these anti-intellectuals, are in a sense as much intellectuals as those other revolutionaries, the children of the Enlightenment, the *philosophes* who made the articles of faith of 1776 and 1789. But the Nazi intellectuals are followers, not of Locke and Voltaire, but of Nietzsche; and Nietzsche, wherever he led, did not lead towards the Rights of Man.

² Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, “Why I am so clever,” § 7.

NIETZSCHE

CHAPTER I

THE STUDENT

ON OCTOBER 15, 1844, a son was born to the young wife of the Lutheran pastor of the little village of Röcken in a part of Saxony which had fallen to Prussia after the War of Liberation. It was the birthday of the reigning king of Prussia, Frederick William IV, towards whom pastor Nietzsche felt as a clergyman of the Church of Luther should feel towards his sovereign. Some of these feelings he managed to express at the christening of his son:

O blissful moment! O exquisite festival! O unspeakable holy duty! In the name of the Lord I bless thee! From the bottom of my heart do I utter these words; Bring me, then, this my beloved child, that I may consecrate him unto the Lord! My son, Friedrich Wilhelm, thus shalt thou be named on earth, in honor of my royal benefactor on whose birthday thou wast born.¹

The boy grew up as Fritz to his family and friends; and since, as a grown man and a philosopher, he came to feel an ordinary king of Prussia rather far beneath him, he did not customarily use the royal name, but signed himself simply Friedrich Nietzsche.

About Nietzsche's heredity biographers have indulged themselves in the fine free speculation customary in such matters. Nietzsche himself set them an example. The Slavic family

¹ E. Förster-Nietzsche, *The Life of Nietzsche*, English translation (1912), I, 12.

name, and some tales of his grandmother, gave his imagination a few facts to work on, out of which, perhaps with the help of his always admiring young sister Elizabeth, he spun out a romantic tale of decent from a family of refugee Polish nobles named Nicki or Nietzky.

My ancestors were Polish noblemen: it is owing to them that I have so much race instinct in my blood—who knows? perhaps even the *liberum veto*. When I think of the number of times in my travels that I have been accosted as a Pole, even by Poles themselves, and how seldom I have been taken for a German, it seems to me as if I belonged to those only who have a sprinkling of German in them.²

The tremendous mustache, of the kind once known in the America of bicycle days as a “handle-bar mustache,” which Nietzsche grew with such care and pride, may well have been worn to accentuate his Polish, and presumably also his noble, appearance.

There is nothing in the story. There was no Polish blood in Nietzsche, and no very recent or certain noble blood. Five generations back of Friedrich in the paternal line, patient research has found a Christoph Nietzsche in Burkau in Upper Lusatia some time about the year 1600. There is further evidence to push the family back across the border into Slavic

² *Ecce Homo*, “Why I am so wise,” § 3. Except for his first book, *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche’s books are not systematically put together into long chapters, but are collections of aphorisms, verses, or parables (as in *Zarathustra*). References to Nietzsche’s works are therefore usually given in the following form: title of the book, section name or number, and aphorism number. This is a very convenient form of reference, and will be used in this study of Nietzsche. Unlike reference to page numbers, it permits the reader to refer to any edition in the original or in translation. Wherever possible, I have quoted the English translation in the authorized edition of Nietzsche’s works edited by Dr. Oscar Levy, published in the United States by the Macmillan Company, who have kindly granted me permission to quote from this edition.

Bohemia. The name Nietzsche is probably a variant German spelling of the diminutive form of a saint's name very popular among Slavs — Nicholas. Some Czech blood, then flowed in Nietzsche's veins — or, since modern genetics repudiates the metaphor of common blood, some Czech chromosomes went into the making of the man Nietzsche. But not many, at least no more than is usual among Germans in the middle Elbe basin. The other names in his ancestry, Oehler, Krause, and the like, sound German enough.³

Nietzsche's mental collapse has set many of his biographers the task of finding an hereditary taint of insanity in his family. They can find one case of mental illness readily enough. In August, 1848, his father fell on a flight of stone steps and suffered a severe concussion. After a year of illness, during which he never recovered mental or physical health, Pastor Nietzsche died. Apart from the fact that we have no satisfactory clinical reports of his illness, there remains the difficulty that in such cases it is impossible to assign any precise part to an hereditary disposition to insanity. There are no known similar cases in the family history, but beyond the maternal and paternal grandparents we have no certain information whatever. Pastor Nietzsche came later to stand in the minds of his son and daughter, who could not really remember him in the flesh, as a sensitive, imaginative, scholarly man, held by fragile health to a country pastorate unworthy of his endowments of mind and character. His emotions, to judge from his words at the christening of his son, were of the kind that frequently required exclamation points to do them justice; this, however, is no

³M. Oehler, "Nietzsche's angebliche polnische Herkunft," *Ostdeutsche Monatshefte* (February, 1938), XVIII, 679.

more than good German taste in the romantic 1840's, and is not in itself evidence even of a mild neurosis.

Nietzsche's ancestors, so far as they can be traced, were apparently substantial middle-class folk, with solid roots in the soil of Germany where it meets the westernmost bastion of the Slavs — Saxony, Lusatia, Bohemia. Many of them were Lutheran clergymen. In Germany, as in England, pastorates in an established protestant church tend to be preserved in the family, and to give it a kind of distinction well short of that enjoyed by a landed nobility. Nietzsche's family background was one of which in his writings he seems now proud, now ashamed: sturdy, industrious, middle-class, respectable, undistinguished, a Germanic stock mixed with Slavic elements — in brief, something *echt deutsch*.

After the death of her husband Frau Nietzsche retired with her mother-in-law, two sisters-in-law, and her two children to the quiet market-town of Naumburg on the river Saale. There is no evidence that the family were ever in pinched circumstances. Frau Nietzsche had a small pension as a pastor's widow, and in Naumburg she was in the midst of her own family, the Oehlers, who were prosperous, well-established people. Fritz grew up in a household carefully and economically run in the traditions common to European bourgeois. The Nietzsches were never allowed to be extravagant. But of the poverty and uncertainty in which fatherless boys so often grow up there was none at all. Indeed, the boy's childhood was comfortable and sheltered beyond that of most boys, even in the safe, domestic Germany of the mid-nineteenth century.

Too sheltered, perhaps, for his future stability, Fritz grew up wholly surrounded by the determined love of five women,

grandmother, mother, aunts, and sister. They were all good women, much too good to distinguish between love and ownership. Aunt Augusta, as she appeared to Elizabeth, will do as a sample:

For years she suffered from exceedingly painful gastric troubles, which she bore, however, with great sweetness and patience; and in spite of her affliction, she did not cease from conducting the affairs of the household in a truly admirable manner. "Leave me this one solace," she would say, when she was entreated to spare herself.⁴

Though Elizabeth reports that Aunt Rosalie regularly perused the papers, which was unusual among women in those days, none of the women seem to have been very intellectual, nor to have possessed the supreme feminine wisdom which tells them when to let a man alone. Fritz, as the one boy left in the family, they worshipped not only with the fervor women in such social groups commonly display towards the symbolically dominant male, but with the added fervor German women feel for the man of the family. The object of such worship is hard to distinguish from any other object of tyranny. His sister herself reports her absolute subservience to her brother, her elder by three years. When she came to study Greek, for instance, she always translated in her mind *αὐτὸς ἔφα* by "Fritz says so." Yet it is clear throughout her biography of her famous brother that she always bossed him about, and that never, save in his philosophical flights, could he twist himself loose from the bonds of her submissive affection. He lived to write one of the most innocently transparent bits of wishful thinking in all literature: "Thou goest to women? Do not forget thy whip!"⁵

⁴ Förster-Nietzsche, *Nietzsche*, I, 29.

⁵ *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, I, chap. xviii.

Fritz was a good little boy, studious, well-behaved, highly esteemed by his teachers. In Anglo-Saxon countries, he would have been a horrible little prig, and it is possible that even in Germany the following anecdote, as told by his sister, suggests virtues carried rather uncomfortably far:

One day, just as school was over, there was a heavy downpour of rain, and we looked out along the Priestergasse for our Fritz. All the little boys were running like mad to their homes — at last little Fritz also appeared, walking slowly along, with his cap covering his slate and his little handkerchief spread over the whole. . . . When our mother remonstrated with him for coming home soaked to the skin he replied seriously: "But, Mamma, in the rules of the school it is written: on leaving school, boys are forbidden to jump and run about in the street, but must walk quietly and decorously to their homes." Fritz had obeyed this rule under the most adverse circumstances.⁶

The boy was known in Naumburg as "the little minister," a title perhaps not given quite in the spirit in which Elizabeth reports it.

We need not rely wholly on Elizabeth for our knowledge of this precocious and virtuous childhood. Excellent confirmation comes from Fritz himself. At the age of fourteen he began an autobiography. Fragments of this, together with other juvenilia, essays, verses, and school exercises, have been published with the most thorough scholarly editing in the first volumes of the "Historical and critical edition of the collected works of Friedrich Nietzsche."⁷ The lad whose odd scraps of writing

⁶ Förster-Nietzsche, *Nietzsche*, I, 25.

⁷ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Werke und Briefe, Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe* (1933-), *Werke*. I Band. "Jugendschriften, 1854-1861." *Briefe*. I Band. "Briefe der Schüler und Bonner Studentenzeit, 1850-1865." The autobiography, "Aus meinem Leben," is in *Werke*, I, 1-32. All these papers were preserved by the especial care of Elizabeth. No one who has followed her determined use

have thus against all odds survived and found their way to print is now and then boyish enough. "I ate lots of cherries yesterday, and my uncles played several of Beethoven's sonatas for me."⁸ He was clearly a bright, bookish boy, omnivorous in his reading, and already bitten with the desire to write. He can, indeed, already write; for although the matter of these writings is wholly conventional, their form shows little of the schoolboy's awkward stumbling. There are few attempts at purple passages, and even the conventional romantic soul-searchings are conducted in amazingly crisp German prose. He reads history, mythology, travels, poetry, and though Elizabeth reports his fondness for play-acting, the printed juvenilia are overwhelmingly didactic or analytical, rather than narrative or dramatic. Nietzsche, indeed, never was able to get far enough outside himself to be an effective mime. No one would expect originality in such early writings; precocity means successful imitation, or it means nothing. But one might expect a trace of mischievousness, some faint foreshadowing of the ironic laughter that was to come. There is, in fact, so little of such foreshadowing that one wonders what so serious a boy made of *Tristram Shandy*, which he resolved to buy for himself as a birthday gift on his fifteenth birthday.⁹

of the *Nietzsche-Archiv* in Weimar to keep to memory of her brother as spotlessly and innocuously German, Christian, and middle-class as possible — a very hard job — would dare assert that this represents all the boy Nietzsche wrote. He may, like other little boys, have had naughty thoughts, and even put them on paper; but if he did, no trace of them remains, and it is always possible that he never had them.

⁸ *Briefe*, I, 9. To his friend Gustav Krug.

⁹ *Werke*, I, 119.

II

At fourteen, the adolescent boy was at last separated from his adoring womenfolk, and entered on a scholarship at the boys' school in Pforta, five miles away from Naumburg on the river Saale. Schulpforta has always had an admirable intellectual tradition, and many writers and scholars have gone from there to the universities. Lutheran pastors and teachers had taken over the place from mediaeval monks, and maintained some of the strictness, sobriety, and devotion to a classical educational discipline of the mediaeval school. The boys worked hard at Pforta. But the school did not put its pupils through the essentially unintellectual social conditioning such nurseries of a ruling class as Eton or the Prussian cadet schools impose. Nietzsche was probably already at fifteen as proof against this sort of conditioning as was, at the same age, the lad Shelley. But Shelley had to undergo Eton and Oxford. Nietzsche never came quite so close to this harsh world.

Pforta was not of course entirely a cloister, a prison, or a library. It was filled with adolescent boys who played, strolled in the garden, swam in the river, joked, and on Sundays and holidays drank wine from the school's own vineyards. Yet this kind of play was pleasantly anarchic, with nothing to gall — or restrain — a lad already precociously intellectual. Fritz had at first some trouble adapting himself to the routine of early rising, communal meals, and ordered studying, but he was still young enough to bend slightly. A fragmentary diary, preserved as usual by Elizabeth's care, gives an interesting account of the daily life of this most German school, so different from any-

thing young Americans and young Englishmen have ever been put through.¹⁰

As the boy grows up his letters, journals, and essays — for he was always writing — begin to lose their straightforward clarity. With adolescence, the appropriate emotional crisis seems to come over Fritz, and gets expressed in ways which are still appropriately conventional. “Vorbei, vorbei! Herz, willst du zerspringen?” Roses, and the world, must die. He writes poetry, pages and pages of it, lyric and dramatic. At his height, in “The Conspiracy of Philotas,” he achieves thirty-six exclamation points in twenty-seven lines, which is rather better than his father had done.¹¹ A new and somewhat less solemn tone comes into the letters from Pforta. He writes long letters to his old friends Krug and Pinder, and to a new one, Granier, letters full of self-conscious and literary jesting, waggish and lively as though they came from a perpetually young American college professor of English:

The plan for my contrarious novel — Lord! you’ve already forgotten it — never mind! — I threw overboard in annoyance as soon as I had finished the first chapter. I’m sending you the monstrous manuscript to use for . . . well, what you will. . . . Yours till we meet again soon

F W v Nietzsche (alias Muck)
homme étudié en lettres
*(votre ami sans lettres)*¹²

The lad is clearly capable, at moments, of high spirits, just as, in his letters to his mother, his aunts, and his sister, he is capable of strong affection. Yet neither the spirits nor the affection ever sound very earthy, substantial, straightforward. Nietzsche is

¹⁰ *Werke*, I, 119-125.

¹¹ *Werke*, I, 129; 170.

¹² *Briefe*, I, 193. To Raimund Granier, July 28, 1862.

already anointing himself with words. He does not leave the impression of pose or insincerity — nothing as simple as that. He is already, perhaps, impatient of the sluggish, wordless, thoughtless world we humans mostly live in, a world in which he was not only uncomfortable, but also inconspicuous.

Nietzsche was confirmed at Easter in 1861 at the age of sixteen, and was, certainly in his womenfolk's mind and probably in his own for some time after, destined for the Lutheran ministry. Yet when he was eighteen, and beginning his last year at school, the model pupil, the bright boy, began to go wrong. He lost interest in his classes; he even slipped off during the school walk on Sunday, and got very drunk in a *Bierstube*.¹³ Though existing evidence cannot be pieced together to make the matter certain, it is more than likely that one very important factor in his behavior was doubt over his call to the ministry. Though the author of *The Antichrist* is still far off, Nietzsche may already have been afflicted with doubts about the existence of the God with whom he had been brought up on such excellent terms. Certainly he had come to doubt very much his own aptitude for the pulpit of his fathers. This was not an easy matter to communicate to his mother. It seems very likely that the forthright moralist-to-be did some human, all too-human hedging; he clearly gave his mother to understand that he would take up the study of theology as well as that of philology in his approaching university career.

Music, which had always meant much to the boy, occupied more and more of his attention in adolescence. He played the

¹³ His contrite letter to his mother shows him still in some ways the school-boy. *Briefe*, I, 209. April 16, 1863. An English translation is in Förster-Nietzsche, *Nietzsche*, I, 105.

piano, apparently well short of excellently, and with much emotion. He wrote *Lieder*, bits of sonatas, and other short bits of music, mostly for the piano. The piety which has hitherto worked such wonders in the *Nietzsche-Archiv* at Weimar has spared us the publication of most of these musical outpourings. Elizabeth did print in her first German biography the score of a piano composition written by her brother in 1858, entitled "In the Moonlight on the Pussta." It has not won its way to the concert-stage.¹⁴ Nietzsche's many gifts were not those that make great musicians or great composers. Music was to Nietzsche in after life a refuge when words failed him; and when words failed him he really had very little left.

The boy's academic troubles, whatever their origin, were not serious, and he rallied to make his school record, in the "certificate of proficiency" with which he left Pforta for the University, on the whole excellent. In religion, German, and Latin he was marked *excellent*; in Greek *good*; in French, History and Geography, and Natural Sciences, *satisfactory*. Only in mathematics was he notably deficient. Here his masters had to report, "As he has never shown any regular industry in mathematics, he has always gone backwards, so to speak, both in his written and in his oral work."¹⁵

III

In October, 1864, at the age of twenty, Friedrich Nietzsche matriculated in theology and philosophy at the University of

¹⁴ E. Förster-Nietzsche, *Das Leben Friedrich Nietzsches* (1895), I, 80. There is also a song of his printed in the same volume, p. 224. The "Hymn to Life," words by Lou Salomé, music by Friedrich Nietzsche, can be found at the end of the English translation of *Ecce Homo* and the poems.

¹⁵ Förster-Nietzsche, *Nietzsche*, I, 119-121.

Bonn. The next few months are a crisis in his life, which will probably remain obscure, and therefore a constant temptation to his biographers. Nietzsche himself used afterwards to refer to his "lost year" at Bonn, and to the whole experience as an almost inexplicable straying from the path of his destiny. His sympathetic biographers, such as Charles Andler, have regarded the year at Bonn as an essential part of their hero's Calvary, his ennobling exposure to the test of withstanding German student-life in its full comic-opera vulgarity.

Here a simpler explanation may be hazarded. Nietzsche was making a final and determined effort to be one of the boys. After his coddled childhood, his cloistral adolescence, after the long domination of his womenfolk, of the Naumburg proprieties, of all sorts of high seriousness, the young man was ready for revolt. And his revolt was still, characteristically, very conventional. He was going to sow his wild oats, in our complex modern society one of the ritual forms through which the adolescent becomes a man. Nietzsche was still one of the tribe, still most eager for the applause of the tribe. He would go through a brave and boisterous initiation.

Such ceremonies, varying in form from tribe to tribe, seem always a bit ludicrous to an outsider. The current American form, especially as caricatured in Hollywood moving pictures of "collegiate" life, may seem ludicrous even to an insider. Certainly German "student life" of the mid-nineteenth century takes on today an absurdity mellowed into something romantically enduring. Beer, metaphysics, song and buxom young love, the manly touch of the duel, the sweetness of a not unconquerable nostalgia — this is surely one of the world's great patterns for ritual, and one likely to survive a number of

totalitarian dictatorships. Sowing one's wild oats, never a pursuit to give the subtle artistic sensibility much scope for independent variation, was in nineteenth-century Germany limited by the national genius for organization, which seems as apt — if as unlovely — at organizing youthful jollity as at organizing a military campaign.

Nietzsche tried his best. He joined a student corps, the Franconia, which was composed mostly of Pforta men. He drank beer — a drink for which he later expressed the greatest contempt — at noisy student gatherings, took long walks, always with groups, and even made a pathetic attempt to fight a duel. For this latter purpose, he challenged a man of whom he was very fond; perhaps the ironist was already at work within him. The duel produced no scars. He must also have been appropriately in love, or at least given his fellows some evidence that in this most important human activity he was what a good German ought to be in his student days. He may merely have talked about women, which if done at all skillfully, will qualify the talker among men. He may have had a go with a prostitute, and thus unfortunately caught the syphilis which ended his career twenty-five years later.¹⁶ Nietzsche's actual relations with women remain a puzzle for most of his life. In spite of the pathetic efforts of his sister Elizabeth to bring in concrete instances of his puppy loves and his adolescent flames, in spite of the insistence with which she repeats that her Fritz was in this as in all matters a sound, normal German lad, the impression

¹⁶ This subject must later be considered in relation to Nietzsche's collapse in 1889. Here it will be enough to say that the fact that Nietzsche did have syphilis may be regarded as proved (as certainly as anything of the kind can be proved) by the publication of E. F. Podach's book, *Nietzsche's Zusammenbruch* in 1930.

persists, from a reading of Nietzsche's own youthful writings, that he hadn't much to do with the girls.¹⁷

Nietzsche's efforts to live up to what his comrades thought he should be lasted several months. In a long letter to Elizabeth he describes one of these excursions of jolly fellows:

I write this the first thing in the morning after having just torn myself from bed, thus flatly disproving the notion that I may have a thick head. Maybe the expression "thick head" conveys nothing to your mind. Yesterday we had a great drinking bout and sang the solemn *Landesvater*, and there were endless torrents of punch; guests from Heidelberg and Göttingen, . . . We numbered over forty men; the public-house was beautifully decorated. . . . The festival was of a very splendid and elevating nature. On such evenings, believe me, there is a general spirit of enthusiasm which has little in common with the mere conviviality of the beer-table. This afternoon we are all going to march through the High Street in parade garb, and there will be a good deal of shouting and singing. Then we go by steamer to Rolandseck, where we have a big dinner in the Hotel Croyen. . . . The bout began on the evening of the day before yesterday; we drank until two o'clock in the morning, assembled yesterday at 11 a.m. for a morning pint, and then went on a spree in the market-place, and had lunch and coffee together at Kley's.¹⁸

Here already Nietzsche is beginning to find the round of drinking and back-slapping less than "elevating," though on the whole this letter sounds like the normal young man boasting sheepishly about his ability to drink. As time went on, however, he dropped more and more out of the merry doings of the Franconia, drew more and more into himself — where he always found plenty of room. His letters home become even

¹⁷ Elizabeth goes so far as to publish, in the English edition of the *Life*, a full-page portrait of the actress Hedwig Raabe, on the grounds that Fritz worshipped her during his University days. But she admits Fritz had but the slightest personal acquaintance with the lady. Förster-Nietzsche, *Nietzsche*, I, 161. See also H. W. Brann, *Nietzsche und die Frauen* (1931), chap. i.

¹⁸ *Briefe*, I, 281. Dec. 11, 1864. English translation in Förster-Nietzsche, *Nietzsche*, I, 127-128.

more forcedly cheerful. Finally he gives up altogether, and admits that "the touch of poetry which seemed to hang over this life had vanished" for him, and that all he could now see was "the coarse, Philistine spirit, reared in this excess of drinking, of rowdyism, of running into debt."¹⁹

Nietzsche had made his last attempt to accept the world. Perhaps the world might have been presented to him in a fairer shape than that of the Franconia Corps of the University of Bonn in 1864. Yet the mere historian finds it very hard to conjure up the picture of a world which Nietzsche would have accepted. The great "Yea-sayer" spent most of his life saying "No." Such is, perhaps, the mark of the profound moralist. And yet, from any other than a profound moralist, Nietzsche's letter of resignation from his corps would sound somewhat priggish:

I beg to inform the Association, the Franconia, that I herewith return it my sash, and in so doing send in my resignation. By this I do not mean that I cease to value the principle of the Association. All I would frankly declare is that its present features are not very pleasing to me. This may be in part my own fault; in any case it has proved a great effort for me to endure my membership over the year. Nevertheless I regarded it as a duty to become acquainted with the Society, and now that no narrow bonds unite me with it I bid it a hearty farewell.

May the Franconia soon grow out of that stage of development at which it now stands, and may it ever claim high-minded moral men for its members.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE²⁰

Perhaps this letter still sounds a bit priggish, even from Friedrich Nietzsche.

Bonn had become unbearable. Well before he composed the

¹⁹ Förster-Nietzsche, *Nietzsche*, I, 146.

²⁰ *Briefe*, II, 12. Oct. 20, 1865. English translation in Förster-Nietzsche, *Nietzsche*, I, 147.

above letter, Nietzsche had left it for the University of Leipzig. Here he made no attempt to be one of the boys. He found a study, classical philology, and a professor, Ritschl — himself a recent refugee from Bonn — worthy of his attention, and in what seems nowadays the almost incredible academic freedom of the German Universities in their great period, this was enough. He might have eaten, drunk, and slept classical philology. No one would have disturbed him. Actually he had some relief from work. "Three things make up my recreation — rare recreation — my Schopenhauer, Schumann's music, and finally, solitary walks."²¹

With his academic work he made out admirably. For these few years he summoned the patient industry, the care, the simple *Sitzfleisch* indispensable for scholarly success. Since he also had what is vaguely and knowingly called intelligence, a gift useful if not altogether indispensable for such success, his work pleased Professor Ritschl very much indeed. The piety of the *Nietzsche-Archiv* has spread out in the third and fourth volumes of the definitive edition of his works whatever is left of the apparatus of his scholarship, from finished dissertations to mere embryos of notes. To the layman, this mass of Greek and Latin is impressive, and often incomprehensible. What for instance lies behind this entry?

	Hesiod	Homer	
	16 Bücher	13	
	Nach Tzetzes		
Theogonie	Aspis		Epithal
Catalog	Aigimius		Ceyc. gam.
Eoëen	Theseus' καταβ		περὶ Ἰδαίων ²²

²¹ *Briefe*, II, 45. April 7, 1866. To Carl von Gersdorff.

²² *Werke*, IV, 126.

Yet it is clear from these notes seen as a whole that Nietzsche was a careful and a curious worker, that he kept asking himself questions about his Greeks that went far beyond mere cataloguing. His most finished work in the field, *De Laertii Diogenis fontibus*, was printed in the *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* in 1868 and 1869, and gave the twenty-four year old scholar a European reputation among professional philologists.

More important in the long run for Nietzsche's career was his discovery of Schopenhauer's philosophy. In one of his numerous autobiographical fragments he has described how, rummaging in a Leipzig bookshop during the lonely days after he had broken with Bonn and the Franconia, he came across Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Idea*, took the book home, and devoured it with increasing excitement. This was something less than what had happened to St. Paul on the road to Damascus or to Rousseau on the road to Vincennes, but it too was a great conversion. Schopenhauer's slightly Biedermeier stoicism, though it could not for long satisfy the emotional needs of a man as God-ridden as Nietzsche, solved in this crisis and for a moment the problem of the universe. "Here each line," he wrote a few years later of his first reading of Schopenhauer, "cried out renunciation, denial, resignation; here I saw a mirror in which the world, life, my own mind were reflected in fearful grandeur. Here the wholly disinterested and heavenly eye of art looked at me, here I saw illness and salvation, banishment and refuge, hell and heaven."²³ The world makes no sense intellectually; Kant and the eighteenth-century *philosophes* were no more than whistlers in the dark. Will, the blind striving of millions of organisms, is what

²³ *Werke*, III, 298. "Rückblick auf meine zwei Leipziger Jahre."

really makes the world go. And it goes crazily, stupidly, cruelly. All that is left for a philosopher is renunciation, the extinction of the will to live which is the will to evil. Schopenhauer came in the end to a kind of Nordic *Nirvana* most attractive to the lonely young philologist. Nietzsche decided, not without pride, that he too was a philosopher.

Yet the Leipzig years were by no means pathologically solitary years. Nietzsche made a few new friends, and especially Erwin Rohde, like himself young, intellectual, seeking his way. Rohde found it in the relatively serene paths of German academic preferment, and though he later lost touch with the academically outlawed Nietzsche, he remains one of the best sources of information on Nietzsche's personal history. Old Pforta friends and especially the Prussian officer and gentleman Baron von Gersdorff and the quiet scholarly Paul Deussen, later a distinguished expert in Sanskrit, remained close to the young Nietzsche, who wrote them long letters of the kind no one seems any longer to write. Music still was a solace and a fulfillment, though by now Nietzsche probably knew he was not to be a great composer. He did, however, meet casually a great composer, Richard Wagner, who with Schopenhauer was to provide the setting for Nietzsche's flight from scholarship to philosophy and preaching.

For the present, he was still a very promising philologist, a favorite pupil of Professor Ritschl, a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. He never had to write his thesis. In 1868 a chair in philology at the University of Basle in Switzerland fell vacant, and Ritschl managed to have his brilliant young student chosen, without benefit of the doctorate.²⁴

²⁴ He was at once given the degree by Leipzig University on the strength of his previous record.

Nietzsche had an almost incredible start in the profession: at twenty-four he was *Herr Professor*! His womenfolk were in raptures. Their little Fritz had justified their loving care; a university professor is perhaps even higher in the hierarchy of virtue and respectability than a Lutheran pastor.

IV

Hero-worship has produced flattering descriptions of the young Nietzsche. We have some help from photographs, and notably from one his sister gives us, taken at his confirmation at the age of sixteen. The portentous Polish cavalryman's mustache of his maturity is not yet there. The lad's rather large mouth is set firmly. His eyes look dark and for so young a boy, surprisingly deep-sunken. His face is round and full, yet sensitive. He is certainly no Nordic, but he might be almost anything else.

He appears at Bonn "a picture of health and strength, broad-shouldered, brown, with rather thick fair hair, and of exactly the same height as Goethe."²⁵ Goethe, of course, is for Germans strength and beauty made flesh, and to associate him ever so tenuously with Nietzsche is to make Nietzsche share something of Olympian health. Elizabeth reports that her brother swam, skated, and rode horseback, and that only his short-sightedness prevented his being still more athletic. Later observers were not struck with any such evidence of physical prowess. They are, indeed, usually reporting after Nietzsche had become famous — which was only after he had become

²⁵ Quoted in W. K. Salter, *Nietzsche the Thinker* (1917), 7, from H. Ellis, *Affirmations*, 11. Goethe is described as slightly above the average height, but looking taller than he really was.

insane and inaccessible. More than usually, perhaps, their reports are less of what they saw than of what they thought they ought to have seen. At any rate, they describe Slavic restlessness, high cheek-bones, piercing and unquiet eyes, the timidity of the scholar and the soul of a prophet.²⁶

The problem of Nietzsche's bodily and mental health has exercised all his biographers. That he was ill a great deal during his adult life, and that he died insane, not even Elizabeth and the faithful workers of the *Nietzsche-Archiv* have been able to deny. They insist, however, that he was born and grew up a splendid example of German youth, normal, healthy, cheerful, fond of sports. For his later ill-health they must find an honorable explanation in circumstances no decent German lad of this sort could have avoided. It all started, according to Elizabeth, from Nietzsche's poor eyesight. This, if an organic weakness, is at any rate one that suggests nobility and spirituality of character. Poor light at Pforta, over-study, carelessness about glasses (Fritz would not listen to his mother and his sister!), led to splitting headaches. Headaches led to sleeplessness. Later this sleeplessness drove the young professor to drugs, and to the serious undermining of his health. Moreover, with his mind on higher things, Nietzsche neglected himself, ate the wrong things, ate irregularly as bachelors do. Then, with his natural good health undermined, he took to doctoring himself, and gradually developed into a mild hypochondriac. Yet underneath this ill-health, very real and very tragic in its consequences, but in a sense superficial, there remained a basis of

²⁶ One of the most plausible of these descriptions is that made by a Frenchman, Edouard Schuré, who saw Nietzsche in Bayreuth in the 1870's, and reported in the 1890's. It is given in Salter, *Nietzsche*, 476.

hearty, sane Germanic health. Such is the account Frau Förster-Nietzsche gives us.²⁷

The medical problems of Nietzsche's life are puzzling enough to the physician. They are quite insoluble to the layman. One can only note that Elizabeth herself was no physician, and that she could not bear to think of her brother as in any way abnormal. He was, she is quite willing to admit, a genius. But "genius" is a very nice word, and "abnormal" is not. Later in Nietzsche's career his behavior was clearly that of an extreme neurotic; and though "neurotic" is also a word of pejorative overtones, and though it has somewhat different meanings for physician and for layman, most of us know neurotic behavior when we see it — and sometimes, even when we indulge in it.

Whatever name we give this behavior of Nietzsche's, it is evident enough, in milder forms, in what we know of the school and university student. The young Nietzsche, swim and skate though he did, seems always to have been awkward in the use of his body. Sensitive and self-conscious, he did not like to appear awkward. If you prefer, you may say that he was a perfectionist, and that he would do nothing he could not from the first do pretty well. Or you may say that he was proud, or vain, and that he hated to seem ridiculous. Whatever the reason, save for a tempestuous facility with the piano, he had no bodily skills. Bodily energy he had, or at least a kind of nervous restlessness for which he found an outlet in long walks.

²⁷ This explanation is scattered through both volumes of Förster-Nietzsche, *Nietzsche*. Most of Elizabeth's points are recorded — for purposes of debate — by E. F. Podach in the chapter "Das Pathologische bei Nietzsche" in his *Nietzsches Zusammenbruch*, 21-35. (There is an English translation of this book, *The Madness of Nietzsche*, 1931, and a French translation, *L'Effondrement de Nietzsche*, published in *Les documents bleus* in 1931.)

Much of his writing was composed during these walks and noted down hurriedly on his return home.

Again, save for his studies, he had undergone no very important discipline. A short and uncomfortable period of military service in the Prussian cavalry had been brought to an end by an accident incurred in mounting his horse. The pommel of his saddle struck his chest, tore muscles and fractured ribs. Elizabeth informs us that he recovered from this wound only thanks "to the excellence and the purity of his blood."²⁸ Neither home, school nor university life gave him the kind of discipline that tames, if it does not subdue, the self-centered person. His family had done little but admire him and take care of him. His womenfolk had been too devoted to leave him any but intellectual work to do. He seems not to have had any hand in the family finances, nor to have had any other kind of responsibility, except that of spending an allowance. Already, at the beginning of his professorship at Basle, he shows signs of an inability to attend to the bothersome details of the external world, an inability not necessarily philosophical in origin.

Nietzsche, in short, was what it is nowadays fashionable to call an intellectual. He was, to an extent rare even among intellectuals, insulated from people whose main concern lies with things, with rituals and traditions, with handling other people, with affairs, with dull, undignified, unyielding "reality." He was about to join a group of intellectuals, many of whom were indeed sober, dull and conforming enough, but who in general could hardly give the young Nietzsche a taste for social discipline, for coöperation with his fellows, or even an

²⁸ Förster-Nietzsche, *Nietzsche*, I, 173.

abiding sense of self-satisfaction. German university professors in the later nineteenth century were not infrequently brilliant men, indeed great men, but as a body they seem notably lacking in cohesion, good manners in controversy, worldly sense, and most of what else is necessary to make an intellectual aristocracy an effective aristocracy.

One gift, one skill, Herr Professor Nietzsche had already shown himself to possess in a very high degree. He could write. From earliest childhood, he had been developing this technical skill in handling words, a skill for which we shall no doubt have to say he had a special, inborn, aptitude, and which increased with exercise and training. Nietzsche had this gift for words as others have gifts for music, for painting, for mathematics, for cookery, or for gymnastics. It was, characteristically, a gift for the written word rather than the spoken word. Nietzsche was far too shy a man for oratory.

This facility with words, not uncommon among bright children, is probably only indirectly and obscurely related to the process of thinking. Like great technical facility in playing a musical instrument, or like facility in arithmetical calculation, it may be very highly developed in individuals incapable of making anything important out of their skills. So far, Nietzsche had done little with the words he poured out so freely. His youthful writings show an eager, sensitive, dutiful young German intellectual, who has gone through the appropriate emotional and religious crises of adolescence. They show, not very far beneath the surface, an ambitious, self-centered young man who wants to shine, and who is one day to write about "the Will to Power." They do not, save to the eye of faith, show any evidence of originality.

Yet the very possession of this command over words was, to a young man about to become a professor of classical philology, a danger. Professors, of course, should be able to write, but they ought not to write well, or at any rate, not freely and easily. The professor should dig deep for his truths and he ought not to bring them to the surface without good, honest — and obvious — sweating. Nietzsche was shortly to find himself badly adjusted in a dozen ways to the demands of the learned profession. They were unreasonable, unlovely, unjust demands if you like, but they were definite and inescapable. As he left Leipzig for Basle, however, only a very wise man indeed, and one who knew Nietzsche well, could have foreseen his early and complete failure as a professor of classical philology. And even the wise man might have been wrong. Great fluency with the written word has not always proved a barrier to success in the learned world, and the will to shine has illuminated many an academic chair.

CHAPTER II

THE PROFESSOR

THE Basle in which young Professor Nietzsche delivered on May 28, 1869 his inaugural lecture on "Homer and Classical Philology" was an old and prosperous town, proud of its independent past as a South German city-state, content with its present part in the Swiss Confederation, perhaps a little conscious, over against the great new Germany to the north, of being provincial. Its university, though it lacked the wealth, equipment, and enrollment of the greater German universities, was by no means an intellectual backwater. The merchant aristocracy of Basle had long been devoted to the support of culture. Several generations of the mathematical and scientific dynasty of the Bernoulli had brought a European distinction to their native town. Jakob Burckhardt, the great historian of the Renaissance, was the most famous member of the University Faculty. In 1869, he was at the height of his powers and reputation, in no sense below the best Leipzig, Heidelberg, or Berlin could offer. Bachofen, whose productive studies of the matriarchate were opening new fields to anthropologists and legal historians, had occupied a chair of Roman Law in the university, and was now a scholarly judge in the city. Rüttimeyer, professor of zoology, was anticipating Mr. G. B. Shaw in the consoling, if not very fruitful, journey back to Lamarck. A good many others, not earth shakers, but well deserving of the humble immortality of the biographical dictionary,

helped bring distinction to town and gown in Nietzsche's Basle.¹

Into the life of Basle Nietzsche never really entered. He made a few intimate friends, with whom he led for a while an almost normal social life. In the first few years, at least, he carried out faithfully the formal teaching obligations of his post, which meant, in addition to university lecturing, six hours a week of classroom work in Greek with picked students in the *Pädagogium*, a sort of *Gymnasium* or high-school attached to the university. He made the necessary minimum of formal social calls and attended the necessary minimum of university meetings. He was not yet the recluse of Sils-Maria and the Riviera, not yet the *Zarathustra en pension* of his last years. But his life at Basle was from the beginning lonely and harassed, lightened only by his work — or at least his writing — his ambitions, and his chosen friendships.

Only a few months after his arrival, he wrote to Rohde, "I feel so alien and indifferent among the mass of my honored colleagues that I turn down with pleasure the invitations and requests that flow in daily. Even the enjoyment of mountains, forest, and lake is somewhat spoiled for me by the herd of my fellow-teachers."² Elizabeth also has frequently to record this aspect of her brother's behavior, though she tries hard to pretend he was a social success at Basle. On one of their numerous

¹ The cultural background of Basle in Nietzsche's day is sketched with — for Andler — surprising brevity in C. Andler, *Nietzsche*, II, 113-125.

² Nietzsche, *Gesammelte Briefe* (1902-1909), II, 148. To Rohde, June 16, 1869. I have translated Nietzsche's *plebecula* by "herd," which is perhaps unduly mild. The great *Gesamtausgabe* is not yet — save for a few letters of 1869 — available for letters or works after the Leipzig period. This is not a serious gap as far as the major writings go, but it is a real loss in the correspondence. The above edition, presided over by Frau Förster-Nietzsche

little vacation trips together, she writes, for instance, that they ran up a huge bill at Constance because Fritz would not eat in the *table d'hôte*. He called such meals "the browsing of herds," and on this occasion had all their meals served privately. As he paid the bill, he remarked sadly, "Lizzie, one always has to pay dearly for grazing away from the herd."³ One more instance, close to neurosis. Piccard, a colleague, tells how he advised Nietzsche to see the cathedral at Lausanne, and how carefully he described the best way to see the sights of the whole city. Nietzsche got lost, walked around aimlessly for hours, and came back to the railway station without having seen anything of the city itself, let alone the cathedral. "But why didn't you ask some one the way?" said Piccard. And Nietzsche replied, "You know, Piccard, they might have laughed at me!"⁴

Nietzsche, then, had a kind of neurotic dislike for mingling with his fellows, a dislike which the professional psychologist could no doubt break down into its complex parts. Fear of ridicule was certainly one of the most important of these. Nietzsche himself was sure that this feeling of discomfort in crowds was a most aristocratic trait. His admiring biographers have repeated the word "aristocratic" in constant admiration of their hero's behavior. Though this comforting adjective has not infrequently been given such an application, especially since the rise of the middle classes, in the general course of European history aristocratic folk have not behaved like Nie-

is the best single collection of Nietzsche's letters. It has six volumes (volume V in two parts).

³ Förster-Nietzsche, *Life*, I, 314.

⁴ C. A. Bernoulli, *Overbeck und Nietzsche*, II, 169. In Lausanne, Nietzsche would probably have had to use French, a language which he read easily, but did not speak well.

tzsche. There is something insecure, timid, and defeated about the over-sensitive young professor that in no way seems aristocratic. Aristocrats have to be fairly insensitive in some ways or they cease to stay up where aristocrats belong. They must not be afraid of crowds, nor even of vulgarity—least of all in themselves. Nietzsche was, in simple fact, a middle-class intellectual in revolt against most of the ways of his class. “F. W. von Nietzky,” the would-be descendant of Polish noblemen, was hardly more of an aristocrat than was Keats. Both, no doubt, belong with the eternal aristocracy of the spirit; but Nietzsche, one suspects, would have been willing to compromise on some more earthly and more immediate distinction, which he was never quite to obtain.

Whatever its roots, whatever its explanation, Nietzsche’s inability to lead a conventional social life has important consequences in any estimate of his work. In spite of the many insights he achieved, in spite of the intensity of his search for a good way of life for men on this earth, at bottom Nietzsche’s study of man as a social and political animal—and this is most of his work—suffers from the fact that he knew so little, at first hand, of other human beings. To a sufficiently transcendental critic, this is of course hardly a serious deficiency. But Nietzsche himself tried hard not to set up as a transcendentalist, directed indeed some of his sharpest barbs at innocent old Kant and other dwellers in the untrodden ways of pure spirit. On Nietzsche’s own grounds, his withdrawal from this world was a limitation and a weakness.

It was a weakness reflected rather in his attempts at practical judgments, in his sense of what is possible, than in the actual materials, in the facts and observations he worked with. Nie-

tzsche was not, like so many of the philosophically inclined — Coleridge, for instance — wrapped up, insulated in, the thoughts that buzzed around inside his skull. He read a good deal, for a man with chronic eye-trouble, and on the whole he read the kind of books — histories, memoirs, travels — from which it is possible to obtain a useful, if vicarious, experience of men and things.⁵ He did not altogether avoid the market-place; indeed he prowled about it quietly, looking and listening, and possibly even learning. And, though he quarreled with them frequently, and otherwise plagued them greatly, he had in these years friends who listened to him, and, indeed, talked back at him. Distantly and faintly, perhaps, he seems to have heard them, and for a while to have tried to adjust himself to their worlds as well as to his own.

Burckhardt was too old to be an intimate, but he was too distinguished to be neglected. Nietzsche excepted him from the herd, and cultivated his acquaintance. They walked and talked together not infrequently. No doubt Nietzsche's devotion to the heroic was strengthened by the historian of the athletic age we call the Renaissance. For Burckhardt, too, a glory had gone from a world in which machines, banks, insurance companies (for which latter Basle was becoming a European center) were more important than *virtù*. The two must have spent many pleasant moments together mourning the world's decay.

In long letters the young professor kept up his ties with Rohde, still solidly Schopenhauerian, and on his way to a professorship of philosophy in Kiel, and with von Gersdorff, the

⁵ Nietzsche's *Belesenheit* is exhaustively treated in the course of Andler's *Nietzsche*, and more especially in vols. II and IV.

Prussian squire he had known so well at school, and who was beginning to display a Prussian willingness to rescue the world from Latin skepticism and decay. Romundt, another of his Leipzig circle, and a lover of Schopenhauer, he helped to an appointment as *Privat-dozent* at the University in Basle, and for a while lived with him on intimate terms. But for Romundt, a delicate soul, pessimism led on to Christianity and finally to holy orders. Nietzsche never forgave him this treason.

Of all Nietzsche's friendships, however, the firmest, longest, and most unclouded was that with Franz Overbeck, who joined the faculty at Basle as professor of church history one year after Nietzsche entered on his professorate. Overbeck, seven years Nietzsche's senior, was an intelligent, rather conventional, scholar, a careful research worker, with the professional skepticism his training as a historian had brought, and no great desire to attain the unattainable in himself or the Universe. Nietzsche he found full of ideas, willing and able to talk on almost anything, and, once the barriers were down, extraordinarily unreserved. The two had bachelor quarters together in a little house in the Schützgraben, Nietzsche on the first floor, Overbeck on the ground floor. Overbeck's marriage a few years later lessened somewhat the intimacy, though Frau Overbeck made valiant efforts to get on with the temperamental Nietzsche. Elizabeth Nietzsche never liked the Overbecks, and when in 1908 Carl Albrecht Bernoulli published in his *Franz Overbeck und Friedrich Nietzsche: Eine Freundschaft* Overbeck's own honest observations on his friend's character and behavior, she lost herself in indignation. According to Elizabeth, all Overbeck says of her brother is false, and inspired by jealousy. Overbeck, however, seems to a neutral observer to

have had to the end the greatest admiration and love for Nietzsche, whom he held to be a genius, an unquestioned member — though certainly not the greatest — of the small group of supremely great German men of letters. But Overbeck thought he was justified from intimate experience of Nietzsche's daily life in noting that his friend was also selfish, absurdly sensitive, a neurotic invalid given to self-doctoring, an awkward figure in society, a thinker impatient of criticism, assured and intolerant. For all that, and indeed because of it, Overbeck to the end cherished towards Nietzsche an affection he himself called "unclouded."⁸ It was, in part, no doubt, the affection the competent in this narrow world often have for the incompetent, an affection that grows on irritation. Nietzsche may well have been a great man; he was certainly not a competent one.

Nietzsche's great sensibility was perhaps unduly concentrated on his few friends. He had no great abstract loyalties to take up his energies and his vanity, no routine administrative duties, no hobby, no gift at all for idleness, for doing nothing. Even the Franco-Prussian War proved for him a confused and unprofitable interlude. He had had to become a naturalized Swiss citizen, and so could not join the German armies. At the first news, he was proudly cosmopolitan and superior. But soon the itch to take part in this marvellous redemption of the Teutonic race from Latin vices and Latin rationalism grew too strong. He enlisted in the German ambulance service, and after a short period of training was sent out to the battlefields, where he promptly took very ill with dysentery and diphtheria, and had to be invalided out of the service. Elizabeth regards

⁸ Bernoulli, *Overbeck und Nietzsche*, I, 63.

this as an important part of the martyrdom which broke down his health. Nietzsche himself took a patriotic pride in the German victory, though hardly had he come back to his teaching at Basle than he began to have his doubts. This new Empire of Bismarck's seemed a little vulgar and materialistic. He could think of better things. For a time, he dreamed of a kind of modern cloister, wherein he and a few choice spirits would purge themselves, and somehow through themselves the world, of this vile materialism.⁷

Friendships, indeed all personal relations, were always exhausting to Nietzsche. They did not free him from his feeling of his own ineptness, did not make up for the deficiencies of peoples and empires. How intense and demanding friendship was for him can be gathered from a description of his farewell to Romundt, about to take holy orders:

It was horribly sad, wrote Nietzsche to Gersdorff. Romundt knew, repeated endlessly that henceforward he had lived the better and the happier part of his life. He wept and asked our forgiveness. . . . At the last moment I was seized with a veritable terror; the porters were shutting the doors, and Romundt, wishing to continue to speak to us, wanted to let down the window, but it stuck; he redoubled his efforts, and while he tormented himself, trying in vain to make himself heard, the train went slowly off, and we were reduced to making signs to each other. The awful symbolism of the whole scene upset me terribly, and Overbeck as much as it did me: it was hardly endurable. I stayed in bed the next day with a bad headache that lasted thirty hours, and much vomiting of bile.⁸

⁷ See his letter to Rohde, Dec. 15, 1870. *Gesammelte Briefe*, II, 214.

⁸ *Gesammelte Briefe*, I, 312. To Gersdorff, April 17, 1875. Romundt's name is represented by asterisks in the original.

II

Of all the men and women who touched Nietzsche's life, Richard Wagner is perhaps the most important, as he is certainly the most striking. The brief and intense friendship between the two men takes up most of the early years of Nietzsche's professorate; its long disintegration filled the rest of his conscious life. Just before his final madness Nietzsche printed a series of violent attacks on the now-dead Wagner. The problems of the relationship, complicated by the fact that Nietzsche was in some senses in love with Wagner's mistress and wife, Cosima, have tempted all sorts of writers, and there is already a large Wagner-Nietzsche literature.⁹ Both Masters have their disciples and their defenders, though Wagner, whose charms are perhaps a little more obvious, has here the numerical advantage.

Nietzsche had met Wagner briefly at Leipzig, but in the rush of a mere social occasion had had no chance to impress himself upon the composer. Now he learned that Wagner, having been forced into the open in his relations with Cosima, the wife of Wagner's friend von Bülow, had left the scandal behind him, and had retreated with Cosima and his Art to the peace of the near-by Swiss village of Tribschen. Admiration and ambition aiding, Nietzsche so far overcame his natural diffidence as to call on the great man. He was politely, and then cordially, received. He was young, eager, admiring, a professor and hence perhaps not without some influence on public opinion. Wagner, who had not yet entirely conquered public opinion, even in Germany, welcomed a new disciple. Soon Nietzsche

⁹ For a brief discussion of it, see the bibliography, p. 255.

was spending as much of his spare time as possible in Trieb-schen, listening to Wagner's music, discussing the supreme synthesis of human culture Wagner was preparing — had indeed practically achieved — talking, eating, strolling by the lake, running errands for the household.

Trieb-schen is removed from us by an awkward interval of time and its idyll necessarily seems to us to fall short of classic finish. The setting is wrong: a Swiss villa of the 1870's will do at best for comic opera. The characters lack serenity and nobility. They seem to come from a slightly depressing novel, or from real — too real — life. Wagner, high-priest even to himself, living each moment and each act in a supreme, intense, and wearing dedication; Frau Cosima, nursing, protecting, flattering and cajoling this man who had brought her fame, if he had not quite made her Isolde; the four children of Cosima and von Bülow, with the fifth, little Siegfried, child of Cosima and Wagner, all of them lively, and, in such a household, relatively uninhibited; the awkward young professor and philologist, protective cavalryman's mustache just grown, listening, admiring, and when opportunity presented — and when Wagner allowed someone else to talk — breaking into long periods of eloquence in which the Master saved the clean soul of animal man from the corruptness of Socrates and Christ.

Time has made almost everything about Trieb-schen slightly ludicrous. The villa itself, furnished "in accordance with the style of a Paris furniture company, who had been somewhat lavish in their use of pink satin and little Cupids," seems no fit birthplace for a pure Teutonic Siegfried. Then there is Frau Cosima strolling by the lake, "dressed in a pink cashmere gown with broad revers of real lace, on her arm a large Tuscan

hat trimmed with a crown of pink roses . . . behind her pacing a dignified, heavy and gigantic, coal-black Newfoundland dog." And Wagner himself, "in a Flemish painter's costume, consisting of a black velvet coat, black satin knee-breeches, black silk stockings, a light blue satin cravat tied in a rich bow, with a piece of his fine linen and lace shirt showing below, and a painter's *béret* on his head." Finally, by no mere metaphor the culmination and purpose of Triebchen, there are the high thoughts, as Cosima recorded them:

When I contemplate our peaceful existence which, in view of the Master's genius, may well be called sublime, and feel at the same time that the sufferings we have previously endured are indelibly stamped on our souls, I say to myself that the greatest joy on earth is vision, and that this vision has fallen to the lot of us poor creatures.¹⁰

The vision has inevitably dimmed for us, or perhaps merely altered. We see the papier-maché in the Master's stage-dragon. We hear above the *Liebsteid*, the unpleasant voice of Wagner the Jew-baiter, Wagner the German fanatic, Wagner the unbuttoned egotist. We hear above the commotion other voices, more recent and even more unpleasant. Triebchen, like Berchtesgaden, is not for us an idyllic spot.

What Nietzsche sought from Wagner he undoubtedly got. The brilliant young philologist was really, like many another academic light, a professor in spite of himself. He had no deep love for the patient ways of scholarly research. He wanted to shine, and as a bookish young fellow he had already shone academically as long as he could. Now he wanted to illuminate the world, and Diogenes Laertius obviously did not provide nearly enough light. He wanted to move and be moved, to

¹⁰ Förster-Nietzsche, *Nietzsche*, I, 223-224.

scale the heights and sound the depths, to solve the problems of Eternity and the Universe. He wanted to be a philosopher. He wanted, as he had wanted at Bonn, tribal initiation and tribal admiration. The little clan of philologists had not been enough. This scorner of the crowd could never do without the homage of the crowd.

Luck or instinct served him well in sending him to Wagner. The composer was already a national, indeed a world figure. His music, acclaimed by the fervent groups of Wagnerites as the supreme experience of human life, was gradually, in the 1870's, coming to be accepted by calmer people for what it is, great music pieced out with long stretches of dull music. To Wagner and the Wagnerites, however, the master was no mere musician. The *Ring*, notably, was at once a history of Germany and a prophecy, a program for Germany. Wagner had achieved a synthesis of all the arts, and the arts were obviously all of life worth having. Wagner was therefore the supreme teacher, philosopher, law-giver, prophet. He was, in the aesthetic frame in which his whole life, like his tam-o'-shantered costume, was cast, the Master; but he might just as well have been the Fuehrer.

Nietzsche's first book grew directly out of this association with Wagner. It was an association at first unquestionably based on mutual liking and respect, though also from the first mixed naturally and profitably with a mutual desire to exploit the partner in the relationship. Nietzsche's great contribution was his book, *The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music*, published with Wagner's blessing in 1872. And well might the composer bless a work in which he appeared as the re-discoverer of the best in Greek art, as the modern heir of Aeschylus, indeed, of Dionysos himself.

Nietzsche's book took a spectacular farewell to philology and scholarship. It was no careful account of Greek tragedy, but a brief, lively, and literary defense of an old thesis in philosophy, an old folk-belief among German intellectuals. According to Nietzsche, art — and therefore, of course, everything in human life — has two poles, the Dionysian and the Apollinian. The Dionysian is A Good Thing: it is God's and Nature's primal strength, the unending turbulent lust and longing in men which drives them to conquest, to drunkenness, to mystic ecstasy, to love-deaths. The Apollinian is A Bad Thing — though not unattractive in its proper place: it is man's attempt to stop this unending struggle, to find peace, harmony, balance, to restrain the brute in himself. But the brute is life, and cannot be long restrained. Greek life and art, as we can find if we go back to the sources, was originally Dionysian. With Socrates and Euripides, however, the Apollinian element won a too-conclusive victory. The living springs of Dionysian strength were cut off. Greek culture became restrained, harmonious, gentlemanly, reasonable, beautiful — and dead.

This is an unduly simple outline of an idea which Nietzsche developed with all the subtlety of his literary skill. But such an outline does bare the commonplace, indeed traditional, character of Nietzsche's basic assumption. Dionysian against Apollinian, romantic against classic, realism against idealism, natural against artificial, Germanic (or Nordic) against Latin — the antithesis has provided great fun for critics and philosophers for generations. Herder, Schiller, Hegel had played with it; Spengler was to take it up, transpose its terms a bit and predict the downfall of a European civilization at the hands of which his Germany had suffered temporary defeat in the Four Years'

War. For Germans, at least, this favorite antithesis has usually had a common feature: the Germans possess the quality X which makes for profundity, strength, union with the World-Spirit — and survival. Nietzsche is no exception:

. . . in some inaccessible abyss the German spirit still rests and dreams, undestroyed, in glorious health, profundity, and Dionysian strength, like a knight sunk in slumber; from which abyss the Dionysian song rises to our ears to let us know that this German knight even now is dreaming his primitive Dionysian myth in blissfully earnest visions. . . . Someday the German spirit will find itself awake in all the morning freshness following a deep sleep; then it will slay the dragons, destroy the malignant dwarfs, waken Brunhilde — and Wotan's spear itself will be unable to obstruct its course! ¹¹

It is true that Nietzsche gives a twist of his own to this old theme. The Dionysian is good, but apparently rather exhausting. What the Dionysos-ridden man wants infinitely he gets — if he gets anything at all — finitely. Unaware of the predicament in its fresh youth, a Dionysian civilization as it grows older comes face to face with this most dialectical difficulty. Awareness of the predicament is tragedy, the brief moment when the Dionysian wild-man, self-conscious at last, tastes the delights of the Apollinian gentleman. This is the costly moment of *Verklärung* — *Verklärung*, that nobly German experience for which we poor Anglo-Saxons have only the inadequate and borrowed Latin “transfiguration.” What tragic myth was for the Greeks, Wagner's music is for the Germans. Wagner's artful dissonance expresses our “desire to hear and at the same time have a longing beyond hearing.” Wagner's is “the eternal and original artistic force.” ¹²

¹¹ *The Birth of Tragedy*, chap. xxiv.

¹² *The Birth of Tragedy*, chaps. xxiv and xxv.

There is, however, a joker in this pack of fine words. Wagner seems cast for Dionysos. But Dionysos is clearly not enough:

If we could conceive of an incarnation of dissonance — and what else is man — then, that it might live, this dissonance would need a glorious illusion to cover its features with a veil of beauty. This is the true artistic function of Apollo, in whose name we include all the countless manifestations of the fair realm of illusion, which at each moment render life in general worth living and impel one to the experience of the next moment.

And therefore:

When the Dionysian powers rise with such strength as we are experiencing at present, there can be no doubt that, wrapped in a cloud, Apollo has already descended to us. . . .¹³

Wrapped in a cloud? Fanciful language, of course, and a bit vague. But it would have been most inartistic to write “disguised as a professor of philology at the University of Basle.”

III

Nietzsche almost from the first seems to have regarded his duties at the University as an unpleasant interruption of the serious work of his life. He took maximum advantages of vacations and holidays; he was ill with increasing frequency, and in one way or another managed to pare down his actual teaching to a minimum. The publication of *The Birth of Tragedy* and its effect on his reputation further diminished his teaching load. Serious students began to avoid him. The little book was hailed favorably by the Wagnerites, neglected by the general public, and damned almost unanimously by Nietzsche's professional colleagues in the study of philology. Had Nie-

¹³ *The Birth of Tragedy*, chap. xxv.

tzsche been a professor of philosophy, his colleagues would not have been surprised at his unverifiable assertions about the Dionysian and the Apollinian; but philologists were used to the methods — if you prefer, the limitations — of exact scholarship. Young Ulrich von Wilamowitz, destined to a great career as a classical scholar, unburdened himself in a pamphlet, *Philology of the Future*, which was a merciless riddling of Nietzsche's careless and confident prose.¹⁴ Rohde, and Wagner himself, came to Nietzsche's defense, but the result was never in doubt. The learned gentlemen rose to the defense of their threatened standards, and shut Nietzsche out. They are still unrepentant nearly sixty years afterwards. Wilamowitz wrote in his recollections:

Boyish as much of my work in question is, with the conclusion I hit the bull's-eye. Nietzsche did what I called on him to do, gave up his teaching office and science, and became the prophet of a non-religious religion and an unphilosophical philosophy. His daemon justified him in that: he had the genius and strength for it. Whether self-worship and blasphemy against the teaching of Socrates and Christ will give him the victory, let the future show.¹⁵

Nietzsche was, as a matter of fact, to continue on the faculty at Basle for another seven years. In the university proper there were not infrequent periods when he had no students at all: the philologists were very effective as boycotters. Public lectures were not a severe strain. In the lower school he continued to take schoolboys through Greek texts. But his health grew worse and worse, his absences more frequent, and his unfitnes for his

¹⁴ U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Zukunftsphilologie. Eine Erwiderung auf F. Nietzsche's Geburt der Tragödie* (1872).

¹⁵ U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *My Recollections* (English translation, 1930), p. 152.

job more apparent. At last, in the summer of 1879, he was very generously retired by the university with a pension of 3,000 Swiss francs a year, though he was only thirty-four years old and had taught at Basle but ten years, and that rather fitfully. From now on, the genius of Nietzsche was freed from what everyone then knew to be the worst shackle a poet or a thinker can wear — a university post.

He had not been a bad teacher, certainly not in his earlier years at Basle. Shyness, fear of numbers of men, afflicted him much less once he felt beneath him the security of the lecture-platform. His delivery was clear and authoritative, if not oratorically very skilled. He always had what in this connection is usually called "ideas," and could hold the attention even of the pedantic — or cautious — among his classes. Even in the lower school he seems to have had no serious troubles. Here he rather shot over the heads of all save the ablest of his pupils. But though he was absent-minded, near-sighted, and highly intellectual, these schoolboys at least kept discipline under him. After all, even in Swiss Basle, they were German schoolboys, and knew their place.¹⁶

Apart from the visits to Tribschen and a few vacation trips, the Basle years were to Nietzsche mostly unhappy, and increasingly so. Elizabeth attributes everything to her brother's bad health and to his irregular life as an unworldly bachelor. There are all sorts of stories about his eccentricities. He experimented with various diets, vegetarian and otherwise, cooked for him-

¹⁶ My temperate account of Nietzsche as professor is not, of course, in the tradition of the *Nietzsche-Archiv*. To Elizabeth, Fritz was at least as good at the job as Burckhardt. See her lyrical summing-up in the *Life*, II, 61. Overbeck is here, as usual, sympathetic but critical. See Bernoulli, *Overbeck und Nietzsche*, I, 66-71.

self, ate raw food, and doctored himself with a fine array of medicines. His letters are full of complaints about nausea, headache, sleeplessness. He estimates he is incapacitated for normal work nearly two-thirds of the time. Traveling seems to bring him some relief, and returning to Basle to work almost always starts him on a particularly bad spell. Wilamowitz's attack made him ill. Wagner's growing preoccupation with the Bayreuth scheme affected his health unpleasantly. In general, when he didn't get what he wanted, he fell ill — or rather, fell more conspicuously ill. This is by no means an uncommon form of behavior among human beings, and not in itself an indication of genius.

The Nietzsche of these years, clear even in the pages of his adoring sister, still clearer in his correspondence and in Overbeck's recollections, is a figure rather more unpleasant than pathetic, a vain, touchy, prematurely old young man, an eccentric, querulous hypochondriac, a preacher unheard, a writer unread and soured. Yet shift the emphasis ever so slightly, and a quite different figure emerges, the poet tortured by God and man, Prometheus exposed not only to the vultures, but to the myriads of biting insects, a noble soul ripened by martyrdom. So Nietzsche later regarded himself, and so his followers still regard him. At any rate, it was a martyrdom, and as such quite essential to his mission. As martyrdoms go, it now seems a little inglorious, even shabby. Psychiatry, above all in the simplified forms with which it has penetrated to popular consciousness, has been hard on martyrs. Nietzsche obviously had forty different kinds of inferiority complex.

IV

One series of gestures Nietzsche did make, in the middle seventies, towards reconciling his sense of mission — mission to do something great, mission to reform the universe — with his position as a university professor. He projected first as lectures, then as essays, a series of discussions on all the great issues which, as editorial writers like to put it, confront mankind. Of these, four longish essays were actually written, and published between 1873 and 1876 under a title officially translated in the English edition of Nietzsche's works as *Thoughts out of Season*: the untranslatable German original, *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen*, may be roughly given as *Considerations contrary to the Spirit of the Age*. In these essays praising Schopenhauer as an educator, damning the philistine and complacent rationalism of the famous Sträuss of *The Life of Jesus*, worrying about the deadening effect of our modern interest in history on our energies and originality, praising Wagner in Bayreuth, Nietzsche conscientiously carries out the promise of his title. Everything is wrong in the nineteenth century. The age is materialistic, vulgar, corrupt, leveling all distinction of mind or spirit in a democratic tyranny, doomed to extinction — and so on in a vein familiar nowadays to everyone. Nietzsche's tone is very much assured, very superior, very earnest and omniscient. It is a tone recognizable enough for twentieth-century Americans, among whom it is rather oddly known as "liberal."

These thoughts were apparently a little too far out of season. They were not appreciated save by the now narrowing circle of Nietzsche's own friends. The philologists no longer even

bothered to attack the young professor. The Germans, after 1870, felt pretty much in tune with the times. They didn't even listen to Nietzsche as he urged them to gather behind him and go somewhere Bismarck couldn't possibly lead. But not only was *Thoughts out of Season* a failure. The one great corporate effort into which the young man had put the devouring enthusiasm of his ambition was turning out badly. Wagner was going wrong; he was succeeding.

The composer had long wanted to build a center wherein his music-dramas could receive the complete and reverent performance impossible in theatres built for the limited operas of Gluck and Mozart. It was not fitting, indeed it was hardly possible, to present *Götterdämmerung* in a setting meant for *Così fan tutte*. In the 1870's, he set seriously to work on what finally became the shrine of Bayreuth. The money essential to the undertaking — ultimately supplied by the mad King of Bavaria — Wagner at first tried to raise by an appeal to his devotees, an appeal conducted with a very modern apparatus of publicity, meetings, committees, a "campaign," in short.

Nietzsche, high in the esteem of the Master, was given an important place in the campaign. His essay on "Richard Wagner in Bayreuth," included in *Thoughts out of Season*, was originally campaign literature, though in the three years or so it was being put together, it lost a bit of its early freshness. Nietzsche was chosen to write a particularly important piece of publicity, a direct appeal for funds. His draft was severely criticized by his co-workers, who found it better philosophy than advertising. It was cast aside as much too high-falutin', and Nietzsche received another of the innumerable wounds he collected all his life — with profit, if not with pleasure.



RICHARD AND COSIMA WAGNER

From a photograph, 1870

More and more people kept discovering Wagner. They were rich, noble, snobbish, vulgar, worldly. They did not seem to find Wagner at all superior to the Spirit of the Age. They did not, unless they had happened to glance at *The Birth of Tragedy*, think of him as Dionysos. They did not, in fact, often notice Herr Nietzsche. They took up most of Wagner's time. The Master not only did not mind them: he seemed to like them. They were helping him build Bayreuth.

Bayreuth was built, and in 1876 the first of the festivals opened with performances of the whole *Ring of the Nibelungen*. Nietzsche could hardly refuse the invitation to be an honored guest. He came, and was lost in the press of visitors. Bayreuth was no Heavenly City: it was already no more than a summer resort, a watering-place.¹⁷ Nietzsche took ill, and went off to the quiet woods of near-by Klingenbrunn to get strength to face the dress rehearsals and formal performances of the four operas. He returned to Bayreuth but could not go through with it. The dress rehearsals were enough. He had been looking for some supreme, unearthly experience, some touch of eternity. He found himself looking at Grand Opera.

My blunder was this. I travelled to Bayreuth with an ideal in my breast, and was thus doomed to experience the bitterest disappointment. The preponderance of ugliness, grotesqueness and strong pepper thoroughly repelled me.¹⁸

After Nietzsche's sudden departure from the triumph of the first season of Bayreuth, his friendship with Wagner died a lingering death, beyond the power of Elizabeth, who retained an innocent German love of Wagner's music, to keep alive.

¹⁷ *The Case of Wagner*, Postscript.

¹⁸ *The Case of Wagner*, Selected aphorisms, § 1.

They never really met again on the old terms. Nietzsche said unkind things about the Master: but he did not as yet print them. It had always been an unstable friendship, for both men were egotists, intellectuals, and *temperamentvoll* Germans — that is, both lacked most even of the purely outward restraints that keep men from behaving like game-cocks. On Nietzsche's part, certainly, the relation had by no means lacked the impulsion of high ideals. It is a mistake, common to idealist and materialist alike, to suppose that men are driven by interests to the exclusion of ideals, or by ideals to the exclusion of interests. Friendship, notably, is a relation much too solid to be based on such abstract distinctions as that between ideals and interests.

Nietzsche, then, really felt that Wagner at Bayreuth had betrayed some great ideal he had at Triebshen promised to serve. What is more important, Nietzsche really felt that the music-dramas were unsatisfactory, that for him at least they unlocked no pent-up Dionysian ecstasy. That he also felt neglected, that he was jealous, that his old fear of the press of people came back on him in crowded Bayreuth, that he was not shining in this Germany of Richard Wagner — surely such considerations can but add to the depth and honesty, as well as to the completeness, of his revulsion from Wagner-Dionysos. Even in 1872, in the *Birth of Tragedy*, he had hinted that Nietzsche-Apollo was needed to make a new Hellas of Germany.

The revulsion led him, as such revulsions have often led German intellectuals, to France. Those who construct periods in Nietzsche's life and works discern after his first or Wagner period a second or critical and rational period, for which he was in part prepared by careful reading of Montaigne,

Pascal, La Rochefoucauld, Vauvenargues, Stendhal and other masters of French prose. In his travels he had met a bright young Jewish intellectual, Dr. Paul Rée, who prided himself on a cynical realism in the study of men, a realism never fashionable, he thought, among such sentimental idealists as the Germans. Rée was undoubtedly a tenth-rate figure, but he proved a good foil for Nietzsche emerging from his disillusion over Wagner. Other new faces came into Nietzsche's circle as he withdrew from Basle and entered the cosmopolitan group that shuttled among Swiss and Italian *pensions* and villas. One of them was Peter Kösselitz, better known by his assumed name of Peter Gast, an undistinguished musician devoutly immersed in his art, a German plunged, as only Germans can be plunged, in what he thought was Italy, an arty, sensitive soul, a born disciple. Another was Mathilda von Meysenbug, an incredibly innocent old lady, a close friend of the Wagners, a collector of experiences and geniuses, a sort of spiritual, or possibly only German, Madame de Warens.

In these new surroundings, Nietzsche put together the series of aphorisms which he published in 1878 under the title of *Human, All Too Human*. It was dedicated to Voltaire. For the German Wagner, who had just published in *Parsifal* his reconciliation with priestly Christianity, and who had hated the French since his failure at Paris, this was indeed an insult. It was, in a sense, Nietzsche's declaration of independence. And not only independence of Wagner. It was also a declaration of independence from the professorate. One year later, Nietzsche was officially retired from a post he was barely occupying. The professor was free to undertake a career which, even in twentieth-century America, is commonly regarded as a bit unacademic: that of the prophet.

CHAPTER III

THE PROPHET

NIETZSCHE in 1880 had twenty years of life ahead of him: a decade of extraordinarily active writing in which all his greatest works were composed, and another decade of complete invalidism, the hopeless isolation of the incurably insane. The marvellous decade of the 1880's in Nietzsche's life is for his disciples and admirers filled with great moments, inspired with the high, tragic contrast between the petty details of his apparent life and the god-like grandeur of his real life. To the unconverted, blind to this real life, his only too apparent life is not without elements of comedy.

Financially, at least, Nietzsche never sank into picturesque want, and the impression current in the 1890's that he had, like all the really great geniuses of art and letters, been "penniless" as well as scorned, is not true. His Basle pension of 3,000 Swiss francs went perhaps as far as \$1,500 would go in America today; and to this he could add about as much again from his mother. For a single man, \$3,000 a year is far indeed from poverty. It permitted Nietzsche, not luxury and display, but some of the subtle little indulgences in food, clothes, and books that gave him such aristocratic satisfaction. No doubt it was an income unworthy of a Polish nobleman. Poor Nietzsche, even here, was at a level well below his estimate of himself. He was, in fact, that characteristic nineteenth-century, middle-class figure, the *rentier* — the *petit rentier*, at that.

Freed from any settled obligations, he could live where he wanted to. His great decade was spent mostly in Italy and in Switzerland, with a few brief visits to Germany. In Italy, where he spent the long winters, he never quite found the perfect spot. One season he had earlier spent at Sorrento, along with others as a member of Mathilda von Meysenbug's *ménage*, and here he had his last constrained interview with Wagner in 1877. After that he stayed alone, with occasional visits from friends like Peter Gast or from his sister. He tried Stresa on Lake Maggiore, and various places along the Riviera, Rapallo, Genoa, Nice — the latter at that time but recently annexed to France, and still in many ways Italian. His last winter before his breakdown he spent at Turin, where he seemed very contented. Wherever he went in Italy, he tried to settle down for part of the season at least, taking a room in some quiet boarding house, eating about in inexpensive restaurants, walking, composing, lying in the sun.

In Switzerland he returned time and again to the Engadine, a region which he used to say "gave me back my life."¹ He went there first with his sister in the summer of 1879, to convalesce from a more than usually severe bout of illness which had signalized his last days as a professor. Later he settled in the little village of Sils-Maria, from which he took long walks through the high valley of the Inn. The piety of the Nietzscheans has associated Nietzsche with the Engadine as Wordsworth is associated with the Lake District, or Thoreau with Concord. A monument now marks the spot on the lake of Silvaplana, not far from Surlei, where, "six-thousand feet beyond Man and Time," Nietzsche was struck with the idea

¹ Förster-Nietzsche, *Nietzsche*, II, 67.

of eternal recurrence, "the highest formula of affirmation that can ever be achieved."² No doubt that Nietzsche loved the Engadine of his day, before St. Moritz had become too fashionable a center; no doubt that its cool, clear air and quiet helped him to the sustained effort needed for his work. But *Thus Spake Zarathustra* is only incidentally a book to be associated with a place. Nietzsche's thoughts were spun out in an atmosphere far more rarefied than that at six thousand feet. He was too good — or too orthodox — a philosopher to notice the petty facts of his environment, save as they got into his moods. He hated cold, dampness, dark, and loved the sunshine and clear air. He was lucky in the Engadine and in the Riviera; but you would not learn much about those regions if you relied solely on Nietzsche's works.³

In some ways, Nietzsche's health did improve in these years. His correspondence is always spotted with complaints about his health: "It has been my gloomiest and unhealthiest winter, except for ten days, which were just enough to allow of my doing something [writing on *Thus Spake Zarathustra*] that makes up for all my days of sadness and ill health."⁴ His headaches and sleeplessness continued; and about this time, according to his sister, he began to take a mysterious mixture she calls the "Javanese sedative." Podach, the most sensible of those who have written about Nietzsche's diseases, has doubts about the very existence of this sedative, which he thinks Elizabeth brought forth as a rebuttal to the unpleasant rumors

² *Ecce Homo*, "Thus Spake Zarathustra," § 1.

³ He could do an occasional descriptive piece, as in *Human, All Too Human*, "The Wanderer and his Shadow," § 295. But even here, though he starts with a lake and pines, he ends with Epicurus.

⁴ *Gesammelte Briefe*, V, part II, 507. To his sister, April 27, 1883.

about her brother's syphilis. Even Nietzsche's doses of chloral, Podach argues, are, to take him at his own word, by no means heroic, and can hardly have seriously undermined his health.⁵ That Nietzsche suffered real pain there can be no doubt; but that he was also a hypochondriac, that he was proud of his sufferings, that he loved to complain of them, is also undeniable.

He complained almost as much about the way he was deserted by his fellows, about his lack of friends, about the absence in his life of the love so necessary to the genius. Naturally, Elizabeth got the brunt of these complaints.

So far as friendship is concerned, I have, in fact, altogether managed to forego a good deal. . . . In the deeper sense I have no comrades (*Genossen*) — no one knows when I need comfort, encouragement, or a grip of the hand. . . . And if I complain, the whole world thinks it has a right to wreak its petty sense of power upon me as a sufferer: they call it consolation, pity, good advice, and so forth. But this has always been the fate of such men as I.⁶

Yet with all his complaining, he somehow contrived health enough to write books. And as time goes on, he complains a bit less, even admits that he feels somewhat better. Here, too, there is the touch of exaggeration, the tension of the extreme, the queer instability rarely absent in Nietzsche's life. He never seems to write quietly, dutifully, and dully: he is always in ecstasy, always panting. As madness approaches, the feeling of euphoria is plain. As far back as *Zarathustra*, he had felt the divine touch. He had written under revelation.

A joy, strained to a tremendous pitch which sometimes seeks relief in a flood of tears — a perfect ecstasy, with the most distinct consciousness of an endless number of delicate shocks and thrills to one's very toes;

⁵ Podach, *Nietzsches Zusammenbruch*, 25–28.

⁶ *Gesammelte Briefe*, V, part II, 541. To his sister, August, 1883.

a feeling of happiness, in which the most gloomy and painful feelings act, not as a contrast, but as something expected and inevitable, as an *essential* coloring within such an overflow of light; an instinct for rhythm that bridges wide gulfs of form. . . . This is my experience of inspiration. I have no doubt that we should have to go back many thousands of years before we could find anyone who would dare say to me: "It is mine as well."⁷

It was a strange life, and Nietzsche must have seemed to the little people among whom he moved — the hotel-keepers, the waiters, the porters, the chambermaids — a most extraordinary fellow. Unfortunately, such people rarely write their memoirs. A few observations from a *concierge* or a waiter might throw light on Nietzsche in ways that have not occurred to the high-minded and highly educated people who have written about him. With his eyeglasses, his mustaches, his height and his brownness, he must have been to his Italian hosts the clumsy German, stupid and exploitable. He was absent-minded, shy, not given to scraping casual acquaintances, fond of mooning about alone. Under inspiration, he could talk to himself, compose aloud, even in Genoa. He looked like a German professor, which, in a sense, he never ceased to be. But, even at the end in Turin he kept himself neat, well-dressed, almost, in a consciously careless way, dandyish. Eccentric, he never quite lost a somewhat bewildered dignity: he never wholly looked the crank.

II

There is not much use trying to follow Nietzsche in the detail of his wanderings during this decade, nor in trying to

⁷ Written in 1888, and quoted in Förster-Nietzsche, *Nietzsche*, II, 155-156.

trace the ups and downs of his health and his friendships.⁸ But there is one phase of his relations to his fellows so characteristic of the man, and so illuminating, that it is worth dwelling upon. As at Tribschen, it is a triangular relation, and as at Tribschen, it is a tragi-comic idyll. The figures were Nietzsche, Paul Rée, and a young and very intellectual Jewish girl, Russian — or rather, Finnish — by nationality, Mlle. Lou Salomé. The three met first in the circle of Mathilda von Meysenbug. Lou was a precocious girl, with literary and philosophical aspirations, and most probably also with a few more ordinary, if not more specifically feminine, aspirations. She was chaperoned — the word is a bit strong — by a not too clearly designing mother. The interplay of emotion among the three is most complicated and confused, and has not been cleared up very satisfactorily by the letters, confessions, and memoirs of the participants, and the debates of Nietzsche's biographers and hagiographers.⁹

Nietzsche certainly saw in Lou a prospective disciple, a tender, respectful disciple, *ewig weibliche*. When, writes Andler "she confided to him her intention of sacrificing her life to Truth, he recognized in her a predestined companion."¹⁰ At any rate, he made her a formal proposal of marriage, to be delivered through Rée. Whether Rée delivered it or not is uncertain. That Lou was also interested in Rée, whom she must have found rather easier to get along with than Nietzsche, is

⁸ This is done, moreover, in very great detail in Andler, *Nietzsche*, IV, and rather more rapidly in Förster-Nietzsche, *Nietzsche*, II.

⁹ C. A. Bernoulli, "Nietzsches Lou Erlebnis." *Raschers Jahrbuch* (1910), I, is perhaps the most sensible account. Andler's chapter, entitled "Idylle tragique," *Nietzsche*, III, 280-306, is astonishingly sentimental, at once French, academic, and maudlin.

¹⁰ Andler, *Nietzsche*, IV, 284.

certain. She seems to have found a very natural pleasure in keeping both men dangling for a while. No reply ever came to the proposal. Lou went off to visit Rée's family, and then to visit Nietzsche's sister. In the summer of 1882, Nietzsche, Rée, and Lou lived together for six weeks at Leipzig in a common pursuit of truth. Nietzsche, already warned by his sister, whose first good impressions of Lou had been altered when she found the girl actually thought the philosopher rather funny at times, began to have unpleasant suspicions. He caught Lou and Rée whispering together; he found their language unpleasantly familiar.

The *ménage à trois* broke up, and back home in Naumburg with mother and sister, Nietzsche began writing reproachful letters to Lou. She hadn't lived up to her promise to sacrifice herself to Truth. She was irreverent, light-headed, even in the presence of Zarathustra. In his last letter to her he wrote:¹¹

I have never yet made a mistake about any human being, and in you I recognize that impulse towards a sublime selfishness which is an instinctive obedience to the highest law. Some curse or other, it seems, has made you confound it with its opposite, the selfishness and rapacity of the cat, that wants nothing but life. Now this feline egotism . . .

Not a lover's letter: not, at any rate, an accepted or an acceptable lover's letter.

Nietzsche at first held Rée guiltless of treachery or betrayal. But reflection, grim, painful chewing over his grievances, with the help of Elizabeth who did not like Rée, and of Mathilda von Meysenbug, whose carelessness let Nietzsche see a letter from Lou's mother complaining that the now altogether too emancipated young lady had been living with Rée in Berlin, all

¹¹ Quoted in Förster-Nietzsche, *Nietzsche*, II, 140.

pointed to Rée. Nietzsche decided he had been duped and insulted. He drafted a letter to Rée, a very strong letter though the one he actually sent may have been milder:

I should very much like to give you a lesson in practical morality with the help of a few bullets. Perhaps, if I am lucky, I shall manage to make you give up occupying yourself with morality once for all — for this occupation needs clean hands, Herr Dr. Rée, not muck-raking fingers like yours!¹²

This, even though it came from the pen of a German professor, would seem to call for a duel. Perhaps Nietzsche never sent the letter. Perhaps Rée was not easily insulted. At any rate, the duel was never fought.

There are some things fairly clear in this unlovely but not unamusing episode. Lou possibly, even probably, became the mistress of Rée; she was almost certainly never the mistress of Nietzsche. Elizabeth, jealous of her brother, and inclined already to anti-semitism, interfered deliberately and sharpened antagonisms that might have tapered off into forgetfulness. But Nietzsche himself appears almost incredibly inept and emotionally immature. Perhaps the philosopher-prophet was too good for the earthly commerce of love and friendship. It is unfortunate, however, that he felt obliged to attempt a course of action so much more difficult than putting words together nicely. Nietzsche simply could not, by this time, leave the private world he was building for himself, and move about with people who occasionally, and even habitually, take the world as they find it. Nietzsche could never relax; he could hardly expect to love.

The episode confirmed him in his self-righteousness, in his

¹² Förster-Nietzsche, *Nietzsche*, II, 176.

fear and hatred of everybody else — even Elizabeth — and in his determination to build his own private world into something colossal, overpowering. It may have helped to shake his already badly shaken nervous system. It must have increased the feeling of personal inferiority for which his writings are sometimes an almost absurdly simple form of compensation:

Every defamation, every misunderstanding has made me more free: I want less and less from humanity, and can give it more and more. The severance of every individual tie is hard to bear, but in each case a wing grows in its place.¹³

Adler and Jung and Freud are hardly necessary here: almost any kind of life is clinical experience enough to give an understanding of such a case. Even Nietzsche himself could have understood it — in another.



III

This is the decade when Nietzsche's best known books were written — though "written" is a modest, routine word for what Nietzsche himself regarded as a cosmic process. He composed them in all sorts of places and in all sorts of conditions — sitting on the sea-shore near Genoa, strolling the back-ways of Nice, striding in ecstasy by Lake Silvaplana, hunched near-sightedly over a table in a dozen rooming-houses. His habit was to think out the matter occupying his mind while he was walking; in times of great excitement he could walk for hours at a rate apparently quite inconsistent with his invalidism. Back in his room, he would put his thoughts together in a series of aphoristic passages, or in a short chapter. A few days, at most a few weeks, of these erratic efforts would exhaust his strength.

¹³ Förster-Nietzsche, *Nietzsche*, II, 181.

Headaches, sleeplessness, and chloral would follow, until calm returned, and inspiration began again its wearing course.

The books he wrote under these conditions were naturally not systematic, orderly treatises. They were collections of great and lesser thoughts, beaded together on the string of Nietzsche's temperament. Critics have inevitably found a higher unity, indeed, several higher unities, in his work. But on the surface — and surfaces are important — a book of Nietzsche's lacks form and continuity. He is always a bit out of breath. And, except in small doses, he is likely to weary readers short on devotion.¹⁴ He repeats himself perhaps more often — perhaps only more obviously — than is usual among more formal philosophers.

We shall have to return to this problem of how far Nietzsche's work holds together. Here we are concerned with the catalogue of his books. They were not, by a publisher's no doubt confined standards, successful books. His *Birth of Tragedy* and *Thoughts out of Season* had been published by E. W. Fritsch of Leipzig, Wagner's own publisher, to whom he had been recommended as one of the inner circle of Wagnerites. *Human, All Too Human* was not the kind of book Fritsch dealt in. Nietzsche transferred his patronage to Schmeitzner of Chemnitz, who continued to publish for him down to 1884. When Fritsch, after Wagner's death, consolidated his list and took back Nietzsche's books, there were still "62 hundredweight" of these earlier writings unsold.¹⁵ Nietzsche was hard on publishers, nagging them over details of printing, always unsatis-

¹⁴ Overbeck himself notes the limitations of the "books of aphorisms" his friend wrote. Bernoulli, *Overbeck und Nietzsche*, I, 228.

¹⁵ Förster-Nietzsche, *Nietzsche*, II, 267.

fied with sales and promotion, convinced that publishers were natural slaves and herd-men who owed their unnatural power over authors to the perverse structure of nineteenth-century society. In 1884, after years of wrangling with his publishers — and after finding it very hard if not impossible to get a new one — he decided to have Part IV of *Zarathustra* printed and published at his own expense. *Beyond Good and Evil* was so published in 1886, and all the rest of his works to the end of his sane life. The great man was reduced to the expedient of buying his way into print. The swinish public wouldn't even root among his pearls.

Human, All Too Human, published in 1878, inaugurates a series of books which clearly belong together. All are frankly aphoristic, modeled as to form on the great French aphorists like La Rochefoucauld. They are collections of thoughts on men and morals, at once chaotic and encyclopaedic. They vary somewhat in tone, but they are all expressions of what Nietzsche called "the free spirit" — anti-intellectual, but also anti-romantic, contemptuous of the plush civilization of Bismarck's Germany, sure that most men are fools, but still unsure as to just who are wise. They are part of the field of *belles lettres*; had Nietzsche never written anything more, he would certainly not be known as a philosopher, but at most as a German imitator of the French aphorists.

Human, All Too Human was followed in 1881 by *The Dawn of Day* and in 1882 by *The Joyful Wisdom*. These are the books that celebrate Nietzsche's emancipation from teaching and his discovery of Italy — sunny, classic, smiling Italy, free of damp, beer, corsetry, Protestantism, and Wagner's music. *The Joyful Wisdom* is — or aspires to be — the Provençal *gai saber*, the

flashing southern wit, never morose, never befuddled with metaphysics, but capable of tragic depth and penetration. Both books are more cheerful than *Human, All Too Human*, less bitterly critical of life as ordinary people live it, less closely modeled on French patterns. They are Nietzsche's best-tempered books.

While they were being written, Nietzsche was meditating much grander things. He was not going to content himself with being a German Montaigne, resigned to writing wisely and skeptically about a world he could not change. He was still the Nietzsche who, in *Thoughts out of Season*, had really hoped to change the German season. After all, there were a lot of clever writers in the world, even in the 1880's, and the world wasn't very clearly the better for their being in it. What was wanted was someone of the stamp of the great religious leaders, Buddha, Zoroaster, Jesus, Mohammed, but someone who could do the job much better than they had done.

Nietzsche set himself up as prophet in *Thus Spake Zarathustra: A Book for All and None*, published in four short parts between 1883 and 1885. The book is in form no more unified than all his other books after *The Birth of Tragedy*. It is a collection of parables, sermons, and reflections, written in what is, no doubt justly, called poetic prose, and giving an account of the mission of Zarathustra to pave the way for the coming of the Superman. Zarathustra has no more than the name in common with his historical original, Zoroaster, and is as much nineteenth-century Nietzsche as the Persians, Hottentots, or Hurons of eighteenth-century letters were Montesquieu, Voltaire, or Diderot. The style throughout is exceedingly elevated; Zarathustra would be lost without his "saith," and "thou" and

“ye,” helpless without his exclamation points. In English translation he sounds very pseudo-biblical, like the King James version gone wrong, and almost inevitably suggests the literary style of the angel Moroni, as transcribed by another and less highly educated prophet, Joseph Smith. Indeed, *Thus Spake Zarathustra* has become, for a certain type of half-educated intellectual throughout the world, a kind of *Enchiridion*.

This is, of course, the report of an unbeliever. For the Nietzscheans, *Thus Spake Zarathustra* is an undoubted masterpiece, a sacred writing inferior in depth and dignity to none. Nietzsche himself was of this opinion. “Whenever I dip into my Zarathustra,” he said, “I walk up and down my room for half-an-hour, unable to repress my sobs.” And his sister continues, “The figure of Zarathustra is the poet’s highest creation, it is a type of eternal beauty, of a divine transfiguration of the world — it is the Superman himself.”¹⁶

Whatever its depth and beauties — probably, since the world of the flesh is so limited, *because* of its depth and beauties — *Thus Spake Zarathustra* is an enigmatic work. Nietzsche seems pretty clearly to have set himself next the deliberate task of bringing it down to earth, of expounding analytically and in plain prose the elevated obscurities that give the book its first hold on the seeker. After the Word, comes exegesis. The result was two books which, to many limited intellects outside the circles of convinced Nietzscheans, are his masterpieces: *Beyond Good and Evil*, published in 1886, and *The Genealogy of Morals*, published in 1887, and written, Elizabeth claims, in twenty days.¹⁷

¹⁶ Förster-Nietzsche, *Nietzsche*, II, 234.

¹⁷ Förster-Nietzsche, *Nietzsche*, II, 277.

Nietzsche himself wrote in the extraordinary biographical fragment he called *Ecce Homo* that after the yea-saying of *Zarathustra* he had to turn to the negative, destructive part of his task, though he looked in vain for help in this work of destruction:

Thenceforward all my writings are so much bait: perhaps I understand as much about fishing as most people? If nothing was caught, it was not I who was at fault. *There were no fish to come and bite.*¹⁸

Again, and quite naturally, a limited critic whose values have not been properly transvalued finds that Nietzsche has got things reversed. *Zarathustra* is destructive nonsense. *Beyond Good and Evil* and *The Genealogy of Morals* are relatively sober and successful efforts to penetrate objectively into some very important aspects of the behavior of human beings. They are, in spots, among the best scientific studies of this behavior ever made. Certainly Nietzsche was wrong in one respect. How the fish have bitten!

Like his earlier works, these are built up from short aphoristic passages, but they are built around definite central themes. *Beyond Good and Evil* tries to show how men have come to value certain ways of life, and to name certain forms of behavior aristocratic; and in its final book, it urges for a "master-class" a reversal of these forms of behavior. *The Genealogy of Morals* pays especial attention to the rôle of religion, and in particular Christianity, in forming our standards of behavior, of "good."

All of Nietzsche's "philosophy" was now in print. There remained to him somewhat more than a year of life, during which he produced a series of brief books, *The Case of Wagner*,

¹⁸ *Ecce Homo*, "Beyond Good and Evil," § 1.

The Twilight of the Idols, *The Antichrist*, and *Ecce Homo*. These extraordinary books, dashed off at high speed in periods of tense excitement, add nothing to his stock of ideas; they represent a stepping up of the already high voltage of his other work. All his gifts, all his faults, as a writer are here exposed in quivering nakedness — his abruptness, exaggeration, petulance, clarity of line, love of epigram and surprise, his straining for an unbreaking breaking-point. They are, as all but a very few of the most extreme Nietzscheans admit, the work of a madman. Even to the amateur diagnostician, they carry on almost every page the mark of the paranoiac.

The Case of Wagner was printed by the late summer of 1888, and Nietzsche, his mind still lucid enough for reading, saw the little book, and some of the very indignant notices it received in the German press. Well, they were paying attention to him, after all! The book — it is hardly more than a pamphlet — puts in most intemperate language the objections to Wagner Nietzsche had been sharing with his correspondents for years: Wagner's music is just German bad manners and indecency, German romantic longing, German wallowing around in vicarious sin and real repentance, German sloppiness and unendingness. By contrast "Bizet's music seems to me perfect. It comes forward lightly, gracefully, stylishly. It is lovable, it does not sweat."¹⁹

The Twilight of the Idols Nietzsche sent to press, but it was not printed until January 1889, by which time its author was beyond reading even his own works. It was put together, as was much of these four books of 1888, out of materials gathered

¹⁹ *The Case of Wagner*, § 1. This is one aspect of Nietzsche's wit at its best; Wagner's music mostly does sweat.

for his projected systematic work, *The Will to Power*. Its sub-title, *How to Philosophize with a Hammer*, is a good sample of its temper. This book, and the famous *Antichrist*, also broken off from *The Will to Power*, are really twins—both attacks on Christianity and other European habits, both mere intensifications, mere *maddenings*, of *Beyond Good and Evil*.

Elizabeth, to whom these manuscripts fell on her return from Paraguay, guarded them with due reverence. But they were shocking books, especially shocking to poor old Frau Nietzsche, who outlived her son's sanity by several years. Only when Nietzsche's fame grew to portentous heights did Elizabeth consent to the printing of the *Antichrist* in 1902. The *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche's last work, she withheld until 1908. It is a kind of autobiography, wholly unsystematic, reviewing one after another Nietzsche's books. It is not apologetic, not an attempt to justify himself. Nietzsche in the fall of 1888 was well beyond that stage, well beyond a mere sense of martyrdom and persecution. Some of its chapter headings have become famous: "Why I am so clever," "Why I write such good books." And sentences: "I am not a man: I am dynamite."

Later, his sister and her faithful co-workers brought together many of Nietzsche's fragments into a book they called *The Will to Power*. So fragmentary are most of the works he wrote in his own lifetime that this book hardly seems out of line with his other books. The mass of his literary remains was enormous. Much of it has been collected here and there, and a notably complete arrangement made in 1931 under the title *Die Unschuld des Werdens* by Professor Alfred Baeumler.²⁰

²⁰ Nietzsche, *Die Unschuld des Werdens* [The Innocence of Becoming]. *Der Nachlass*. Ausgewählt und geordnet von A. Baeumler. (2 vols., 1931.)

Scattered through the works are a number of short poems, which, put together, make part of a volume of the authorized English edition of the works of Nietzsche.²¹ They are very German poems, not at all the product of Nietzsche's enthusiasm for the Provençal and sunny clarity, and they are wholly untranslatable. A few have found their way into most anthologies of German poetry, where they must fulfill some need. The most famous is the very Dionysian and well-named "Drunken Song" from *Zarathustra*.

Oh Mensch! Gieb Acht!
 Was spricht die tiefe Mitternacht?
 "Ich schlief, ich schlief —,
 Aus tiefem Traum bin ich erwacht: —
 Die Welt ist tief,
 Und tiefer als der Tag gedacht.
 Tief ist ihr Weh —,
 Lust — tiefer noch als Herzeleid:
 Weh spricht: Vergeh!
 Doch alle Lust will Ewigkeit —,
 — will tiefe, tiefe Ewigkeit!"²²

This goes at least one better the famous concluding lines of *Faust*, the *chorus mysticus*.

Alles Vergängliche
 Ist nur ein Gleichnis;
 Das Unzulängliche,
 Hier wird's Ereignis;
 Das Unbeschreibliche
 Hier ist's getan:
 Das Ewig-Weibliche
 Zieht uns hinan.

²¹ In the volume *Ecce Homo*, 149-207.

²² Thus Spake Zarathustra, "The Drunken Song," § 12.

But Goethe also wrote poems like *Ueber allen Gipfeln* and Nietzsche did not.

IV

Nietzsche's last few years were spent in loneliness: hotel-keepers, servants, fellow-guests, a very few casual acquaintances made the sum of his relations with his fellow-men. It was, if you are a Nietzschean, the loneliness of a brooding Titan left alone by ungrateful little men; if you are not a Nietzschean, it was the loneliness of a man who had quarreled with all his friends and relatives. Peter Gast remained, and from time to time stayed with Nietzsche, and helped him with his manuscripts. The rest were all gone—Wagner and Cosima long ago. Rée and Lou Salomé, Fräulein von Meysenbug, all the arty and talkative little folk of her circle had broken with Nietzsche, or left him to himself. Frau Overbeck had mixed in the affair of Lou, Elizabeth had replied indignantly, and though there was no formal break between Nietzsche and Overbeck, there was a coolness, and a lessening of letter-writing. Rohde was one of the last to go. But in the spring of 1886 Nietzsche had stayed for a while in Leipzig, and misunderstandings between the two had come to the surface. To his sister he wrote from Leipzig:

Neither Rohde nor Overbeck have the slightest idea of what I am about, let alone a feeling of obligation towards me. In this university atmosphere the best men decay; I feel it continually in the background and as an ultimate determinant, even with such men as Rohde and Overbeck, this damned general indifference and total lack of belief.²⁸

This letter was sent to his sister in Paraguay. Elizabeth, his beloved "Lama," his mainstay in trouble and illness, had left

²⁸ *Gesammelte Briefe*, V, Part II, 675. To his sister, June 14, 1886.

him too, and her leaving had in some ways been a worse blow than the defection of Lou. Nietzsche had come to regard Elizabeth as his; she was proof that he, too, owned a woman. And now, at almost forty, she married Bernhard Förster, an anti-semitic agitator who had founded a Germanic racial colony in Paraguay, and was taking her off there to the ends of the earth. Nietzsche had opposed the engagement, but, as usual when he attempted to get something done, he behaved very unskillfully. Elizabeth took literally his sour and self-pitying assertions that he could get along by himself and married Förster in 1885. Nietzsche wrote an extraordinary letter to the bridegroom.

Love is leading the Lama — apologies, but I have called her that up to now — into many dangers, it seems, far from home, into a life full of temptations. Some things will go well, others badly: on the whole, she has a heroic future before her. So have I: it seems that this is characteristic of our stock. And if love leads her in a less abstract form than it leads me, perhaps she has a better taste, and has chosen the better part: namely Herr Bernhard Förster. In such matters, women are shrewder than men. We men run after truth, and similar pallid beauties. . . . This, to conclude from letters and other psychological documents has not been my sister's fate.

And to his Lama he sent, in lieu of attendance at her wedding, a long letter — entirely about himself, and the failure of his friendships! ²⁴

In comparative loneliness and in intense literary activity, Nietzsche spent the years 1887 and 1888. For the autumn of 1888-1889 he chose to go to Turin, intending to spend the winter itself in Nice. Indeed, he had worked out for himself a pathetically regular schedule of wandering, suited to the great

²⁴ Förster-Nietzsche, *Nietzsche*, II, 237-239.

systematic work — *The Will to Power* — he was engaged upon: Sils-Maria, Turin, Nice, Turin, and then Sils-Maria again for the beginning of another Nietzschean year.²⁵ He did not get beyond Turin. Sometime in December 1888 or January 1889 he went incurably mad. His terrified landlord was about to turn him over to the Italian authorities when the faithful Overbeck, warned by a series of strange letters from Nietzsche, arrived and took charge of his removal to Switzerland.

Signs of what was coming are clear to us now in *The Twilight of the Idols*, *The Antichrist*, and *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche's last works. They might have been clear then to other correspondents than Overbeck. To August Strindberg, with whom he had linked correspondence through Georg Brandes, he wrote: "I have called together at Rome an assembly of princes, I will have the young emperor [Kaiser Wilhelm II] shot. Au revoir! For we shall meet again. One condition. Let us divorce! — Nietzsche-Caesar." In the last access of madness, he wrote letters and telegrams to an astonishing variety of people: some, no doubt, have never been traced. To the King of Italy he wrote, addressing him as "my dearly beloved son Umberto"; to the papal secretary of state he wrote requesting that His Holiness be told of Nietzsche's veneration for him, and signing himself "the Crucified One." To Brandes he wrote: "To friend George: When once you had discovered me, it was easy enough to find me; the difficulty now is to get rid of me — The Crucified One." To Overbeck and his wife: "Although hitherto you have shown small faith in my solvency, I nevertheless hope to prove to you again that I am one who pays his

²⁵ *Gesammelte Briefe*, V, Part II, 793. To his sister, September 14, 1888.

debts — to you, for instance. Right now I'm having all the anti-Semites shot — Dionysos." It was this letter, and a longer one to Burckhardt which the historian had brought at once to Overbeck, that sent Overbeck to Turin.

The whole sheaf is no doubt revealing to the professional psychiatrist, and tempting to the amateur psychiatrist that lurks, not sufficiently unsuspecting, in almost everyone who writes today. The illusions of grandeur, the assumption of the rôle of Napoleon-Caesar, are obvious enough. Dionysos and the Crucified One are echoes of Nietzsche's own intellectual history. But the strangest, most revealing, in some ways most obvious of the letters was a scrawled line to the widowed Cosima: "Ariadne, I love thee — —Dionysos."

Nietzsche in these later years had worked his relations with Wagner and with Cosima into an elaborate symbolic tale, hints of which are frequent in his writings, as for instance: "Who, besides myself, knows who is Ariadne? To all enigmas of this sort, no one has yet learned a clue; I doubt whether anyone has even seen enigmas there."²⁶ Cosima was Ariadne, held prisoner by no mere Minotaur, but by the stale old hero Theseus, known to the world as Richard Wagner. Nietzsche was the god Dionysos, the real lover of Ariadne, and loved by her. This was certainly a projection of the old Triebtschen days. It proves only that Cosima played an important part in Nietzsche's life of revery. Twenty years before, at Triebtschen, it seems doubtful whether Nietzsche would ever have dared to admit, even to himself, that he was in love with so impressive — and so possessed — a woman as Cosima. In his madness, the symbol kept its life. Examined in the insane asylum at Jena on March

²⁶ *Ecce Homo*, "Thus Spake Zarathustra," § 8.

27, 1889, he told the physician, "It is my wife, Cosima Wagner, who brought me here."²⁷

Overbeck arrived just in time to rescue his friend. Nietzsche, who was fortunately in a period of docility, allowed himself to be taken to the train, and was brought safely to Basle, where he was put into a hospital for the mentally diseased. From there, courageous old Frau Nietzsche took him to Jena, where she consulted the best specialists available. Their verdict was incurable insanity. Elizabeth's husband had died in Paraguay, and in 1890 she came home to take charge of brother and mother. For the first few years of his illness, Nietzsche had occasional lucid intervals. He was usually quiet, and his rare outbreaks were no worse than petulance or bad temper. After Frau Nietzsche's death in 1897, Elizabeth moved her brother to a house in Weimar which she had already destined to be the shrine of his fame. Perhaps — for the Germans are incurable in these matters — she moved to Weimar because Goethe and Schiller had already given the place the right atmosphere. It was an inept action, a little like trying to move Mr. Mencken — who is, happily, no invalid — to die in Concord.

Here, in a big, airy room looking out on the sunset, Nietzsche spent the last years of a steady decline. Paralysis, which had

²⁷Podach, *Nietzsches Zusammenbruch*, 94. I have used Podach for my account of the final madness, because he seems the most temperate and sensible of those who have written on the subject. For the other side, the Nietzsche-worshipping tradition of the *Nietzsche-Archiv*, the most modern treatment is Paul Cohn, *Um Nietzsches Untergang* (1931), 13-59. This book also prints four letters from Elizabeth to Dr. Cohn, letters dealing with the subject of her brother's health, and the last important word she has to say on the subject. She continues to deny that the Ariadne story relates to Cosima, and to refuse to believe that Nietzsche was in love with Cosima. Needless to say, she still denies that her brother had syphilis.

struck him in Turin, held his whole right side, and prevented, one can only say fortunately, his writing. He would lie for hours, looking fixedly out of the window. Music stirred him to the end, and to the end he could listen to Peter Gast, who had followed the Master to Weimar. On August 25, 1900 he died quietly.

Nietzsche's illnesses were many and varied. It is unlikely that, even with the full information we have about his daily life, a trained physician could from such documentary information alone make a satisfactory diagnosis of his trouble. Certainly, it would be rash for a mere historian to attempt such a diagnosis. But one thing seems fairly clear. He did have syphilis, and the paresis with which his life ended followed on a syphilitic infection.²⁸ Some natural and presumably very useful sentiments, strong even among intellectuals, tend to focus a disproportionate attention on the fact that a great man had a venereal disease. With Nietzsche, especially, that attention is perhaps rather cruelly sharpened by the workings of the comic spirit. For syphilis is not a philosopher's disease. Even after we cease in our minds to associate it with sin, it cannot be dissociated from indignities.

You cannot, however, explain Nietzsche by the spirochetes. His trouble — and his genius — are not so simple as that. And even after psychiatrist, psychologist, physician, and biographer have got through with the man, his printed words remain.

²⁸ The explanation of syphilis was first ably and completely put forward in P. G. Möbius, *Ueber das Pathologische bei Nietzsche* (1902), and put beyond reasonable doubt by Podach's *Nietzsches Zusammenbruch*, based on an examination of the papers recording the clinical examination of Nietzsche at Jena. It has been bitterly denied, even in the face of this evidence, by most Nietzscheans, or slurred over in silence.

They now are Nietzsche. They now are part of what we call Western culture. And more: they have been incorporated into the body of beliefs to which the German National Socialists subscribe. They have, then, become a part of something many men fear as the mortal enemy of Western culture. Nietzsche's personal history fades into unimportance compared with the history of his ideas. We may here leave the nicer disputes over Nietzsche's life and personality to others, and attempt the difficult task of analyzing and classifying his ideas.²⁹

²⁹Of the books which attempt at some length the process of linking Nietzsche's life and character with his work, I find best among the older ones C. A. Bernoulli, *Overbeck und Nietzsche*, and among the newer ones K. Jaspers, *Nietzsche: Einführung in das Verständnis seines Philosophieren* (1936). Professor Jaspers is certainly not guilty of over-simplification. Neither of these books is available in English.

CHAPTER IV

WHAT NIETZSCHE HATED

THE mapping of Nietzsche's ideas is a difficult task. We are not, to be sure, dealing with a *terra incognita*. Dozens of explorers have penetrated this strange land with its contrasting lights and shades, its straining heights and hollow depths. Many of them, indeed, report that they have acclimated themselves to its unearthly atmosphere, that they have found good living there. Yet their maps vary. The truth is that the cartography of ideas is still, and may perhaps remain, no exact science. Much goes on in the human mind that is beyond triangulation, and the human spirit will be measured by no surveyor's spirit-level.

With Nietzsche the major difficulty may be, as he was pleased to think, that his ideas are greater than the understanding of other men. "My destiny ordains that I should be the first decent human being. . . . I was the first to discover truth."¹ Naturally, so remarkable an achievement must still, for a time, remain a solitary one. In any attempt to measure Nietzsche's work with the instruments available to ordinary critical thinking, there is one very obvious difficulty. The Master poured his ideas out with no regard for the petty conventions by which most thinkers arrange their thoughts. He was above contradiction. One of his aphorisms may seem to deny what another has asserted. He would create a race of Supermen; but whenever,

¹ *Ecce Homo*, "Why I am a fatality," § 1.

as with the "Aryans" in India or the "golden men" of Plato, he encounters an attempt to create — if only by thinking about it — a superior ruling class, he is scornful in condemnation. He loathes all mention of so decadent and English-liberal a word as "happiness" (Glück); yet he likes "instinct," and writes that "happiness is identical with instinct." In an attack on the vocabulary of philosophers which must delight our more innocent converts to semantics, he writes of the error "of supposing the will to be something that actuates — a faculty. Now we know that it is only a word."² Yet he entitled what he hoped would be his masterpiece "The Will to Power." Even the "philosopher with a hammer" had also to be a philosopher with words.

Nietzsche's contradictions can, of course, be resolved in a "higher unity," of which his followers have found several varieties. But with Nietzsche contradiction usually attains the mad intensity that marks almost all his work. It is tempting to explain the piled-up complexities of his writing very simply. His endless vanity made him reject everything anyone else had proposed. But to contradict everybody is to contradict yourself. Nietzsche, who made so many paradoxes, was himself the victim of this one. He had to take refuge in one of the oldest and firmest shelters of bewildered men — and Supermen. "Why? Thou askest why? I am not of those who may be asked after their Why!"³

The ideas of Nietzsche most certainly have origins in his experience; and since his experience was above all that of a

² *Twilight of the Idols*, "The 'Improvers' of Mankind," § 3; "Reason" in *Philosophy*," § 5.

³ *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, Part II, chap. xxxix, "Poets."

German intellectual of the late nineteenth century, his ideas have in part an origin in the books other men wrote. He did, indeed, transmute those ideas in the process of working them over in his mind — or his consciousness, or his temperament, or his will, or whatever else you like to call what was peculiarly Nietzsche. What came out of the process was indeed original, though not quite as original as Nietzsche liked to think.

Many scholars have devoted themselves to the pleasant task of tracing the affiliation of Nietzsche's ideas in the vast network of ideas which make up the intellectual heritage of Western civilization.⁴ There is, indeed, a fundamental difficulty in such research. We know perhaps less about the inheritance of ideas than we do about biological inheritance. Thus, for instance, Nietzsche's grand and much-prized conception of the "Eternal Recurrence" — which he considered absolutely unique, snatched from the pure air of the Engadine — has much in common with notions prevalent in Eastern philosophy and theology, in Stoicism, and even in modern mathematical speculation. Yet we cannot say absolutely that he took it from any of these sources. He read much, if rather desultorily, in translations of and commentaries on Indian and Persian philosophy. The name, at least, of Zarathustra he proudly borrowed from the East. Greek philosophy he knew very well indeed. Of modern mathematics he knew very little. It seems likely, then, that he built the Eternal Recurrence out of confused memories of his reading, fused together in the ecstasy of poetic composition,

⁴As a matter of fact, Charles Andler did the job so thoroughly that it hardly needs additional work. The first of his six volumes is entirely devoted to Nietzsche's "precursors" — including Emerson, who wrote of the "Over-soul." Scattered through the other five volumes are notes on what Nietzsche read, whom he talked to, what he talked about.

during which he could almost forget himself, to say nothing of others.

Nietzsche was trained as a classical philologist, and though his learning was not sufficient to satisfy the exacting standards of a Wilamowitz, it remained as a solid background for his later work. Greek and Latin he had mastered as a schoolboy, and with the classical philosophers and historians, as well as with the Greek dramatists, he had the kind of familiarity that cannot be easily acquired unless one begins as a schoolboy. Nietzsche, like most lovers of classical antiquity, found what he wanted there — a club with which to belabor his contemporaries. He found, especially among the Greeks before they were corrupted by Socrates-Plato, the Will to Power in all its fierce violence. The Greeks, he insisted, were not the sober lovers of the Golden Mean stuffy German academics found them to be, not the rapt dawn-folk German romantics found them to be, but energetic fighters, at once disciplined and furious. Burckhardt had helped him to this conception.

Fancy judging the Greeks in the German style, from their philosophers; fancy using the suburban respectability of the Socratic schools as a key to what is fundamentally Hellenic! The philosophers are of course the decadents of Hellas, the counter-movement directed against the old and noble tribe (against the agonal instinct, against the *polis*, against the value of the race, against the authority of tradition).⁵

These old Greeks might almost have read Nietzsche, and joined the Nazi party.

Much more important than the Greeks and Romans in Nietzsche's intellectual inheritance were the Germans among whom he was brought up. He had a good staple German

⁵ *The Twilight of the Idols*, "Things I owe to the Ancients," § 3 and 4.

education in the Bible and Lutheran piety, in Goethe and Schiller, in the nineteenth-century romantics. Although he turned against them in later life, finding imperfections even in Goethe (the poet was all wrong about the Greeks, and his prose style was often heavy), their stamp was on him. Nietzsche had to the full that eternal German sense of cultural inferiority which appears as a perpetual striving, discontent, sense of imperfection and incompleteness. He turned in passage after passage to the dissection of this "German soul" — and his own. For instance, of *Die Meistersinger*,

something German in the best and worst sense of the word, something in the German style, manifold, formless, and inexhaustible; a certain German potency and superplenitude of soul, which is not afraid to hide itself under the *raffinements* of decadence — which, perhaps, feels itself most at ease there; a real, genuine token of the German soul, which is at the same time young and aged, too ripe and yet still too rich in futurity. This kind of music expresses best what I think of the Germans: they belong to the day before yesterday and the day after tomorrow — *they have as yet no today*.⁶

Among these Germans, Schopenhauer and Wagner were the two great masters of the young Nietzsche, by his own admission, men who helped turn him from the safe paths of philology to the dangers and delights of high thinking and strong feeling. With truly noble detachment — or ingratitude — he damned them specifically afterwards:

A large number of the higher and better-endowed men will, I hope, have in the end so much self-restraint as to be able to get rid of their bad taste for affectation and sentimental darkness, and to turn against Richard Wagner as much as against Schopenhauer. These two Germans are leading us to ruin: they flatter our dangerous qualities. A stronger future

⁶ *Beyond Good and Evil*, "Peoples and Countries," § 240.

is prepared for us in Goethe, Beethoven, and Bismarck than in these racial aberrations.⁷

But in his younger days these two were his Masters. They taught him to distrust the comforts of logic and common-sense, to seek refuge in something endless, indefinable, and indescribable, which he was to spend his life trying to limit, define, and describe. They did not make him a romantic, but they confirmed his romanticism. He tried to shake off Schopenhauer's pessimism, but succeeded only in calling it optimism. His concrete debt to Schopenhauer — his ideas on women, for instance — remained very great. He tried to shake off Wagner's confused bumbling by going to those masters of clarity, the French *moralistes*.

Nietzsche learned much from the French. He did not need to learn to write, for even as a schoolboy he could write a clear, impatient German. But he learned to write better, to mould a sharper phrase, to twist suddenly into irony, to condense and to shade. His was still, however, a *German* style, full of striving and parentheses, and hitched to all the heavens. He went to La Rochefoucauld and Beyle for an antidote to German *Gemütlichkeit* and idealism, of which he never had much anyway, just as he went to Bizet for an antidote to Wagner's music. But an antidote is not in itself a form of nourishment, and in spite of his "middle period" of aphoristic books like *Human, All Too Human*, and *The Dawn of Day*, he never attained the sure good judgment of the more serene of his models, like Montaigne, nor the delicate sensitivity of the more troubled, like Pascal. Proof of what he failed to get from the French is

⁷ *The Genealogy of Morals*, "Peoples and Countries," § 12.

his inability to understand and appreciate the achievement of so final a Frenchman as Sainte Beuve, of whom he wrote,

There is naught of man in him, he is full of petty spite towards all virile spirits. He wanders erratically: he is subtle, inquisitive, a little bored, forever with his ear to key-holes,—at bottom a woman, with all a woman's revengefulness and sensuality. . . . In his fundamental instincts he is plebeian, and next of kin to Rousseau's resentful spirit: consequently he is a Romanticist.⁸

A man who could write such perverse nonsense was hardly capable of learning what is best of France. That phrase about "virile spirits" is the stock German defense against France, in some ways a good defense, but not a form of understanding. And even as a defense, it has had its weaknesses in the past, and will have them again. What Nietzsche mistook for a lack of masculine fire in Frenchmen like Sainte Beuve is really a kind of tranquillity rarely attained by Germans, and certainly not by Nietzsche. Here, as so often, the labored originality and fierce individualism of Nietzsche turns out to be the old feeling of the tribe.

From Anglo-Saxon thought Nietzsche got very little. He could not read English well, as he could French, in the original. He seems to have read little in translation, though as a good nineteenth-century intellectual he had picked up, if only from conversation and reviews, all the necessary names and tags. He had what was in the 1880's among Germans a most foresighted dislike for the English, whom he regarded as a shallow race incapable of philosophy and devoted to the decadent illusions of Trade and Science. He took out his dislike in epigrams which are not among his best: "Carlyle, or pessimism after

⁸ *The Twilight of the Idols*, "Skirmishes in a War with the Age," § 3.

undigested meals. — John Stuart Mill, or offensive lucidity.”⁹ Of America he thought very little: we were too innocent to count. As a young man he had read Emerson in translation, and he always thought more highly of him than of Carlyle. His sister read him some of Mark Twain, whom he found amusing and harmless. But on the whole, he liked to think of the Anglo-Saxon peoples as not really counting. They were numerous, and apparently successful, but they lacked Depth. And only the deep survive — or ought to survive. The judgment of the tribe again.

Like most “imaginative” writers who crusade against what they call science, Nietzsche had no first-hand acquaintance with any scientific discipline. He was, however, too much a child of the nineteenth century he loathed so vocally not to dabble in writings about biology. He may have read Darwin in translation; at any rate he read enough about Darwin to know that Darwin’s theories of evolution were wrong. Zarathustra, he insisted, was uninfluenced by current doctrines of evolution; the race of Supermen was not to come by any such suspiciously British process as natural selection, but by a Dionysian exercise of the Will to Power.

In general, Nietzsche’s reading and education, save for his brief apprenticeship in classical philology, was that of a serious dabbler — or, if you prefer, a philosopher. In working up to the *Antichrist* he read widely in the history of religions, and especially in that of Christianity and its Eastern antecedents; but even here he neglected what is perhaps the most important

⁹ *The Twilight of the Idols*, “Skirmishes in a War with the Age,” § 1. For a long and typical passage blaming England for “the European ignobleness, the plebeianism of modern ideas,” see *Beyond Good and Evil*, § 253.

part of the history of religions, institutional history. He was as contemptuous of the Middle Ages as any philosopher in the Age of Enlightenment, and knew little of the actual workings of the Mediaeval Church. Such study he felt was unnecessary, and indeed harmful. History, as he explained in one of his first essays, "On the Use and Abuse of History" in *Thoughts out of Season*, can really tell us nothing important about the present, and can woefully distract us from the flashing sureness of the play of instinct and will. Nietzsche, especially in his masterpiece, *Beyond Good and Evil*, was most critical of the philosopher's habit of taking the word for the deed. Yet in his study of Christianity he himself concentrated on what the more articulate and intellectual Christian apologists wrote, and avoided the difficult study of how ordinary Christians really behave. Professional habit is strong, even among philosophers with a hammer.

II

From all this miscellaneous, but on the whole overwhelming literary, abstract, and second-hand experience, Nietzsche produced what is in many ways a unique and original interpretation of what must be grandly called the meaning of life. It was not, as we shall see, by any means an interpretation as *unzeitgemäss*, as contrary to the spirit of the age, as he believed it to be. Indeed, Nietzsche's importance for us is that he is a part of a movement among his contemporaries and near-contemporaries which is rather unfortunately called anti-intellectualism, a movement which is in some sense at least as old as Greek thought, but which in our time has taken on a complexity and a thoroughness perhaps new. Nietzsche belongs in

the history of thought with Marx, Georges Sorel, Freud, Pareto, and hundreds of lesser men, down to the latest popularizers of semantics. His work in part differs greatly from theirs. He is either the *enfant terrible* or the mad prophet of the movement — or both. But he is part of a movement, and no solitary. This scorner of history is a product of history.

Nietzsche himself, at least, could hardly complain too bitterly if we accept him on his own grounds, and attempt to arrange his ideas according to a thoroughly anti-intellectualist scheme. We shall attempt to see what he hated and what he wanted; or to use more abstract terms, and perhaps misleading ones, to distinguish between the negative and the positive aspects of his work, between Nietzsche the destroyer and Nietzsche the builder. Again, he has made himself so great a reputation as the “philosopher with a hammer” that he could hardly object if we concentrate at first upon what he proudly regarded as his destructive labors. We shall begin appropriately with what Nietzsche hated.

He hated extensively and energetically, so that it is hard to distinguish among his hatreds. One of the most constant of them, however, one which appears clearly in his very first book, is a hatred for the tradition of European rationalism. Socrates, one of the great heroes of that tradition, is for Nietzsche a villain. Before Socrates, the Greeks had been, according to Nietzsche, happy creatures of instinct and habit, fighters, revelers, builders, singers, “the men who fought at Marathon.” With Socrates they began to think — not to think as healthy animals probably think, and as the old Greeks thought, simply to find ways of getting what they wanted, getting what their wills and instincts made them strive for.

Socrates actually told them to *think about what they wanted!* He carried the process a step farther, as far indeed as it can ever be carried, into the final abyss of the unconscious: he invented in his daemon an intellectualized perversion of instinct:

This voice, wherever it comes, always *dissuades*. In this utterly abnormal nature instinctive wisdom only appears in order to *hinder* here and there the progress of conscious perception. Whereas in all productive men it is instinct that is the creatively affirmative force, and consciousness that acts critically and dissuasively; with Socrates it is instinct that becomes critic, and consciousness that becomes creator — a perfect monstrosity *per defectum*.¹⁰

After Socrates and his pupil Plato, Nietzsche thinks, the way was open for the ravages of Christianity. Still other perversions were indeed necessary to make Christianity finally victorious, but the basic perversion was achieved when the Greeks abandoned Dionysos for Apollo, Homer and Aeschylus for Socrates and Plato. In its more or less easily isolated form of rationalism, the Socratic virus has persisted down to our own day. England, notably, is hardly more than a mass of infection, with her Darwins, Mills, and Herbert Spencers. But Nietzsche could find this deadly rationalism almost everywhere he looked — which is one of the comforts of hating. It was clear to him in the fashionable critics of Christianity, in men like Tom Paine and David Strauss, who were merely stuffer Christians, ethical-society bores without the capacity for mystic feeling which gave Christianity a touch of life. It was even clearer to him in natural science, the devouring heresy of the age. It was clear too in the absurd disguise of conventional philosophic idealism. Poor

¹⁰ *The Birth of Tragedy*, chap. xiii.

Hegel missed the Life Force by at least as much as did John Stuart Mill. Jumbled together in the minds of little men, the European herd-men who believed in science, progress, democracy, bigger and better things ahead, all these ideas were a sign of the decadence of the age. Nietzsche innocently called it *décadence*: his followers today repudiate the corrupt French word and insist on the good German word *Entartung*.

Nietzsche's hatred of rationalism, vigorous and clear in his earlier writings, seems to weaken in his "French" period, when he wrote *Human, All Too Human*, *The Dawn of Day*, and *The Joyful Wisdom*. Now and then in these books he sounds almost like a shallow Englishman. "The most important result of the past effort of humanity is that we need no longer go about in continual fear of wild beasts, barbarians, gods, and our own dreams."¹¹ His prophetic gifts were in abeyance when he wrote this aphorism; not only Hitler, but Freud escaped his foresight. Yet even in these books Nietzsche never really abandons his anti-intellectualism. He comments on Spinoza's *non ridere, non lugere, neque detestari, sed intelligere* (not to laugh, not to lament, nor to abhor, but to understand): "We think that *intelligere* is something conciliating, just and good, something essentially antithetical to the impulses; whereas it is only a certain relation of the impulses to one another." And he adds, "*Conscious* thinking, and especially that of the philosopher, is the weakest, and on that account also relatively the mildest and quietest mode of thinking; and thus it is precisely the philosopher who is most easily misled concerning the nature of knowledge."¹²

¹¹ *The Dawn of Day*, § 5.

¹² *The Joyful Wisdom*, § 334.

In his last years, this hatred for traditional rationalism reaches the pitch of obsession, and he repeats over and over again, sometimes in an involved style worthy of any German philosopher, what Thomas Hardy said so simply: thought is a disease of the flesh.

It does not suffice for you to see in what ignorance man and beast now live; you must also have and learn the *desire* for *ignorance*. It is necessary that you should know that without this form of ignorance life itself would be impossible, that it is merely a vital condition under which, alone, a living organism can preserve itself and prosper; a great solid belt of ignorance must stand about you.¹³

Zarathustra was more eloquent and abusive, as is fitting in a poet:

For fear — that is man's original and fundamental feeling. . . . Such prolonged ancient fear, at last become subtle, spiritual, and intellectual — at present, methinketh, it is called *Science*.¹⁴

Science, then, that fine flower of the Western mind, is for Nietzsche really but a refinement of feeling — but of a perverse form of feeling, the fear which makes for cunning and arms the weak against the strong. Darwin rightly saw that thought in this sense is an instrument making for survival; but he was wrong in claiming that it is an instrument making for the survival of the fit. On the contrary, "species do not evolve towards perfection: the weak always prevail over the strong — simply because they are the majority, and because they are also the more crafty."¹⁵

¹³ *The Will to Power*, § 609. For an example of Nietzsche at play like any other philosopher among Being and Becoming, see § 617 of this same work. He is on the side of Becoming.

¹⁴ *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, chap. lxxv, "Science."

¹⁵ *The Twilight of the Idols*, "Skirmishes in a War with the Age," § 14.

III

Nietzsche, then, rejected with contempt that current of European rationalism represented in his time by natural science and, in ethics, political theory, philosophy in general, by positivism, materialism, empiricism, by the French *philosophes* and the English utilitarians. But he disliked quite as vigorously that strain in European rationalism which is usually labeled "idealism," a strain clear in the formal philosophy of Plato, the pupil of the original rationalist, Socrates, and fixed by Leibnitz and Kant as the dominant form of German philosophy. In his attacks on philosophic idealism, Nietzsche's hatred ripens into some of his most remarkable pages of criticism, pages which ironically foreshadow the attacks on philosophic idealism made by such modern scientists as Pareto. We can study best this phase of Nietzsche's work in his famous comments on Kant in *Beyond Good and Evil*.

Kant, says Nietzsche, was proud of having made what he thought was a discovery, the existence in men of the faculty of synthetic judgment *a priori*. In other words, Kant, like Plato, was hunting for an absolute, a formula in words to which all men would subscribe as the Truth. He had no trouble in showing that sense-experience could not provide any such eternal, changeless, absolute Truth, and that scientific laws were not truths in this sense. But he dug up an absolute — in words, where it can always be found.

"How are synthetic judgments *a priori* possible?" Kant asks himself — and what is really his answer? "*By means of a means (faculty)*" — but unfortunately not in five words, but so circumstantially, imposingly, and with such display of German profundity and verbal flourishes, that one altogether loses sight of the comical *niaiserie allemande* involved in

such an answer. . . . But — is that an answer? An explanation? Or is it not rather merely a repetition of the question? How does opium induce sleep? “By means of a means (faculty)” namely, the *virtus dormativa*, replies the doctor in Molière,

*Quia est in eo virtus dormativa
Cujus est natura sensus assoupire.*¹⁶

Indeed, Nietzsche wrote as bitterly about idealists as he did about everybody else. He is not always as good-tempered as in the above passage on Kant. In the midst of *The Antichrist*, for instance, he breaks out:

I find the arrogant habit of the theologian among all who regard themselves as “idealists” — among all who, by virtue of a higher point of departure, claim a right to rise above reality and to look upon it with suspicion. . . . The idealist, like the ecclesiastic, carries all sorts of lofty concepts in his hand (— and not only in his hand!), he launches them with benevolent contempt against “understanding,” “the senses,” “honor,” “good living,” “science”; he sees such things as beneath him, as pernicious and seductive forces over which “the soul” soars as a pure thing in itself.¹⁷

The idealists, then, have, according to Nietzsche, fished in their own minds — really, in their own desires — and brought up a lot of nice words like “idea” and “the thing-in-itself.” Nietzsche occasionally admits that this process is even more delusive, even more remote from normal human experience, than the processes of common-sense rationalism. Such philosophers let “conceptions, opinions, events, books” come between themselves and “things.”¹⁸ Nietzsche could even, in a moment of apparent nihilism, admit that “will” is only a word.¹⁹ But

¹⁶ *Beyond Good and Evil*, chap. I, § 11.

¹⁷ *The Antichrist*, § 8.

¹⁸ *Thoughts out of Season*, “Schopenhauer as Educator,” chap. vii.

¹⁹ See above, p. 75.

this was no doubt "will" as Schopenhauer and others used the word — not Nietzsche's own precious Will to Power.

Here Nietzsche rescues himself by a device central to modern anti-intellectualism. We must not, he says, worry ourselves over the problems raised by such men as Kant. The classic problems of philosophy are simply insoluble. The "new" philosophers so necessary to the world will not ask whether an opinion is true or false, but whether it is useful or harmful.

The falseness of an opinion is not for us any objection to it: it is here, perhaps, that our new language sounds most strangely. The question is, how far an opinion is life-furthering, life-preserving, species-preserving; perhaps species-rearing; and we are fundamentally inclined to maintain that the falsest opinions (to which synthetic judgments *a priori* belong) are the most indispensable to us; that without a recognition of logical fictions, without a comparison of reality with the purely *imagined* world of the absolute and immutable . . . man could not live — that the renunciation of false opinion would be a renunciation of life, a negation of life. *To recognize untruth as a condition of life*: that is certainly to impugn the traditional ideas of value in a dangerous manner, and a philosophy which ventures to do so, has thereby alone placed itself beyond good and evil.²⁰

Nietzsche does not, however, consistently accept his conclusion that idealism, though "false," is "indispensable to us." He admits that such opinions as Kant's have a long history and a "natural" origin, that they are a product of the philosopher's instincts, of physiological demands for a mode of life. He even traces them to a common origin in the language of Indo-European peoples, a function of the prehistoric formation of our vocabulary and grammar.²¹ But Nietzsche was a hater, perhaps a lover, and certainly no skeptic. He is soon back in

²⁰ *Beyond Good and Evil*, chap. I, § 4.

²¹ *Beyond Good and Evil*, chap. I, § 20.

his old strain. " 'Reason' in language! oh what a deceptive old witch it has been! I fear we shall never be rid of God, so long as we still believe in grammar." The idealists have really invented *harmful* fictions, and the age and long prevalence of these fictions is far from proof of their usefulness to us nowadays. On the contrary, that we should so respect them is a sign of our degeneracy, of our blind attachment to history, that muse of unprofitable illusions.

The characteristics with which man has endowed the "true Being" of things are characteristics of non-Being, of *nonentity*. The "true world" has been erected on a contradiction of the real world; and it is indeed an apparent world, seeing that it is merely a *moralo-optical* delusion. . . . To divide the world into a "true" and an "apparent" world, whether after the manner of Christianity or of Kant (after all a Christian in disguise), is only a sign of decadence, a symptom of *degenerating* life.²²

It is significant that Nietzsche does not put the skeptic's quotation-marks around "real world" in the above passage. The fact is that, attack the idealists as he might, he could not get over a certain fascination for them, notably for Plato and Spinoza. He wavered much, and it is possible here, as on almost every point, to find him at some time or other contradicting himself. But he rarely shows any sympathy with materialistic or empirical philosophers. He is convinced there is a "real world" beyond the lying evidence of the senses, beyond the misleading organization scientific thought gives to the evidence of the senses. But he cannot accept for long the gentle, orderly world of love and pity idealistic philosophers always end by finding. He wanted something better — something more. He was a German.

²² *The Twilight of the Idols*, " 'Reason' in Philosophy," § 6.

IV

Nietzsche, then, condemned both the materialistic and the idealistic philosophical solutions: both were to him essentially intellectualist at bottom, both were merely more or less ingenious metaphysical dodging of a problem essentially moral: right conduct here and now. But he was at least as violent in condemnation of a solution he, like the late Irving Babbitt and many other modern thinkers, always associated chiefly with Rousseau. In spite of his frequent damning of "intellect," his frequent praise of "instinct," "impulse," "nature," he insisted over and over again that he did not mean by any of these nice words what Rousseau and his followers seemed to mean by them. "Rousseau, or the return to nature, *in impuris naturalibus*." Significantly, the list of Nietzsche's "impossible people" from which this malicious characterization is drawn, ends with a very earnest and unsubtle condemnation: "Zola, or the love of stinking."²⁸

The Rousseauists, Nietzsche felt, preached that the lowest and cheapest human feelings were the best guide to conduct. They appealed from reason to sentiment, and beyond sentiment to the deepest well-springs of desire in the animal man, the *plebs*, the herd-man. They were justified in attacking the silly "right reason" of the *philosophes* and the commonsense school; but they themselves fell into even sorrier depths when they appealed from reason and commonsense to common feeling. Rousseau was really the father of all the worst modern heresies, democracy, socialism, humanitarianism, pacifism (they had, of course, many mothers!). He and his followers gave Christian-

²⁸ *The Twilight of the Idols*, "Skirmishes in a War with the Age," § 1.

ity, which had become a mere tradition, and hence an almost harmless, if not actually beneficial, opiate for the people, a new and baleful energy. This new *political* Christianity, this appeal to "natural man" and his General Will, aspired to a world at best mere organized mediocrity, at worst a chaos of stupid conflicts among dog-men.

To Nietzsche, Rousseau's influence was not at all limited to the "romanticists" so labeled in our manuals of literary history, but extended to "realists" as well. Zola was, in fact, the foster-son of Rousseau. Take away, as Rousseau preached and as our modern democracies have done, the restraints of convention and tradition, of a society organized hierarchically, feudally, and at least as much according to high aristocratic unreason as according to priestly reason, and you unchain, not the bright violence of the saving few, but the meagre ambitions or the dirty lusts of the many. The old feudal society and its Renaissance successor did protect a few great souls and bodies, did allow scope for a Frederick of Hohenstaufen, a Michelangelo, a Cesare Borgia. The new democratic society swamps all such great spirits. Nietzsche, like many another moralist, was not sure whether democracy tended to produce a society flatly conforming to the dull mediocrity of the greengrocer's actual habits, or a society madly pursuing the unpleasant extremes of sensual indulgence which he was sure were the greengrocer's not very secret desires. He seems to have felt that democracy could quite inconsistently be both things at once — both an organized mediocrity and a disorganized and very vulgar rout. We are in Nietzsche's mind on the brink of a volcano, and ready for several other clichés. Perhaps his general formula provided for a period of conformity and mediocrity, to be ended by the catastrophic disintegration of a society in which moral disci-

pline had so long lacked the sanction of true aristocratic leadership. Nietzsche's attacks on democracy are somewhat confused, but so are most of those of our prophets of doom. Needless to say, he had no first-hand knowledge of the working of a democratic society. His acquaintance with common men was limited to waiters, hotelkeepers and professors. All he knew he learned from newspapers, and introspection.

Nietzsche's hatreds are hard to weigh. But his hatred for the Rousseauists was certainly one of his strongest. This romantic opponent of the great tradition of European rationalism could not bear his fellow-romantics. His Will to Power, as befits a philosopher, was really a Will to Belief. Like most strong believers, he hated heretics even more than unbelievers. He was his own pope, and infallible. It is strange that so insistent a psychologist as Nietzsche did not recognize this trait in himself. Perhaps he did. He was fond enough of self-analysis, and could write that he too was a decadent, could confess that "My danger is the loathing of mankind."²⁴ At any rate, rail against "reason" and "idealism" though he did, he could not bring himself to accept the simple alternative to these concepts, the emancipation of "natural" man, the "natural goodness of man," the "life of instinct." He wanted to say "Yea": "*Voluptuousness, passion for power, and selfishness*: these three things have hitherto been best cursed, and have been in worst and falsest repute — these three things will I weigh humanly well." But he found himself saying "Nay": "I am distrustful of your doggish lust."²⁵ Good voluptuousness and doggish lust. Do we hear echoes of the *virtus dormativa*?

Nothing in Nietzsche is harder to expound than his position

²⁴ *Ecce Homo*, "Why I am a fatality," § 6; *The Case of Wagner*, preface.

on this old question of "reason" versus "instinct." His range varies with his immediate polemical purpose. He can be quoted, as Lutheran divines have discovered, in an edifying vein:

To cling to life, blindly and madly, with no other aim, to be ignorant of the reason or even of the fact, of one's punishment, nay, to thirst after it as if it were a pleasure, with all the perverted desire of a fool — this is what it means to be an animal. If universal nature leads up to man, it is to show us that he is necessary to redeem her from the curse of the beast's life. . . . We should consider where the beast ends and man begins.²⁶

He could, indeed, be more than edifying: he could be priggish. He wrote of Lou Salomé: "She told me herself she had no morals (I thought that, like me, she had stricter morals than anyone else)."²⁷ Moreover, and in spite of the ecstatic and far-fetched comments of followers like Klages, who hold that Nietzsche actually felt the intellect to be a weakness in men, Nietzsche himself rarely went the whole way in condemning the intellect. It was the *abuse* of thinking by *savants*, Christians, and "practical" men he objected to, the making an end rather than a means of the intellect and of intellectual effort. Only rarely does he write in the vein of "*Gefühl ist alles*"; usually he employs words like "intellect," "intelligence," and "reason" in a clearly eulogistic sense.²⁸

Here, as so often, Nietzsche will not be pruned down. He is complex, refined, subtle, modern, most *zeitgemäss*; his thought is part of what he called the "morbid multiformity of modern

²⁶ *Thoughts out of Season*, "Schopenhauer as Educator," chap. v.

²⁷ Quoted in Förster-Nietzsche, *Nietzsche*, II, 142.

²⁸ See for instance the last paragraph of *The Antichrist*, § 21, quoted in part below, p. 101.

life.”²⁹ Yet, in a final attempt to pin him down, we may take two texts which reveal, perhaps, a common ground in his hatred for science and for Rousseauistic romanticism. Both are from his earlier writings. In one of the essays in *Thoughts out of Season* he writes:

Science . . . considers only that view of things to be true and right and therefore scientific, which regards something as finished and historical, not as continuing and eternal. Thus it lives in a deep antagonism towards the powers that make for eternity — art and religion.³⁰

This is a complete misunderstanding of what the practising scientist *does*, and it runs counter to such modern theorists of scientific method as von Mach and Poincaré. But it is not a serious misunderstanding of what such contemporaries of Nietzsche as Herbert Spencer thought science to be. Nietzsche's outburst is a revulsion against the notion of science as a closed system of absolute laws which still prevails today among lesser scientists, and among major non-scientists. In the history of thought, it places him more or less clearly in the company of such thinkers as Croce, Bergson, and even Whitehead, who insist that the “scientific positivism” of the nineteenth-century tradition provides no place for novelty and adventure.

A second text has an even earlier origin, in the reflections of the Leipzig student:

Self-observation — it betrays. Know thyself. Through acting, not through observing. Observation confines and limits energy: it breaks up, disintegrates. Instinct is the best. Our deeds must be brought about *unconsciously*.³¹

²⁹ *Thoughts out of Season*, “Richard Wagner in Bayreuth,” chap. ii.

³⁰ *Thoughts out of Season*, “On the Use and Abuse of History,” chap. x.

³¹ *Werke* (*Historisch-kritische Ausgabe*), IV, 126.

Both Spencer and Rousseau, both scientist and romanticist, sin against this precept. Knowing is *doing*, not formulating nor enjoying. Laws and lyrics are both evasions, forms of self-indulgence. Men must act; and for a guide to action they must seek neither in the lessons of the past — in the too-neat patterns of science or history, or of that deadening combination, scientific history, — nor in tortured searchings of the heart; but in a difficult and most human skill, a skill impossible to define, hard to learn, but which can be recognized in its results. Nietzsche here takes refuge in the word “unconscious,” but he clearly does not mean the romantic “impulse from a vernal wood.” He means rather the *acquired unconscious*, the unconscious skill of the trained craftsman, an effective adjustment to the complexities of experience which can be gained only by *thinking while acting*, never, or never solely, by *thinking about acting*. Here again Nietzsche’s position, where he does not exaggerate it for the purposes of philosophizing with a hammer, is essentially that of contemporary anti-intellectualism.

V

Before Nietzsche, then, — to simplify, but not to falsify the Master’s own analysis of his predecessors — Western thinkers immersed in the high problems of philosophy had gone astray in three ways. Materialistic or empirical rationalists, taking their cue from Socrates, had falsified and suppressed full human experience by erecting the dream-world we now call science. Idealistic rationalists, taking their cue also from Socrates, had achieved a similar falsification and suppression by erecting the even more fantastic dream-world of idealism, a

world especially familiar to Germans, who had produced Kant and Hegel. Finally, gross men miscalled artists, hardly obliged to appeal to Greek masters, though Epicurus and others were there if needed, had tried to do without these intellectual dream-worlds, and had fallen back on their "doggish lusts" and sentimental memories as guides to conduct and exhaustive descriptions of reality. For Nietzsche, all these errors were combined in Christianity, the historic form in which philosophical speculation had been brought within the capacities of ordinary men — brought deliberately by designing thinkers, weaklings perversely turned men of action: that is, by priests. All Nietzsche's more general and abstract hatreds were focussed in his hatred for what he called Christianity. He found there the idealist, hardly at all disguised; the sensualist, his simpler lusts suppressed only to crop up in subtler and more tortured forms; even the empirical rationalist — did not the English call themselves Christian?

Nietzsche's most famous attack on Christianity is *The Antichrist*, written at top speed in the last few months before he was shut up as a madman, and charged with the full energy of his hatred, his literary gifts, and his tautened nerves about to break. If only because of its intensity and skill in invective, it makes conventional anti-Christian literature seem pale and lifeless. It has become a kind of handbook for lustier anti-Christians like Mr. H. L. Mencken and for Nazis, though it is meat much too strong for the mild, vegetarian radicals who want to keep Christian ethics while discarding Christian "superstitions." Hardly any of Nietzsche's writings is without passages directed against the Christian religion; but in *The Antichrist* his hatreds, magnificently, madly, indecently gath-

ered together, burst in a final explosion. The book ends with a passage which reveals the overwhelming ambition of the prophet. The Nietzsche who signed himself in his madness The Crucified One would supplant Jesus with Nietzsche:

And *time* is reckoned from the *dies nefastus* upon which this fatality came into being — from the first day of Christianity! — *why not rather from its last day?* — *From today?* — Transvaluation of all Values! ³²

The base from which Nietzsche works, he had already clearly laid down in earlier writings. What we call morality among men, if studied as the natural historian studies the behavior of other organisms (Nietzsche, by the way, was willing to adopt “scientific” methods when he found them convenient), this morality is seen to be no divine command, no thing-in-itself, but an instrument by which a few men control for their own benefit the activities of their fellows. The distinction between “good” and “bad” is wholly man-made; Nature, the universe revealed to us by our sense-experience *and by our desires*, knows nothing of such a distinction. “There are no moral phenomena, only a moral interpretation of phenomena; the origin of this interpretation lies beyond the pale of morality.” ³³

All men *want*. And since we must give names, we shall, writes Nietzsche, call this wanting, this fundamental attitude of human consciousness, which uses the intellect as a tool, but is hardly ever guided by the intellect — though it may be corrupted and weakened by the intellect — we shall call this wanting The Will to Power. Now some men are stronger in body, more alert in mind, more *driven* by this Will, than others. Very early, among peoples we call primitive or savage, this fact became

³² *The Antichrist*, § 62.

³³ *The Will to Power*, § 258.

clear. Nietzsche is uncertain whether this differentiation took place *within* all those groups of men we call races, or whether whole races, in respect to other races, possessed these superior powers. He inclines to accept *both* descriptions as true. Within any group, a few men possess such powers, and become masters; but *au fond* the northern peoples of Europe do possess them in greater strength than the southern peoples. Whatever their origins — and Nietzsche is emphatic that they are not at all as simple as innocent theorists of German racial “purity” make out — Nordics, Teutons, “blond beasts,” do in fact possess this superiority.³⁴ There are purified races, if no pure ones. And these races, these groups of superior men, if you prefer, have set up those potent abstractions we call “good” and “bad.” “The pathos of nobility and distance, the chronic and despotic *esprit de corps* and fundamental instinct of a higher dominant race coming into association with a meaner race, an ‘under-race,’ this is the origin of the antithesis of good and bad.”³⁵

There are, then, a minority of “masters” and a majority of “herd.” This means that there are two moralities, master-morality and herd-morality. They are different, indeed antithetical. “Good” for the masters is the pure exertion of the

³⁴ I know that there is much in Nietzsche that can be quoted against such a view. He attacked theories of “race” as products of nineteenth-century herd morality, of unaristocratic looseness of thought and feeling. He wrote bitter things against the Germans, who had so stupidly neglected him. But in one of his bitterest attacks on the Germans, he wrote that they display “a number of virtues more *manly* than any that other European countries can show.” *The Twilight of the Idols*, “Things the Germans lack,” § 1. To anyone who knows the supreme value Nietzsche set on what he called “manly,” the above passage is final. The Nazis have had no trouble in adopting him as their prophet. See also Chapter VIII below.

³⁵ *The Genealogy of Morals*, First Essay, § 2.

Will to Power, which in our decadent times we cannot even name without using words of ill-repute, like fighting, cruelty, greed, lying, voluptuousness. "Good" for the herd we herdmen and Christians can describe in nice words, like peace, compassion, obedience, self-restraint. And similarly, of course, with "bad."

Already it should be clear, from the terms used above, that Nietzsche is facing the ineluctable and insoluble problem of the origin of evil. He has decided that somehow, sometime, somewhere — perhaps in Greece before Socrates — men behaved as he liked to think of them as behaving. This is his Garden of Eden, a place extraordinarily like Valhalla, where heroes fought and cheated all day, and, their wounds miraculously no wounds, feasted all night. Once the distinction between master-morality and slave-morality had been as clear on earth and in reality as it was in Nietzsche's mind. But no longer. There had been a Fall of Man, and the slaves had come to rule the masters. Good had somehow become evil, evil good. Inexplicably? Not quite, unfortunately. History, aided by Nietzsche, was equal to the explanation.

Christianity is for him the key. Christ, and even more the apostle Paul, inspired by Jewish malevolence and Greek philosophy, undid the work of Nature, and set slaves over masters. What they did was indeed no more than priests everywhere have tried with varying success to do. But they did it more completely and more disastrously than it has ever been done — more so even than in India. There Buddha, a natural if somewhat gentle aristocrat, came to the rescue of the victims of "super-spiritualization." Buddha was primarily a "hygienist," "He understands goodness as being good — as promoting

health. *Prayer* is out of the question, as is also *asceticism*.”³⁶ But Christianity, as finally established, was the work of herdmen who loved their own weaknesses, who strove to further *disease*. “Christian is the hatred of the intellect, of pride, of courage, freedom, intellectual *libertinage*; Christian is the hatred of the *senses*, of the joys of the senses, of joy in general.”³⁷

How can anything so unnatural as the victory of the slaves over the masters take place? As easily, surely, as the regrettable elevation of the Lower Law above the Higher Law noted by moralists more orthodox than Nietzsche. The slaves are always vastly more numerous than the masters. Normally they remain quiet, content with their slave-morality. Indeed, Christianity, if it were limited to the masses, and used, as it was used during the best days of the Renaissance, to keep them quiet, might be a natural and a useful thing. But perversely some of the slaves are born intelligent, or at least crafty, and they become priests. Even more perversely, some of the masters are born weaklings, but intelligent; or at any rate catch the mysterious disease called moral idealism. They too become priests — Christian, Jacobin, or socialist. Now the priest in this broad sense is a man with a very strong Will to Power, but without the great gifts of bodily strength, without the capacity for masculine joy in its disciplined exercise, without the reverent attachment for this earth so essential to the true aristocrat — the old Prussian Junker, for instance. The priest’s Will to Power drives him to seek a way to rule, and his craft finds this way; he invents a religion of pity, of softness, of equality, and rallies the slaves to the overthrow of the masters.

³⁶ *The Antichrist*, § 20.

³⁷ *The Antichrist*, § 21.

Especially when he is dealing with the origins of primitive religions and of Christianity, Nietzsche leans rather heavily on this somewhat outmoded "priest-hypocrite-villain" theory. But he is far too subtle a psychologist, too good a child of the late nineteenth century, to repeat here the simplicities of French anti-clericals of the eighteenth century. Nietzsche's priest is no plain hypocrite. This priest believes, perhaps from the very first, the pious fictions he invents. He really believes the meek are blessed; he even believes that he himself is meek, and that he ought to inherit the earth. His hatred he thinks is love. He takes joy in his disease, in his weakness. And since joy is one of the primal sources of strength in men, the priest achieves the extraordinary and very Christian feat of turning his weakness into a kind of personal strength, not consciously, not hypocritically, but unconsciously. That is the full and paradoxical horror of religion, and especially of Christianity; it seems regrettably *natural*. When he comes to modern exponents of the religion of humanity, Nietzsche is sure that no hypocrisy is involved. Men like Condorcet and Tolstoy have not the intelligence to be hypocrites.

Among all religions of gentleness — that is, among social diseases — Christianity is for Nietzsche by all odds the worst, partly because it has succeeded in corrupting the most manly and capable of the human race, the peoples of Northern Europe, partly because it is so perfectly tailored to meet the desires of the groveling herd. "Faith, hope and charity" make a complete charter for the domination of the masters by the slaves. Christian morals are consistently, coherently, the expression of the basic instincts of low men, instincts that make them try to *avoid real living* — that is, to try to perpetuate

existence at the lowest possible level. Christianity fouls life at its very source, in the relations of the sexes. "How can one possibly place in the hands of children and women, a book that contains those vile words: 'it is better to marry than to burn.' And is it decent to be a Christian so long as the very origin of man is Christianized, — that is to say, befouled by the idea of the *immaculata conceptio*?"⁸⁸ Christianity is thus the perfect form of decadence, the denial of life, the use of instinct *against* itself. Jesus and Paul finished the deadly work of Socrates's daemon. "Let us not underestimate the Christians: the Christian, false *to the point of innocence in falsity*, is far above the apes, — with regard to the Christians a certain well-known theory of Descent becomes a mere good-natured compliment."⁸⁹

Nietzsche recognizes many historical reasons for the peculiar virulence of Christianity: the importance of Paul, whom he makes the arch-villain of the piece, an insane, vengeful Jew, a destroyer, a hater; the skill with which Greek idealism was woven into Christian theology, giving it a specious intellectual respectability; the perverted discipline of Church organization; the existence of a great proletariat of slaves, thirsting for salvation and revenge. But he puts particular emphasis on two broad considerations, the Christian doctrine of personal immortality and the Jewish origin of Christianity.

The doctrine of immortality as it appears in Christianity is for Nietzsche one of the most diabolical of priestly inventions. Believers are not promised that pity, self-abnegation, chastity, asceticism will bring them success in this world. They do not turn the other cheek to get caresses, but blows. By the ingenious

⁸⁸ *The Antichrist*, § 56.

⁸⁹ *The Antichrist*, § 39.

device of the Kingdom of Heaven, however, they are promised complete fulfillment of their crudest desires in an after-life. Without this promise, even herd-men might come to realize that the Christian virtues failed to pay dividends on this earth. The Christian doctrine of personal immortality provides an almost unbelievably effective way of getting men to accept the degenerate life in which the priest is supreme. The more unnatural, the more diseased, the more hopeless the lot of the believer here below, the more certain his eternal bliss above. And this is not the worst. Hell is even more effective than Heaven in preventing men from becoming what they might become. The more natural, healthy, and hopeful the lot of a believer here below, the more certain his eternal punishment in a still lower region. The hope of Heaven and the fear of Hell combine to botch existence for all men, save for the tiny minority — is it a minority of one? — of free spirits (*freie Geister*) beyond Heaven and Hell, beyond good and evil. The real horror of Christianity for Nietzsche is not so much that it coddles the weak as that it suppresses and cows the strong. Indeed, he is willing at times to welcome Christianity as a means by which, in better times, a minority of masters, free spirits, might keep in useful contentment a majority of slaves, herd-men. At other times, however, he will have nothing less than a new race of Supermen, an earth untainted even by the memory of Christianity, with no men as we now know them left. He was no Utopian, however, neither a Morris nor a Bellamy. He does not bother to ask what these Supermen will do about the mean little routine tasks. Perhaps there will be no such tasks? Nietzsche-Zarathustra was a very exalted fellow, who rose above Nirvana as well as above Heaven.

A second element in the triumph of Christianity, according to Nietzsche, was its Jewish origin. In *The Antichrist*, at least, Nietzsche can write as crudely as any Nazi Jew-baiter.⁴⁰ The Jews first invented the lie of monotheism. Their Jehovah was originally, in the days of Israel's prevailing, a God of dignity and justice; with the Captivity he became a monstrous god of jealousy and philosophy, a figure on whom the disappointed Jewish intellectuals spilled out their wounded pride, their unrealized ambitions. Jehovah became their revenge on the world, their flight from the world. But he was still a mere tribal God, at whose threats the Gentiles could—and did—laugh. There remained the final step, which Jewish intellectuals like Paul took. This tribal God could, by a gigantic conspiracy, be foisted on ignorant Gentiles. As the Christian God, he would sap the strength and confidence of the enemies of Israel. Jerusalem would be revenged, and the Jews would rule over a world corrupted by Jewish poison. It would be a dark, womanish rule over a world sunk in weakness and despair, but a world of which Jerusalem would once more be the center.

This was the most fatal kind of megalomania that had ever yet existed on earth: insignificant little abortions of bigots and liars began to lay sole claim to the concepts "God," "Truth," "Light," "Spirit," "Love," "Wisdom," "Life," as if these things were, so to speak, synonyms of themselves, in order to fence themselves off from "the world"; little ultra-Jews, ripe for every kind of madhouse, twisted values round in order to suit themselves just as if the Christian, alone, were the meaning, the salt, the standard and even the "ultimate tribunal" of all the rest of mankind.⁴¹

⁴⁰ The key passages are in *The Antichrist*, § 24 and 25.

⁴¹ *The Antichrist*, § 44.

But another God is coming — may we not say invented? — and Nietzsche is his prophet. Another megalomania? Has another people, scorned and humiliated, produced a new and successful gospel of revenge? We can only hope that Nietzsche is as bad a prophet as he is a historian.

For his account of the origins of Christianity is certainly not good history. The notion that Christianity began as a Jewish conspiracy is melodramatic nonsense. Conspirators, even in very recent times, are rarely philosophers of history. Saint John, and certainly Saint Paul, were not quite innocent enough for conspiracy. Even the major thesis of Nietzsche's attack on Christianity contains a paradox that strains the limits of logic. Christianity, according to him, is the victory of the weak over the strong. But if the weak are victorious, are they not then really the strong? Have not they carried out successfully the supreme demands of the Will to Power? There is certainly an obvious reply here. The Will to Power of the Christians is not the right kind of Will to Power, not a *good* one. But if there are good and bad kinds of power, or success, then there are standards of judgment with which we can criticize the results of the struggle for power. There is a "higher" power than the Will to Power. We are back in the company of Kant and Socrates. Perhaps Nietzsche too had his daemon?

An analysis of Nietzsche's attitude towards Christianity would be incomplete without some mention of his attitude towards what he regarded as the final, and most decadent, form of Christianity — the contemporary movement towards democracy and socialism. Nietzsche hated all forms of Western parliamentary governments, lumping together in his hatred English liberalism and continental socialism. In his opinion,

the great popular movements of modern times, the English, American, and French revolutions, represent the herd-men's attempt to bring the unlovely and impossible Christian heaven down to earth. No longer content with the vicarious other-worldly realization of his low desires for comfort and self-indulgence which the success of the Jewish conspiracy brought him, the democrat or the socialist is trying to be comfortable and self-indulgent here and now, trying to remake this earth in his own image. And the result? A mad scramble for the cheap wares of the factory, for the pleasures of a vulgarized art, for the satisfactions of that base form of envy called patriotism.

An absolute uprooting of culture in the increasing rush and hurry of life, and the decay of all reflection and simplicity. The waters of religion are ebbing, and leaving swamps and stagnant pools; the nations are drawing away in enmity again, and long to tear each other to pieces. The sciences, blindly driving on according to a system of *laissez-faire*, are splitting up. . . . The educated classes are swept along in the contemptible struggle for wealth. Never was the world more worldly, never poorer in goodness and love. Everything bows before the coming barbarism, art and science included.⁴²

We are ripe for the final disintegration, for universal nihilism. The one saving factor in the older Christianity, the postponement of its deadly egalitarianism to an after-world, which still permitted a fruitful inequality in this world, is lost. The equality of souls before God was a doctrine that might have been made harmless, but the equality of men before Society is a fatal lure, a final decadence; it is nihilism.

The *protraction of Christianity* through the French Revolution. The seducer is Rousseau, he once again liberates woman, who thenceforward

⁴² *Thoughts out of Season*, "Schopenhauer as Educator," chap. iv.

is always represented as ever more interesting — *suffering*. Then come the slaves and Mrs. Beecher Stowe. Then the poor and the workmen. Then the vicious and the sick. . . . Then comes the cursing of all voluptuousness (Baudelaire and Schopenhauer): the most decided conviction that the lust for power is the greatest vice; absolute certainty that morality and disinterestedness are identical things: that the "happiness of all" is a goal worth striving after (i.e. Christ's Kingdom of Heaven). We are on the best road to it: the Kingdom of Heaven of the poor in spirit has begun.⁴³

VI

On such blanket-terms as rationalism, Christianity, and democracy Nietzsche centered hatreds which, to take him in his own terms, are rather more than philosophical. There is a certain consistency in their variety. Nietzsche hates all that seems to him hostile to Life, to struggling, to the free expression of a restless energy in men he called the Will to Power. He hates anything finished, complete, contented, "dead." Perhaps this worshipper of succeeding hates anything successful? At any rate, we shall not stop now to pursue Nietzsche's personality into its final — and not very well concealed — hiding-places. Our list of his hatreds has perhaps been a bit too abstract, has concentrated on their broadest and most generalized expression. We shall do well to consider some of his more specialized hatreds. They are many, and we can but choose a few among them. They are also, and not unnaturally, greatly mixed with love. Nietzsche might have written, *odi, ergo amo*.

He wrote some bitter things, which, values having been properly transvalued, he regarded as just and kindly things, about women. Nietzsche's opinions on women are at least as well-known as the very similar ones expressed by his master

⁴³ *The Will to Power*, § 94.

Schopenhauer. Historically, both represent a reaction against some of the views about women held in the nineteenth century, especially in England, America, and Germany, and commonly known as "Victorian." Such views really were held: read John Stuart Mill's *Autobiography* if you doubt it. Women, ran the common version, are really morally superior to men. They are gentle, kindly, idealistic, yet sensible. Their minds and desires are on higher things. They put up, because they have to, with the wicked lusts of men. They are ignorant now of many important worldly matters because men conspire to keep them uneducated, and this ignorance gives them a certain charm. But since they are really so much better than men, they should be given at least an equal chance with men, for our common good. They should be given equal educational opportunities, should be welcomed into the world of business and politics. This, indeed, is the more radical version dear to men like Mill. The ordinary Victorian accepted the premises of Mill's version, the view of women as ministering angels; but he preferred to keep them in their present satisfactory place, and to continue to receive their ministrations.

Against such notions Nietzsche wrote aphorisms scattered through all his works, and the famous eighteenth chapter of the first part of *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, "Old and Young Women." It is roughly possible to distinguish two veins in his writing about women. In the first vein, he attacks Victorian notions in his usual manner — by affirming loudly their opposites. Women are unscrupulous, self-centered, sensual; they make good schemers, liars, and haters. They are admirable practitioners of the art of slave-morality, using with intelligent hypocrisy the "Christian" virtues to establish their regrettable

domination over men. And they are intelligent, in a low way. Established European ideas in the nineteenth century have got the truth just reversed. Men have "character," women "intelligence."

The intellect of women manifests itself as perfect mastery, presence of mind, and utilization of all advantages. They transmit it as a fundamental quality to their children, and the father adds thereto the darker background of the will. . . . For those who know how to put a thing properly: women have intelligence, men have character and passion.⁴⁴

In his second vein, Nietzsche is directly concerned with putting women in their proper place. Here, as so often when he has a concrete program, he sounds very like a Nazi. He might almost have used their formula, Church, Children, Cooking. Women must not be given an equal voice with men in affairs of any kind, state, business, or family. The movement for equal rights for women is one of the sorriest signs of our decadence. Women are really not good for much of anything. They are not even good cooks.⁴⁵ But in the economy of the world they must be used for something, and, properly mastered, they make tolerable slaves. The real danger is not the direct rule the suffragettes and their sympathizers, eunuchs like Mill, want; it is that women will rule indirectly, in the manner of a Pompadour — or a Maintenon — by using their talents for love-making and Christian piety to obtain an unnatural mas-

⁴⁴ *Human, All Too Human*, "Wife and Child," § 411. The whole of this division of *Human, All Too Human*, § 377-437, together with *The Joyful Wisdom*, Book II, § 57-75, makes up perhaps the best sample of Nietzsche's ideas on women, much fuller and more typical than anything in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*.

⁴⁵ "Stupidity in the kitchen: woman as cook. — Woman does not understand what food means." *Beyond Good and Evil*, § 234. And Nietzsche had never faced an American female "salad"!

tery over their masters. In the new order of society, women must be kept in their ordained position of inferiors, must be limited to the functions of child-bearing and housekeeping, that men may at last become Supermen.⁴⁶

Nietzsche loved and hated women — from a safe distance. The determined Elizabeth was the only woman whom he could have known at all well. Cosima he loved in secret, as the Ariadne of a most transparent sublimation. The ludicrous passage with Lou was too brief and wordy to have taught him much. Fräulein von Meysenbug was not even a good mother-substitute. In real life, there was always something fumbling and unsatisfactory in his relations with women. Perhaps this is why he wrote so assuredly about them. And he never really owned one, which is perhaps why he was so confident they should be owned.

Nietzsche also hated professors, and here at least he had ample opportunity to know intimately the objects of his hatred. The academic mind, according to this professor of classical philology, is devoted to the process of embalming; it does not kill — it has not energy enough for that. What priests and women kill, the *savant* embalms, preserves to clutter the world so that there is no room for anything alive. Professors are hopeless herd-men, conservatives in the negative sense of mere

⁴⁶ This summary is not wholly fair to Nietzsche, since, especially in *The Joyful Wisdom* — his least embittered book — he can occasionally write about women discerningly, fair-mindedly, almost sympathetically. See for instance the aphorism (§ 71) "On Female Chastity" in Book II of *The Joyful Wisdom*, where he discusses the "psychic entanglement" of the ordinary upper and middle-class European woman who faces marriage after being educated "with as much ignorance as possible *in eroticis*." Not that Nietzsche is untrue to his major premises: even in this book, he insists that "Man's attribute is will, woman's attribute is willingness." (§ 68).

conforming; they are hostile to novelty, enterprise, adventure; they form a guild responsible for the spread of Socratic rationalism in its modern and deadly forms of science and scholarship; they conspire against and suppress the rare spirits—like Nietzsche—who can use the stuff of history to illuminate, nay, to set fire to, the world.⁴⁷

All this was not as new and as daring in the 1870's and 1880's as were Nietzsche's opinions about women. It had all been said before, and has been said since. It is the eternal complaint of the adventurous and imaginative free-lance writer, himself battling for a living among the realities of competitive existence, while the cloistered professor rests secure in his make-believe world of academic tenure. It is the cry of the free artist against the enslaved scholar, of the creator against Dryasdust, of the thinker against the mere cataloguer. The kind of thing Nietzsche said about professors has been said so often that it must be worth saying. It has become almost a piece of ritualistic consolation for the imaginative and the profound in this dull world. And this must indeed be a dull world, in which so brilliant and fascinating a fellow as Nietzsche has to spend so much energy in warning his fellow men against the contagion, if not the charm, of academic dullness and stupidity.

Wagner is almost a test case of Nietzsche's capacity for love-in-hate. In the Triebsehen period, Nietzsche felt, as much as he could ever feel, the worship of the disciple for the master. Wagner's music was then the unattainable perfection of Dionysian striving. His emotions never recovered from the crash of Wagner's music, and to the last he never denied its unholy

⁴⁷ Here the *locus classicus* is *Thoughts out of Season*, "Schopenhauer as Educator," chap. vi.



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From a photograph, about 1880

greatness. But he came to hate the Theseus who still held Ariadne's body, though her soul must obviously belong to Dionysos; he came to envy the successful Master who had the admiration of the tribe, always denied to Nietzsche. His taste in music, too, changed. Well ahead of his time, and a little against the grain, one suspects, of so unbridled a yearner, he reverted to the "classical" in music.⁴⁸ He came to prefer music *before* Beethoven to music *after* Beethoven, though he also liked the unpretentious clarity and lightness of Bizet's "Carmen." In this mood, he wrote about Wagner as only a disillusioned romantic could:

Wagner's heroines one and all, once they have been divested of their heroic husks, are almost all indistinguishable from Madame Bovary. . . . If it were not for Wagner, who would teach us that innocence has a preference for saving interesting sinners? (the case in "Tannhäuser"). Or that corrupted old females prefer to be saved by chaste young men? (the case of Kundry). Or that young hysterics like to be saved by their doctor? (the case in "Lohengrin"). Or that beautiful girls must love to be saved by a knight who also happens to be a Wagnerite? (the case in the "Mastersingers"). Or that even married women also like to be saved by a knight? (the case of Isolde). . . . Let us wander in the clouds, let us harangue eternity, let us be careful to group great symbols all around us. *Sursum! Bumbum!*—there is no better advice. The "heaving breast" shall be our argument, "beautiful feelings" our advocates. Virtue still carries its point against counterpoint.⁴⁹

According to Nietzsche, then, Wagner was no musician; he was an actor, a panderer to the low tastes of the public who

⁴⁸ A remark of Hans von Bülow makes very clear Nietzsche's native taste in music. Of a "Bacchanal" of Nietzsche's own composing submitted to him he wrote, "habe ich mehr an den *lendemain* eines Bacchanals als an dieses selbst denken müssen"—"it makes me think rather of the day after a Bacchanal than of a Bacchanal itself." Nietzsche, *Gesammelte Briefe*, III, 350.

⁴⁹ *The Case of Wagner*, § 9; 3; 6.

assemble at that "Hydro," Bayreuth — "the cultured *crétins*, the *blasé* pigmies, the eternally feminine, the gastrically happy, in short, the people."⁵⁰ Wagner's works are an encyclopaedia of decadence. They end, appropriately, with the worst kind of decadence — the Christian religiosity of "Parsifal."

Finally, there are the Germans. Nietzsche was fond of calling himself a "good European," but he never forgot that he was a German. He thought the racial movement a swindle, but he contributed much to its spread. He was certainly in the ordinary sense not a good German, and, especially in his later years, wrote very violently against the Germans — which is why we have considered this subject among his hatreds.

It is part of my ambition to be considered as a despiser of Germans *par excellence*. . . . The Germans are impossible for me. When I try to think of a man who runs counter to all my instincts, the result is always a German. . . . The Germans are *canaille*. . . . A man debases himself by consorting with Germans. . . . I cannot endure this race with which a man is always in bad company, which has no feeling for nuances (and alas! I am a nuance). . . . The Germans have no idea of how vulgar they are — which is itself the very acme of vulgarity — they are not ashamed of being merely Germans.⁵¹

Yet here Nietzsche's hatred is most transparently disappointed love. He had wooed his fellow-countrymen, and they had turned him down. They had not followed Zarathustra. They had not even stoned him; they had simply paid him no attention at all.

And he had tried very hard. The Germans, in spite of their weaknesses, had still seemed to Zarathustra the most hopeful

⁵⁰ *The Case of Wagner*, § 6.

⁵¹ *Ecce Homo*, "The Case of Wagner," § 4.

stuff out of which to make Supermen. Save for a few professors, a few dull bourgeois like David Strauss, they had not followed the false light of Socratic rationalism. Some deep instinct, something in the German soul, is forever hostile to the shallow glibness of French *philosophe* and English utilitarian. The Germans had, it is true, their philosophical weakness: Kantian idealism. But according to Nietzsche, even this absurd and loving dalliance with the thing-in-itself is really for Germans nothing more than a form of amusement, and perhaps a not altogether useless and innocent form of amusement, since it bewilders foreigners into thinking that the Germans really are good-natured metaphysical maunderers, and conceals from them the basic German hardness. "German depth — among ourselves alone we perhaps take the liberty to laugh at it . . . we should do honor to our name — we are not called the 'tiusche Volk' (deceptive people) for nothing."⁵² At the core of this German race is to be found a fine blond strength, a capacity for disciplined obedience, for efficient cooperation, an energy that can be stimulated into Dionysian activity and enjoyment, a noble discontent — clear even in men like Luther — with the world as it is. Even the German search for "depth" is a sign of the German Will to Power. "Wir Deutschen *wollen* etwas von uns, was man von uns noch nicht wollte — wir wollen etwas *mehr*."⁵³

Over against this strength, Nietzsche finds serious German weaknesses which have hitherto prevented its highest develop-

⁵² *Beyond Good and Evil*, § 244. I doubt whether Nietzsche's derivation of "Teutonic" is good etymology, but it makes fine irony.

⁵³ "We Germans will get something from ourselves, which no one has yet wanted of us — we want something *more*." *The Will to Power*, § 108. This is understandably a favorite text in Nazi Germany.

ment. The right instincts are there, but they do not have full play; they are suppressed, overlaid by bad habits and institutions. They emerge awkwardly, if at all, into action. Nietzsche is never quite sure how this regrettable failure came about, but he knows how it shows itself at present — in Wagner-worship, in the new Empire with its striving after worldly goods and empty political prestige, in national arrogance and obtuseness, in whoring after the strange gods of parliamentary government and socialism, in decadence, in neglect of Nietzsche. The Germans are an enigma — even more complex and contradictory than women.

As a people made up of the most extraordinary mixing and mingling of races, perhaps even with a preponderance of the pre-Aryan element, as the “people of the center” in every sense of the term, the Germans are more intangible, more ample, more contradictory, more unknown, more incalculable, more surprising, and even more terrifying than other peoples are to themselves: — they escape *definition*, and are thereby alone the despair of the French.⁵⁴

We have, however, spent enough time on Nietzsche’s hatreds. The list could be extended to great length, from Dante, “the hyena that writes poetry in tombs,” to fanatical reformers, “that ‘noble’ little community of unbridled, fantastic, half-mad people — of geniuses, too — who cannot control themselves, or experience any inward joy, until they have lost themselves completely.”⁵⁵ But it will be more profitable to try to under-

⁵⁴ *Beyond Good and Evil*, § 244. This whole passage is an admirable summary of Nietzsche’s mature position on the Germans. See also the section “Peoples and Countries,” appended to the English translation of *The Genealogy of Morals*.

⁵⁵ *The Twilight of the Idols*, “Skirmishes in a War with the Age,” § 1; *The Dawn of Day*, Book I, § 50. There is no sign in the passage from which the latter quotation is taken that Nietzsche was indulging in self-analysis.

stand, not what Nietzsche loved — which is, as we have seen, usually indistinguishable from what he hated — but what Nietzsche wanted. We shall in the next chapter attempt the difficult task of finding a program, a platform for concrete action, in his work.

CHAPTER V

WHAT NIETZSCHE WANTED

THE variety — or the confusion — of Nietzsche's thought is at least as apparent on what we may call, conventionally, its positive side as on its negative side. There is one constant: all his life Nietzsche was concerned, as a *politique* and *moraliste*, with the problems of men in society. There are many variables. He is now critic, essayist on aesthetic problems, now moralist in the French tradition, now preacher, now prophet — always, perhaps, philosopher. In his first work, he is primarily interested in ethics as aesthetics. In his last book, the skeleton *Will to Power*, he is interested in ethics as high politics, religion. Throughout his work, he seems torn between the contrary ideals of anarchy and authority; rarely, if ever, does he solve the conflict with the common play on words, the assertion that true liberty is true obedience. He is certainly not fairly labeled *either* as anarchist *or* as authoritarian, though enemies and friends alike have not hesitated to interpret him as one or the other. Perhaps he believed in the anarchical solution for an elite, the Supermen, in the authoritarian solution for the many, the herd-men? Certainly he is always vividly aware of a contrast between the able few and the incompetent many, and the distinction between "masters" and "slaves" runs throughout his thinking. But, if it is in general true that for him "slave-morality" is obedience, it is not true that for him "master-morality" is what we know as anarchy. We must put the

question of his ethics in its simplest form, and ask how he wanted men to behave.

This seems, at least to an Anglo-Saxon mind trained to ask just such empirical questions, a perfectly fair question. But it is surprising, and in a sense no doubt illuminating, to learn how difficult it is to answer from Nietzsche's writings. He does not admit sharing Carlyle's noble scorn for any concrete proposal of reform as a mere "Morrison's pill." He does not in so many words say that if the soul of man sees the new light, all will be well, that we need a *spiritual* revolution in which the petty details of institutional change will take care of themselves. Any such barefaced preaching would seem to be at odds with his tough-minded attacks on theological and philosophical idealism. But listen to him:

And it is the great noontide, when man is in the middle of his course between animal and Superman, and celebrating his advance to the evening as his highest hope: for it is the advance to a new morning.

At such time will the down-goer bless himself, that he should be an over-goer; and the sun of his knowledge will be at noontide.

"Dead are all the Gods: now do we desire the Superman to live." — Let this be our final will at the great noontide! —

Thus spake Zarathustra.¹

No doubt it is, in one of Nietzsche's favorite words, hopelessly *vulgar* to ask for some indications of what Supermen will be like in the flesh — for we understand that they are to have flesh. The mere asking such a question marks the questioner as one not chosen to advance to the new morning. Nietzsche is not going to imitate his Christian opponents, and come down to details such as the white robes and the harps of the Christian

¹ *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, Part I, chap. xxii.

heaven. The conception of the Superman is of course pure eschatology, incomprehensible to the outsider, save as he can observe the behavior of men who say they "believe in" it.

Nevertheless, in his less exalted moments Nietzsche did write much about how he wanted men to behave in this transitional period of the "great noontide." Even when he is dealing with such problems of conduct, he is more often than not the preacher, urging the masters to be bold, active, brave, cruel, hard, voluptuous, manly, and to keep the slaves in their places. Occasionally he will recommend some vague institutional frame for such behavior, but not often. And when he does, it is not at all clear whether he is thinking of masters or slaves, or of both.

Take, for instance, the family. He believes in monogamy as the best general rule both for masters and slaves. For both, he holds that the man must be master within the family, that the place of woman is in the home. Marriage is an institution for breeding. It should have nothing to do with love. Modern bourgeois marriage has been corrupted by romantic notions about love. In the good society, it may well be necessary to supervise marriages in order to prevent the birth of the weak, the misfit.

Society, as the trustee of life, is responsible to life for every botched life that comes into existence . . . it should in many cases actually prevent the act of procreation and may, without any regard for rank, descent, or intellect, hold in readiness the most rigorous forms of compulsion and restriction, and, under certain circumstances, have recourse to castration. The Mosaic law, "Thou shalt do no murder," is a piece of ingenuous puerility compared with the earnestness of this forbidding of life to decadents, "Thou shalt not beget"!!!²

² *The Will to Power*, § 734.

Note here the vagueness of "under certain circumstances" and the failure to define "decadents." Both the doctrine and the vagueness are proving useful to the Nazis, and this passage from *The Will to Power* is very popular with their theorists of *Rassenhygiene*.³

On education Nietzsche is again vague and often contradictory. He wrote the famous aphorism, "The future of German culture rests with the sons of Prussian officers."⁴ What he admired in the Prussian officer-caste was precisely its rigorous training and discipline, its acceptance of tradition, its freedom from "decadent" questionings. And yet he also wrote, "What is now needed in Germany is independent educational establishments which actively oppose the State system of slave-drilling."⁵ The Prussians were clearly not quite Supermen. Nietzsche wants something more: "The *education* which rears those *ruling* virtues that allow a man to become master of his benevolence and his pity: the great disciplinary virtues . . . and the *passions of the creator, must be elevated* to the heights — we must cease from carving marble!"⁶

But although Nietzsche never gives us a curriculum, he knows what he doesn't want. The kind of formal education he himself had, for instance. In one of his longer passages — it is almost an essay — on "The So-called Classical Education" he writes:

Only think of this wasted youth, when we were inoculated clumsily and painfully with an imperfect knowledge of the Greeks and the Romans as well as of their languages, contrary to the highest principle

³ See below, p. 215.

⁴ *Genealogy of Morals*, "Peoples and Countries," § 14.

⁵ Quoted in Förster-Nietzsche, *Nietzsche*, II, 250.

⁶ *The Will to Power*, § 983.

of all culture, which holds that we should not give food except to those who hunger for it. Think of that period in our lives when we had mathematics and physics forced down our throats, instead of first of all being made acquainted with the despair of ignorance, instead of having our little daily life, our activities, and everything occurring in our houses, our workshops, in the sky and in nature, split up into thousands of problems, painful, humiliating and irritating problems — and thus having our curiosity made acquainted with the fact that we first of all require a mathematical and mechanical knowledge before we can be allowed to rejoice in the absolute logic of this knowledge! If we had only been imbued with reverence for those branches of science, if we had only been made to tremble with emotion at the struggles, the defeats and the renewed combats of those great men, of the martyrdom which is the history of pure science! But, on the contrary we were allowed to develop a certain contempt for those sciences in favor of historical training, formal education, and “classicism.”⁷

As for what is called “popular education” (*Volksbildung*), the very notion is unspeakable. You cannot “educate” the masses by submitting them to smatterings and distillations of what our time calls knowledge. Their true education they do not get from schoolmasters in their new schools. This education they find “there, where the *Volk* cherishes its religious instincts, where it builds its mythical figures, where it guards its customs, its sense of right, its home-soil (*Heimatsboden*), its speech.” The only result of trying to give the people a formal academic education is to destroy in part this organic growth which keeps them *völkisch* and contented. And of course all “popular educators” are at heart envious radicals and socialists, bungling little intellectuals who want to destroy the natural Order of Rank.⁸

⁷ *The Dawn of Day*, § 195. Even the natural sciences are good, when Nietzsche wants to use them to club something else!

⁸ From Nietzsche’s unpublished literary remains. See *Werke* (*Grossoctav.*

One would not expect Nietzsche to pay much attention to economics, to the ordinary details of making a living. The Supermen will be supported by the herd-men, as aristocratic classes in the past, foreshadowing the Supermen, have been supported by the masses. Apparently the deep habits and instincts of the masses, if undisturbed, will be sufficient to produce all that is needed in economic goods. Certainly the Supermen will not even guide the masses in economic life. The true aristocrat can have nothing to do with trade. "Not to understand trade is noble — To sell one's virtue only at the highest price, or even to carry on usury with it as a teacher, a civil servant, or an artist, for instance, brings genius and talent down to the level of the common tradesman. We must be careful not to be clever with our wisdom!"⁹ Nevertheless, Nietzsche brings himself to consider such matters now and then. The importance of the industrialist and the entrepreneur in modern society is for him a sign of disease. Sudden wealth makes unnatural leaders, men without taste, without honor, without the steadying force of tradition — without what Pareto called "persistent aggregates."

In order that property may henceforth inspire more confidence and become more moral, we should keep open all paths of work for small fortunes, but should prevent the effortless [!] and sudden acquisition of wealth. Accordingly, we should take all the branches of transport and trade which favor the accumulation of large fortunes — especially, therefore, the money-market — out of the hands of private persons and private companies, and look upon those who own too much, just as upon those who own nothing, as types fraught with danger to the community.¹⁰

ausgabe), IX, 357. The whole long passage is a most interesting anticipation of what the Nazis call their *völkische Weltanschauung*.

⁹ *The Dawn of Day*, § 308.

¹⁰ *Human, All Too Human*, "The Wanderer and his Shadow," § 285.

Here again, Nietzsche stops short very conveniently for himself. "Out of the hands of private persons," and into whose hands? Nietzsche does not say. His Nazi commentators have answered for him. Into the hands of the National Socialist state as now organized, writes one of them, who finds that Nietzsche foresaw the corporative state.¹¹ Not too much, not too little. Robespierre once said that in the republic to come, no one should have much over, or much under, 3,000 francs a year — but Robespierre is strange company for Nietzsche.

Capitalist society, Nietzsche continues, has *exploited* the laborer. The socialists for once are right. But their egalitarian remedies are a poison worse than the disease. The worker must be restored to his proper place in the Order of Rank. We have got to get rid of the cash-nexus.

Workmen should learn to regard their duties as *soldiers* do. They should receive emoluments, support, but they should not get wages!

There is no relation between *work done* and *money received*; the individual should, *according to his kind*, be so placed as to perform the highest that is compatible with his powers.¹²

We need, in order to dissolve this cash-nexus, a revolution, a great renewal of society. Before economic life can be put in the modest place where it belongs, it must be properly subordinated to the moral and political life of the community. Justice, not wealth, must be the measure of utility.¹³

And justice? It is at any rate the *opposite* of the prevailing capitalistic spirit. Socialism is merely the workman's aping envy of his masters. To cure the workman of his socialism, the upper classes must cure themselves of their capitalism.

¹¹ Haertle, *Nietzsche und der Nazionalsozialismus* (1937), 31.

¹² *The Will to Power*, § 763.

¹³ *Human, All Too Human*, "The Wanderer and his Shadow," § 286.

The only remedy against Socialism that still lies in your power is to avoid provoking Socialism — in other words, to live in moderation and contentment, to prevent as far as possible all lavish display, and to aid the State as far as possible in its taxing of all superfluities and luxuries. You do not like this remedy? Then, you rich bourgeois who call yourselves “Liberals,” confess that it is your own inclination that you find so terrible and menacing in Socialists, but allow to prevail in yourselves as unavoidable, as if with you it were something different. As you are constituted, if you had not your fortune and the cares of maintaining it, this bent of yours would make Socialists of you. Possession alone differentiates you from them. If you wish to conquer the assailants of your prosperity, you must first conquer yourselves. — And if that prosperity only meant well-being, it would not be so external and provocative of envy; it would be more generous, more benevolent, more compensatory, more helpful. But the spurious, histrionic element in your pleasures, which lie more in the feeling of contrast (because others have them not, and feel envious) than in feelings of realised and heightened power — your houses, dresses, carriages, shops, the demands of your palates and your tables, your noisy operatic and musical enthusiasm; lastly your women, formed and fashioned but of base metal, gilded but without the ring of gold, chosen by you for show and considering themselves meant for show — these are the things that spread the poison of that national disease, which seizes the masses ever more and more as a Socialistic heart-itch, but has its origin and breeding-place in you. Who shall now arrest this epidemic? ¹⁴

II

No more as to politics than as to family life, education, and economic life, can one expect from Nietzsche concrete proposals for reform. He is certainly no conventional political philosopher. He uses the classic terms of political theory — monarchy, aristocracy, democracy — in no fresh senses. In the abstract, “democracy” sounds bad to him, “aristocracy” and “monarchy” good. But with the actual governments of his

¹⁴ *Human, All Too Human*, “Miscellaneous Maxims and Opinions,” § 304.

time, no matter what they are called, he is disgusted. France and England have frankly committed themselves to democracy and therefore to decadence. Germany, in which the strong old instincts for a society founded on the Order of Rank were still alive under Frederick the Great, has since 1813 given way increasingly to her almost equally old weakness, the desire to imitate, and excel at their own game, the Western powers. Even so intelligent and realistic an "old" German as Bismarck has felt himself obliged to introduce parliamentary government and in many other ways to compromise with the West. The result is an unstable mixture of elements natural and unnatural in Germans, a society enjoying its own peculiar decadence; "the era of Bismarck — the era of a stupefied Germany" (*Aera der deutschen Verdummung*).¹⁵ In this sad situation, only Russia seems to hold a promise, "Russia, the *only* great nation today that has some lasting power and grit in her, that can bide her time, that can still promise something — Russia, the opposite of all wretched European petty-statism and neurasthenia, which the foundation of the German Empire has brought to a crisis."¹⁶ As for America, all Nietzsche thought we deserved was an aside, "no American future." It is true he put a question-mark after the phrase.¹⁷

The politics of all European and American states in the nineteenth century, then, — with the possible exception of Russia — were to Nietzsche impossibly corrupt. And they were deeply corrupt, not with the petty graft old-maidish reformers worry about — that was at most a symptom — but with the funda-

¹⁵ *Werke* (*Grossoctavausgabe*), XIII, 350.

¹⁶ *The Twilight of the Idols*, "Skirmishes in a War with the Age," § 39.

¹⁷ *The Genealogy of Morals*, "Peoples and Countries," § 17.

mental corruption of democratized Christianity. They were organized to achieve the ignoble ends of herd-men, peace, animal comfort, the survival of the mean, the stupid, the botched. But they were not even successful in achieving these ends. The nineteenth century had seen the rise of democratic nationalism, a new era of wars on a grand scale, wars between huge armies raised by universal conscription, not between the small armies of professional fighters of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. In these wars, the comfortable decadence of the bourgeois was made impossible. International politics were in a worse mess — if that was possible — than domestic politics.

Nietzsche approved wars in principle, and wrote flowingly in praise of war and warriors.¹⁸ But he did not altogether like the specific wars of his own time. Perhaps here, as so often, Nietzsche simply displays the unsubtle neurosis that made him disapprove anything he hadn't invented — and he clearly hadn't invented Bismarck's wars. He does, however, try hard to rationalize his feeling that the wars of his time are inglorious wars.

They are inglorious partly because, of course, they are most unnaturally fought among the herd-men, who ought to be limited to their proper function of hewers of wood and drawers of water for the real warriors, the master-men. European nationalism is an emotion of the herd, the pooled egotisms of common men. But not even these emotions are really natural, really rooted in the strong soil from which *grows* the *Volks*. Like everything else in this stupid contemporary world of ours, the emotions we call nationalistic are mere perverse and corrupted sentiments, artificially cultivated by men — mostly “in-

¹⁸ The classic passage is in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, Part I, chap. x.

lectuals" — infected with the Socratic virus. The nationalism that at present holds the Germans together, for instance, is not a pure love of blood and soil, but a ferment of Rousseau, Wagner, "progress," egalitarianism, hedonism, beer and fine ideals generally.

This nation has deliberately abused itself for almost a thousand years: nowhere else have the two great European narcotics, alcohol and Christianity, been so viciously abused as in Germany. Recently a third opiate was added to the list, . . . our music, our costive and constipating German music. How much peevish ponderousness, paralysis, dampness, dressing-gown languor, and beer, is there not in German intelligence!¹⁹

For a Europe so fundamentally ill, Nietzsche will supply no remedy in the narrow sense of mere clinical experience. That is not his way: he is nothing so limited as a clinician. But he will prophesy, he will play with the magic of words. Against the petty nationalists of his time — he is always *against* someone or something — he declares himself to be a "good European."

I see over and above all these national wars, new "empires" and whatever else lies in the foreground. What I am concerned with — for I see it preparing itself slowly and hesitatingly — is the United Europe. It was the only real work, the one impulse in the souls of all broad-minded and deep-thinking men of this century — this preparation of the new synthesis, and the tentative effort to anticipate the future of "the European." I am thinking of men like Napoleon, Heinrich Heine, Goethe, Beethoven, Stendhal, Schopenhauer. . . .

But to the help of such minds as feel the need of a new unity there comes a great explanatory economic fact: the small states of Europe — I refer to all our present kingdoms and "empires" — will in a short time become economically untenable, owing to the mad, uncontrolled struggle

¹⁹ *The Twilight of the Idols*, "Things the Germans Lack," § 2. For a more moderate discussion of "artificial nationalism," see *Human, All Too Human*, Part I, § 475.

for the possession of local and international trade. . . . In order, however, that Europe may enter into the battle for the mastery of the world with good prospects of victory . . . she must probably "come to an understanding" with England. The English colonies are needed for this struggle, just as much as modern Germany to play her new role of broker and middleman, requires the colonial possessions of Holland. For no one any longer believes that England alone is strong enough to continue to act her old part for fifty years more [that is, to 1940] . . . here, as in other matters, the coming century will be following in the footsteps of Napoleon, the first man, and the man of greatest initiative and advanced views, of modern times.²⁰

This is certainly prophecy in the grand manner. Nietzsche at times seems to be almost grateful to democratic nationalism: it is something to overcome. It is, indeed, the necessary prelude to a better state of affairs. The last few hundred years have been a time of marvellous and necessary destruction: they have at last leveled the ground on which the coming Supermen, the Cyclopeans, can build a noble work of masonry. They have destroyed, or are destroying, the last remnants of European barbarism, all the crude and tyrannical instincts of mere animal man.

Whether we call it "civilization," or "humanity," or "progress," which now distinguishes the European: whether we call it simply, without praise or blame, by the political formula: the *democratic* movement in Europe — behind all the moral and political foregrounds pointed to by such formulas, an immense *physiological process* goes on, which is ever extending: the process of the assimilation of Europeans; their increasing detachment from the conditions under which, climatically and hereditarily, united races originate; their increasing independence of every definite *milieu*, that for centuries would fain inscribe itself with equal demands on soul and body; — that is to say, the slow emergence of an essentially super-national and nomadic species of man, who possesses,

²⁰ *The Genealogy of Morals*, "Peoples and Countries," § 18. See also *The Joyful Wisdom*, Part V, § 362.

physiologically speaking, a maximum of the art and power of adaptation as his typical distinction. This process of the *evolving European* . . . will probably arrive at results on which its naive propagators and panegyrists, the apostles of "modern ideas," would least care to reckon. The same new conditions under which on an average a levelling and cheapening of man will take place — a useful, industrious, variously serviceable and clever gregarious man — are in the highest degree suitable to give use to exceptional men of the most dangerous and attractive qualities. For, while the collective impression of such future Europeans will probably be that of numerous, talkative, weak-willed, and very handy workmen who *require* a master, a commander, as they require their daily bread; while, therefore, the democratising of Europe will tend to the production of a type prepared for slavery in the most subtle sense of the term: the *strong* man will necessarily in individual and exceptional cases, become stronger and richer than he has perhaps ever been before — owing to the unprejudicedness of his schooling, owing to the immense variety of practice, art, and disguise. I meant to say that the democratising of Europe is at the same time an involuntary arrangement for the rearing of *tyrants* — taking the word in all its meanings, even in its most spiritual sense.²¹

Therefore: "The leveling of the mankind of Europe is the great process which should not be arrested; it should even be accelerated."²²

Nietzsche has achieved the philosopher's favorite task, the reconciliation of the irreconcilable. Hegel could have found no better example of the benign workings of the dialectic; out of democracy, dictatorship; out of the rule of the herd-men, the rule of the Supermen. The cosmic process is at work smoothly and surely. It would almost seem as if there were nothing to get excited about. But the cosmic process needs the aid of cosmic thinkers. Nietzsche is at least as excited as another, and more open, Hegelian, Karl Marx. He, too, has blue-prints for the future, blue-prints a bit vague for mere practising architects

²¹ *Beyond Good and Evil*, § 242.

²² *The Will to Power*, § 898.

and builders, but all that a philosopher and a prophet ever need. Nietzsche foresaw a future which without him might not really turn out to be a future. The heart of his work is what he sets forth as a new eschatology, a new morality. Our study of what Nietzsche wanted in family life, education, economic life, and politics has led us naturally and inevitably to the traditionally abstract and generalized form of what this anti-philosopher wanted — to his philosophy. We must try now to come to grips with those famous phrases of Nietzsche's which his followers have turned into slogans — "the Will to Power," "immoralism," "the transvaluation of all values," "the Superman" (*Uebermensch*), "the Eternal Recurrence" (*ewige Wiederkunft*).

III

Nietzsche learned from Schopenhauer that Will is the first principle of the Universe, or at least of human life in the Universe — and that the intellect is the servant of the Will. But Schopenhauer's pessimism held human life, and hence Will, as an evil, to be palliated if not transcended by "living" as little as possible. This near-death in life he would attain by a kind of pseudo-oriental quietism, a Nirvana-like state of philosophic calm and contempt. Nietzsche early decided he would say "Yea" where his Master had said "Nay," that he would accept with delight the endless struggles to which his Will invited him. What Schopenhauer had called the Will to Life, and A Bad Thing, he would call the Will to Power, and A Good Thing.

What is good? All that enhances the feeling of power, the Will to Power, and power itself in man. What is bad? — all that proceeds from weakness. What is happiness? — the feeling that power is *increasing* — that resistance has been overcome.

Not contentment, but more power; not peace at any price, but war; not virtue, but efficiency (virtue in the Renaissance sense, *virtù*, free from all moralic acid). The weak and the botched shall perish: first principle of our humanity. And they ought even to be helped to perish.²³

The Will to Power, as Nietzsche used the term, is no doubt a philosophic rather than a scientific term. It will not satisfy contemporary logical positivists and students of semantics. Mr. Stuart Chase might ask in vain for a "referent" for this Will to Power and Mr. P. W. Bridgman might find that no operational test could be performed on it. Yet Nietzsche certainly does not use even this grand phrase, the "Will to Power," as Kant used the "Thing-in-itself" or Plato "idea." He struggles very hard not to hypostatize the term, not to make it an absolute; he avoids as meaningless the simple old problem of free-will *versus* determinism; and he makes a genuine effort to attain what he calls an "unphilosophical" definition of the term.²⁴ At any rate, though Nietzsche finds himself falling back on such fine, vague terms as "good," "bad," "happiness," "contentment" and "overcoming" as soon as he tries to define the Will to Power, he is perhaps in a position not much worse than the physicist struggling with the concept of Energy, of the economist struggling with the concept of Wealth. The Will to Power is for Nietzsche a convenient blanket-term, a generalization, a consciously invented abstraction which saved him time and enabled him to avoid repetition—well, a certain amount of repetition.

The Will to Power manifests itself, according to Nietzsche

²³ *The Antichrist*, § 2.

²⁴ The key passage, in *Beyond Good and Evil*, § 19, is much too long for quotation. The reader is advised to go to the passage himself, and to judge how far Nietzsche avoids the usual philosophical traps—and trappings.

(*and it is only to be known by its manifestations*), very diversely in the lives of human beings; since it is practically synonymous with what we call "life," it is to be found in them all. Statesman, artist, priest, peasant and banker are all trying to prevail, to impose themselves, to arrange their surroundings — including surrounding human beings — to suit themselves. In some, indeed in most men, this effort is a limited one, easily satisfied by rough-and-ready adjustment which is hardly more than mere staying alive. But there are a few stronger spirits whom the Will to Power impels to a wider range of action. These are the men who mould society, who determine for their own times, and even for posterity, the conditions of life on this earth. They must work with recalcitrant material, both human and non-human, and they do not commonly perform miracles. They are usually groups of men, "they" rather than "he." Nietzsche believed firmly, however, in the "great man" theory, and he held that sometimes individuals like Napoleon, gifted with an extraordinary Will to Power, intelligent and well-trained — and favored by luck — have brought about major changes in the conditions of life on this earth. Saint Paul, too, was one of these men — which brings us to a very important point.

It is possible to distinguish from a study of the past, and especially the past of European men, two broadly antithetical forms which the Will to Power has taken in the lives of these makers of history. The dualism is of course a rough one, as Nietzsche will admit, and there are all sorts of shadings in actual fact between the two poles we set up for our convenience in ordering the facts; but the dualism *is* convenient, since it corresponds, however roughly, to facts. At one pole is the Will to

Power as represented by the Warrior; at the other is the Will to Power as represented by the Priest.

The Warrior is essentially noble. He represents for Nietzsche the "good" and also, — for Nietzsche was as fond of the word as any eighteenth-century *philosophe* — the "natural." The Warrior is frank and open in his exercise of the Will to Power. He has a strong body, good health, handsome features, noble bearing; he delights in the use of his strength in bodily combat, in the indulgence of all the fine gifts of enjoyment his lusty senses afford him. He is capable, at his best, of that flashing physical ecstasy — so different from the spiritual masturbation of the religious mystic — which Nietzsche liked to call "Dionysian." He is guided by honor, not by interest. He loves form, punctiliousness, ceremony. He has a keen sense of the Order of Rank, and will defend his own high place in that order. He hates as strongly and as much as he loves — perhaps he hates rather more than he loves? He has a "loathing of demagogism, of enlightenment, of amiability, and plebeian familiarity."²⁵ He is not, except when he hates, very much like Friedrich Nietzsche.

The Priest is essentially ignoble. He represents for Nietzsche the "bad" and also the "unnatural." He is physically weak, diseased in mind if not in body. He is incapable of clean, straightforward voluptuousness. He cannot be truly proud or honorable, since he lacks the gifts of body and soul which enable him to establish his pride and honor in open combat with the Warrior. But his Will to Power is strong, perversely strong, and his intelligence is sharpened, as compensation for his bodily weakness, into a craftiness, an ignoble ability to

²⁵ *The Will to Power*, § 943.

manipulate words and concepts. This craftiness, the servant of his Will to Power, he uses to confound and overthrow the Warrior. He bears in many ways an extraordinary resemblance to a philosopher named Friedrich Nietzsche.

Contemporary Europe, or rather, the whole civilized world, was produced by the collective victory of Priests over Warriors. Indeed, and in a sense rather oddly, the Warrior has never yet had his rightful place in society.

This more valuable type has appeared often enough already: but as a happy accident, as an exception, never as *willed*. He has rather been precisely the most feared; hitherto he has been almost the terrible in itself; — and from the very fear he provoked there arose the will to rear the type which has now been reared, *attained*: the domestic animal, the gregarious animal, the sick animal man, — the Christian.²⁶

The clever and degenerate Priests, realizing that they could not compete with the Warriors at the Warriors' own level, have enlisted the aid of the masses against their "natural" masters, and have established themselves as their "unnatural" masters. This the priests have achieved by inventing morality and religion, and especially their masterpiece, Christian morality and religion. The *weak* are, in the most literal sense, weak and as individuals would always go down before the strong — the good, bodily strong, the nobles, the Warriors. But the weak are very numerous, and *organized into a collectivity*, they can overcome the strong. This organization has been achieved in the Christian Church and in its contemporary adaptation, the religion of democracy and progress.

We have already seen how Nietzsche works out his explanation of the nature and triumph of Christianity.²⁷ The upshot

²⁶ *The Antichrist*, § 3.

²⁷ See above, pp. 97-108.

of it all is for Nietzsche that at present the weak, the botched, the ignoble seem to represent the actual working-out of the Will to Power in human beings. If we loved paradox as much as Nietzsche did, we might say that the Will to Power has denied, has annihilated, the Will to Power. Clearly this is a shocking state of affairs, for which the word "decadence" is hardly adequate. What is to be done?

Well, we might try a little juggling with words. It is true that this is a rather priestly way of doing, but it seems to have worked for the priests, and we must not be too nice, or the Will to Power will perish from the earth. Why not fight fire with fire? — a vulgar activity, and certainly expressed in a vulgar way unworthy of the subtlest aphorist, but these are times of crisis. And it is a simple way, refreshingly, and perhaps deceptively, simple. Since the priests have given a good name to bad actions, and called them "moral," we will become *immoralists*. Their good shall become our evil, their evil our good. But we are really better moralists than they; we are really in the right, and we cannot forego the help the established uses of language can give us. So we shall call the standards we want to have prevail among men a *transvaluation of all values* (*Umwertung aller Werte*).

Such a manipulation of words charged with sentiment is by no means easy to carry out consistently, and Nietzsche is frequently in trouble. Sometimes he is logically and defiantly consistent: "evil, be thou my good!" He uses as terms of praise words that common usage makes terms of blame. He wants men to be cruel, hard, ruthless, pitiless, unscrupulous, deceitful, boastful, truculent, sensual, frivolous. Sometimes, however, he uses as terms of praise words that common usage makes terms

of praise. He wants men to be brave, honorable, strong, serious, lofty, noble. Sometimes he uses words the Christians themselves regard as good words; and then he has to be very careful to explain that these are indeed transvalued values, that he does not mean by them what the Christians mean. He can praise asceticism, even chastity; but he will have men ascetic only towards the coarser indulgences, ascetic only as the athlete who trains himself for struggle by disciplining his body; and as for chastity "it means that a man's taste has remained noble, that *in eroticis* he likes neither the brutal, the morbid, nor the clever."²⁸ Again, that constant definition *by negation*. Nietzsche can rarely keep on in the affirmative for more than a sentence or so. Listen to him attempt to answer a question which should bring out to the full his capacity for Dionysian Yea-saying: "What is noble?"

The fact that one is constantly forced to be playing a part. That one is constantly searching for situations in which one is forced to put on airs. That one leaves happiness to the *greatest number*, the happiness which consists of inner peacefulness, of virtue, of comfort, and of Anglo-angelic-back-parlor-smugness, à la Spencer. That one instinctively seeks for heavy responsibilities. That one knows how to create enemies everywhere, at a pinch even in one's self. That one contradicts the *greatest number*, not in words at all, but by continually behaving differently from them.

Or, from a longer series of answers to the same question:

We [the noble ones] are not quick to admire. . . . We are ironical towards the "gifted"; we hold the belief that no morality is possible without good birth. . . . We always feel as if we were those who had to dispense honors; while he is not found too often who would be worthy of honoring us. . . . We are capable of *otium*, of the unconventional con-

²⁸ *The Will to Power*, § 947.

viction, that although a handicraft does not shame one in any sense, it certainly reduces one's rank. . . . We collect precious things, the needs of higher and fastidious souls; we wish to possess nothing in common. We want to have our own books, our *own* landscapes.²⁰

Thus is "noble" transvalued — from, shall we say, that which characterizes the behavior of a conventional, satisfied member of an aristocratic European family into that which characterizes the behavior of an unconventional, neurotic, dissatisfied and intellectual member of a middle-class family, who would like very much indeed to be considered an aristocrat? There are words much simpler than "transvaluation of all values" which one might apply to such a process: "snobbery," for instance.

Assuming, however, that we know what we mean by the "transvaluation of all values," how can it be brought about? It seems — there are no end of paradoxes in Nietzsche's thought — that the present condition of human affairs is in itself a kind of transvaluation of values. Somehow the weak have come to rule the strong; the slaves have overcome the masters. Nature failed in her first experiment with nobility. We shall have to aid her — possibly to supplant her — and devise a new nobility, a new kind of master-class. These we shall call the "Supermen." They will accomplish the final transvaluation of values. They will live the bright, clean life their Dionysian prophet longed for, of which he caught in moments of inspiration such tantalizing glimpses, and which he struggled so hard to capture in the feeble words which are all that the greatest of mere men can command.

Do not ask Nietzsche how to make Supermen. They will not be made in our time, nor in our children's. They will not

²⁰ *The Will to Power*, § 944, 943.

come through the kind of biological evolution our Darwinian superstitions evoke. Evolution in Darwin's sense can perhaps make Englishmen, but certainly not Supermen. They will not even be achieved by what later biologists were to call a mutation. And they will certainly not be achieved by "planning," by the exercise of our petty little human tricks for making ourselves comfortable. They will come, these pure creatures of the Deed, by the miraculous exercise of the Word—the poetic Word, the prophetic Word. Nietzsche-Zarathustra has not quite words enough:

I teach you the Superman. Man is something that is to be surpassed. What have ye done to surpass man?

All beings hitherto have created something beyond themselves; and ye want to be the ebb of that great tide, and would rather go back to the beast than surpass man?

What is the ape to man? A laughing-stock, a thing of shame. And just the same shall man be to the Superman: a laughing-stock, a thing of shame.

Ye have made your way from the worm to man, and much within you is still worm. Once ye were apes, and even yet man is more of an ape than any of the apes.

Even the wisest of you is only a disharmony and hybrid of plant and phantom. But do I bid you become phantoms or plants?

Lo, I teach you the Superman!

The Superman is the meaning of the earth. Let your will say: The Superman *shall be* the meaning of the earth!³⁰

The Superman is not quite Nietzsche's highest flight. There is yet the Eternal Recurrence, a concept which Nietzsche seems to feel will, if held firmly by the strongest of mere men, enable them to live as a kind of bridge to the Supermen. And the Supermen themselves, so far as Zarathustra can achieve the

³⁰ *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, Part I, Prologue, § 3.

impossible feat of seeing into their minds-to-come, will nourish and fortify themselves in their superhuman world by their fearless contemplation of the eternal verity of the Eternal Recurrence, "somewhere between golden ice and a pure heaven."³¹

Nietzsche's concept of the Eternal Recurrence is an unrefined mixture of oriental speculation on metempsychosis, old European striving for a metaphysical absolute, and misunderstood theoretical physics of the late nineteenth century, the latter of which held for Nietzsche much the same horrifying fascination it held for Henry Adams. Energy, says Nietzsche, was once thought to be unlimited. Now we know that it is limited. It is eternally active, but it cannot eternally create new forms. Therefore it must repeat itself. "Everything has returned: Sirius, and the spider, and thy thoughts at this moment, and this last thought of thine that all things will return."³² There is no order in the universe, other than this circular process in which all things repeat themselves. Notions of growth, of change in any *direction*, of purpose in the universe, are all illusions, the notions we call "scientific" as well as the notions we call "moral." Abandon, as we must, any system of theism, of belief in a creator, and we have only this endless and almost unbearable Becoming. A thousand Nietzsches have written a thousand appeals to create the Superman, and a thousand more

³¹ "Notes on the Eternal Recurrence," § 42, appended, in the English edition, to the volume containing *The Twilight of the Idols* and *The Antichrist*. These may be found in German in A. Baeumler's edition of Nietzsche's remains, *Die Unschuld des Werdens*, II, § 1296-1351. The quotation above is from § 1351.

³² "Notes on the Eternal Recurrence," § 22. In *Die Unschuld des Werdens*, II, § 1330.

will write again the same appeal, world without end and words without end. But no Nietzsche will ever have the slightest memory of another Nietzsche.

It would seem that belief in the Eternal Recurrence might tempt its adept to cease trying to change the universe. But this grand and complete determinism no more makes Nietzsche a determinist in the fleeting life of his consciousness than an almost equally grand determinism made Marx a practising determinist. On the contrary it spurs him to intense moral effort. We must live so that we may be worthy of living again. We must fight theism, fight beliefs that deny this life and this world. We must struggle to attain the pure heights on which alone so stark a doctrine as that of the Eternal Recurrence can be endured. We must put off softness and take on hardness. We must give up the little hopes, and cherish the great hope of hopelessness. We must be what has never been before — never, at least, during our little rondo in the Eternal Recurrence. We must become Supermen — once more.

CHAPTER VI

NIETZSCHE-IN-HIMSELF

THE critic of Nietzsche's work must not infrequently wish that he could imitate his subject's fine careless freedom, and cast his reflections in the form of loosely connected aphoristic passages — "Nietzsche on being noble," "The best 'Yea' is an explosive 'Nay,'" "How to exercise the Will to Power without sweating," "Will the Supermen use exclamation-marks?" It is dangerous, however, for the critic to desert the conventions of his craft to follow even so successful a rebel against these and other conventions as was Nietzsche. He had better try to bring the Master down to earth, though the Master himself was always in flight high above Lake Silvaplana, and seemed never to descend, not even to re-fuel. He did at least take off from this earth somewhere, sometime.

He took off from the soil of late nineteenth-century Germany. Nietzsche was so far from being out of tune with the spirit of his age, *unzeitgemäss*, that one is tempted to employ mechanically Nietzsche's own favorite intellectual device and declare that his work is most *zeitgemäss*, most representative of his age. He was irritated, indeed infuriated, by the way most of his fellow men behaved. But so were most intellectuals of his time. Nietzsche wrote well after the brief era of Victorian peace and contentment with the world had reached its peak; and besides, that feeling of contentment with the world had never captured the intellectuals. The bulk of surviving nineteenth-century

literature in any language is a literature of protest, and of protest against most of the things Nietzsche hated — middle-class morality, industrial civilization, materialism, ostentation and vulgarity in art, the leveling process in manners, morals, and politics. Nietzsche's originality was largely a matter of intemperate vocabulary. He swore at the herd instead of merely distrusting the common man. He not only wore his heart on his sleeve — he wore much less sentimental organs there. He is the nineteenth-century intellectual in a frenzy. If you like the frenzy, you may of course call it a transcendence.

Nietzsche's work fits neatly into the late nineteenth century in two very broad ways: in its emphasis on growth, development, change, and in its anti-intellectualism. In spite of his contempt for history and historians, he was himself a historian, or at least a philosopher of history. In spite of his hatred for Rousseau and the Rousseauists, he was in his distrust for the instrument of thought a direct descendant of the Genevan — and, no doubt, of old Adam himself. Nietzsche may indeed have achieved the transvaluation of all values; but some facts are more recalcitrant than others to the easy magic of the prefix "trans," and it seems to be a fact that on this earth a man has to have contemporaries; which means that a man is contemporary, that his thoughts are contemporary. Nietzsche was, if you like, unfashionable and unpopular in his day; but he was very greatly influenced by what was fashionable and popular in his day. And those influences worked far more subtly than is implied in Nietzsche's proud boast that he was everything his contemporaries were not.

We have already outlined briefly Nietzsche's philosophy of history, the curious and sketchy account of man's long rise from

mere animal to decadent European, about to transform himself into Superman.¹ This sketchy and very intellectual philosophy of history he himself has summed up in a most characteristic passage, elliptical, sardonic, cryptic, yet under analysis clear and almost Comtean in its simplicity. It is worth quoting at length:

THE HISTORY OF AN ERROR

1. The true world, attainable to the sage, the pious man and the man of virtue, — he lives in it, *he is it*.

(The most ancient form of the idea was relatively clever, simple, convincing. It was a paraphrase of the proposition "I, Plato, am the truth.")

2. The true world which is unattainable for the moment, is promised to the sage, to the pious man and to the man of virtue ("to the sinner who repents").

(Progress of the idea: it becomes more subtle, more insidious, more evasive, — *it becomes a woman*, it becomes Christian.)

3. The true world is unattainable, it cannot be proved, it cannot promise anything; but even as a thought, alone, it is a comfort, an obligation, a command.

(At bottom this is still the old sun; but seen through mist and skepticism: the idea has become sublime, pale, northern, Königsbergian.)

4. The true world — is it unattainable? At all events it is unattained. And as unattained it is also *unknown*. Consequently it no longer comforts, nor saves, nor constrains: what could something unknown constrain us to?

(The grey of dawn. Reason stretches itself and yawns for the first time. The cock-crow of positivism.)

5. The "true world" — an idea that no longer serves any purpose, that no longer constrains one to anything, — a useless idea that has become quite superfluous, consequently an exploded idea: let us abolish it!

(Bright daylight; breakfast; the return of common sense and of

¹ See above, pp. 131-141.

cheerfulness; Plato blushes for shame and all free-spirits kick up a shindy.)

6. We have suppressed the true world: what world survives? the apparent world perhaps? . . . Certainly not! *In abolishing the true world we have also abolished the world of appearance!*

(Noon; the moment of the shortest shadows; the end of the longest error; mankind's zenith; *Incipit Zarathustra*.²)

There is, apparently, a first stage omitted from this summary, a period when men lived without worrying about the "true world," lived in simple acceptance of the world of the senses, the world of willing — but of willing innocently undisturbed by the necessity of choice between good and evil. Once men got to worrying about good and evil, however, the priests could begin their sorry work. What is most noticeable in this account of men's overcoming the illusions of abstract thought — Comte's theological, metaphysical, and *positivistic* stages all successively overcome — is its highly intellectualist form. History seems to be for Nietzsche the working out of an idea, men's actions for him to be determined by their response to the "first principles" of abstract thinkers. This of course will never do, and Nietzsche himself in most of his work goes to great pains to escape from a position so annoyingly like a caricature of Hegel's.

He falls at other times into what looks like a caricature of Darwin's position. Life is a struggle among men exercising to the best of their abilities their Will to Power. In this struggle the weak and the botched are — or should be — beaten by the

² *The Twilight of the Idols*, "How the 'True World' ultimately became a Fable." Nietzsche, who loved to mock himself — a pleasant and easy exercise of the Will to Power — wrote that in spite of his attacks on history and historians, "In my own way, I am attempting a justification of history." *The Will to Power*, § 63.

strong and the competent. What we call morality and religion are but the instruments with which the strong subdue the weak, and make them minister to the process of evolution, a process in which higher and higher types of strength emerge from a conflict ever more tense. Or should emerge, for as we have already seen, there is a catch in the process. Something has gone wrong. Under Christianity, the weak have found a way to dodge the Will to Power, or to pervert it. They have hamstringed the strong with a religion of gentleness, love, pity, and general glorification of weakness.

Christianity is the *reverse* of the principle of *selection*. If the degenerate and the sick man ("the Christian") is to be of the same value as the healthy man ("the pagan"), or if he is even to be valued higher than the latter, as Pascal's view of health and sickness would have us value him, the natural course of evolution is thwarted and the *unnatural* becomes law. . . . In practice this general love of mankind is nothing more than deliberately favoring all the suffering, the botched and the degenerate; it is this love that has weakened the power, responsibility, and lofty duty of sacrificing men.³

There is an old, old philosophical difficulty unsolved here, the difficulty of explaining how the unnatural became natural. But Nietzsche is really a consistent anti-philosopher deep down underneath, however much he may play with the traditional methods and vocabulary of philosophers, and he is willing to let the insoluble stay unsolved. Sufficient for him that the notion of a struggle for life, so much in the air in his generation, is one that he finds satisfying and useful.

But he will be no conventional Darwinian. In Nietzsche's view the English scientist belonged, like all Englishmen, to the herd. His doctrine of evolution, as Herbert Spencer has un-

³ *The Will to Power*, § 246.

consciously shown, is no call to battle to prepare the earth for the Supermen, but a sedative belief that the process of evolution will take care of itself, that our environment is automatically turning out better men, that natural selection is still going on. (It is doubtful whether Nietzsche ever really read Darwin.) What Darwin, according to Nietzsche, failed to understand is that the Will to Power is no mere process to be analyzed by so-called "scientific method," but something that only poets and prophets can get at and stir up. Such a poet-prophet could, for instance, find the Will to Power even in the amoebae — not, of course, by objective observation and the other silly superstitions of science, but by intuition. "Among the amoebae propagation appears as a process of jetsam, as an advantage to them. It is an excretion of useless matter."⁴ Wherever the seer looks, he sees the Will to Power. He also sees himself, perhaps nothing but himself. But that is the prerogative of the god-like, even if jealous little scholars call it naive anthropomorphism.

Nietzsche thought he saw through Darwin as well as through the amoebae. Darwin depicted organisms as trying to *survive*, to adapt themselves to an environment, rather than as trying to *extend their power*, to mould their environment, because, like most inquirers into nature, Darwin was not an aristocrat. Such men "belong to the people, their forefathers have been poor and humble persons, who knew too well by immediate experience the difficulty of making a living." Small wonder that "over the whole of English Darwinism there hovers something of the suffocating air of over-crowded England, something of the odor of humble people in need and in straits."⁵

⁴ *The Will to Power*, § 653.

⁵ *The Joyful Wisdom*, V, § 349.

This, by the way, is typical of the kind of bright idea which makes interesting reading, the kind of thing one finds in essayists and critics of the livelier sort. It may even have some relation to facts. But there is no way of proving such a relation. On the other hand, its origin in Nietzsche's mind is clear enough. He was very anxious to show that he was an aristocrat, that he had always been able to *vivre noblement*. He could not, however, altogether resist the plebeian temptation to write.

Nietzsche, then, is a good child of his age. He has a philosophy of history which is also a doctrine of evolution. It is true that in this field his work is somewhat involved and contradictory, that his evolving organisms and his evolving societies really have no business evolving as they do. His positive doctrine, which is eminently philosophical rather than historical or biological, comes in the end to a kind of Lamarckianism, duly "transvalued" to accord with Nietzsche's sentiments. No species ever evolves, but only fit individuals within a given species (biologists, being herd-men, have naturally concentrated on the species).⁶ The fit individuals are not "selected" because of any accidental biological variation by which they are passively adapted to an environment, but because they possess something of their own, something *inside* them, something ultimate and real; not the "consciousness" or the "ego" of common philosophical talk, but something we might call "soul" if the Christians hadn't spoiled the word, something we shall call the "Will to Power." Inspired by the Will to Power, these happy individuals dominate, *increase* their domination by struggle, and since they are, almost by definition, lusty folk, they exercise the Will to Power in sexual relations, and beget

⁶ *The Will to Power*, § 679-683.

strong children who in turn dominate and expound their domination. This looks like a procession onward and upward in the best nineteenth-century style. But at just this point the Devil enters in the shape of Socrates-Paul-Pascal-Spinoza-Kant-Darwin, wickedly weakens the strong, and reverses the whole process — makes it, indeed, hardly more than a legend. The Jews, who are an intelligent as well as vicious race, seem to have understood matters very well; did they not invent the story of Samson and Delilah?

II

Nietzsche's anti-intellectualism makes him as much a child of his age as does his evolutionism, an eccentric and spoiled child, perhaps, but certainly no changeling of Time. Indeed, in Nietzsche as in his tamer contemporaries, both anti-intellectualism and evolutionism are manifestations of a "climate of opinion" hard to pin down with a single descriptive label. To use very old philosophical terms, we may say that the nineteenth century was very strongly inspired with a Heraclitan feeling that *all things flow*. At all times, no doubt, men are aware of experiencing sameness (or repetition or permanence) and also of experiencing difference (or change). Ordinary, unreflecting men are aware of *both*, and do not much bother themselves with the question as to which is *real*, or *more real*. Philosophers, of course, have readily discerned that one sort of experience is real, or more real, and the other unreal, or less real; but they have not agreed as to which is which. A historian may content himself with the statement that the manifestations of human feelings about permanence and change in observed phenomena vary in different times and places. Note

well that the manifestations of men's sentiments and opinions about change may also be observed phenomena. Plato's *opinion* on the matter, as recorded in the famous metaphor of the prisoners in the cave, for instance, is a phenomenon that can be observed. Plato, it need hardly be remarked, was all for the reality of permanence.

Now, although no mathematical formulation is possible, the historian can be pretty sure of a number of generalizations about this matter of permanence and change. The physical aspects of Paris, for instance, changed less rapidly in the thirteenth than in the nineteenth century. That is simple and certain. Parisians in the thirteenth century felt, or were of the opinion, that changes of this sort, and changes in laws, clothes, habits, were not very rapid; Parisians in the nineteenth century felt, or were of the opinion, that such changes were very rapid. This is almost as simple and certain as the fact of changes in buildings and streets, and you can verify it from the materials of recorded intellectual history. We need not bother ourselves about the question (which is insoluble) as to whether "physical" change *caused* "mental" change, or *vice versa*. We can, however, safely take another step, and state that in general thirteenth-century Parisians were less favorable towards, less desirous of, changes of a great many sorts than were Parisians of the nineteenth century. We may extend the scope of the generalization, and state that the climate of opinion in all Western Europe was less favorable to change in the thirteenth than in the nineteenth century. This is not of course to deal with absolutes and to say that nothing changed in the thirteenth century and that everything changed in the nineteenth century. It is a cautious and rather platitudinous generalization about a

series of relations among observed phenomena, which would need at least a volume to be given a semblance of what we may unphilosophically call reality.

The anti-intellectualism of the later nineteenth century is a part of its attitude towards change, an attitude extraordinarily receptive and eager towards all sorts of change. Perhaps in the sum total life for Western men changed more rapidly in the nineteenth century than it has ever before changed for men on this earth. Certainly in the series of phenomena we group together as the Industrial Revolution, change was more continuously obvious than it has ever been before, so obvious that the intellectuals took over from Renaissance Latin the neutral term "progress," and made it into an almost-popular religious belief in the desirability of change. But traditionally the European mind, working at the level of theological, philosophical, and even, in a sense, "scientific," thought, had tended to reach conclusions that seemed inconsistent with the facts of change, that seemed to make change undesirable, impossible, unreal. It is not by any means clear how far such thought, such "intellectualism," influenced the course of events. But as a process in the minds of certain men — and that is after all what Nietzsche all his life was analyzing — its implications are clear.

They are perhaps clearest of all in that manifestation of intellectualism Nietzsche attacked as "idealism."⁷ The idealist, in the opinion of such critics as Nietzsche, cannot accept the evidence of his senses as to the reality of change. He does not *want* change. He wants to escape the flow of all things, and take refuge in the absolute, the eternal, the unchanging. He can do this by a trick of his mind, by using what we call

⁷ See above, pp. 87-90.

the intellect to construct — after all, out of his experience, which must be an experience of change — a system of absolutes which he calls the “true world.” This “true world” is of course a false one; but since we critics are good relativists, we must recognize that it is only *relatively* false. That is, as a mental construct it affects the lives of those who made it and of those who live in it; it is a part of reality. Its “falseness,” its “badness,” means in simplest terms that we don’t like the way people who hold it, who live in it, behave. We don’t, for instance, like the way people behave under the influence of too much alcohol; we don’t like drunks. Similarly, we don’t like the way people behave under the influence of too much philosophical idealism; we don’t like Kantians.

We don’t like them because, having persuaded themselves that change is unreal, they try to prevent the kind of changes we want to bring about. They do not, of course, succeed in preventing change; indeed they commonly let themselves and us in for the most unforeseen and catastrophic changes. For the intellect, as these searchers after the absolute use it, is readily satisfied with over-simple formulae, which it erects into “laws” of all sorts, moral, political, scientific; it then seeks to make all human experience conform to these laws. But human experience cannot be so confined — this is a fact of experience — and when a prolonged and serious attempt is made to so confine it, it accumulates under pressure and finally blows off — a kind of experience we do *not* like.

When we relativists feel like exercising our noblest vocabulary — we have one — we accuse the absolutists of trying to dry up the well-springs of human life, of intolerance towards all who refuse to repeat their meaningless litanies, of a haughty

disregard for the fruitful difficulties in attempting the conquest of which the true scientist and the true artist are one; we accuse them of sterility, of verbalism, of seeking death-in-life, of hating adventurousness, novelty, growth; we accuse them of being intellectuals, even though we ourselves are by no means blacksmiths.

Nietzsche in his middle period was fond of this "we" — "we fearless ones," "we free spirits," "we good Europeans," though in his later years the "I" sounds out louder and louder, until the final crescendo of "Why I am a fatality." But throughout his career he is crying out against intellectual absolutism, wherever he finds it — and he finds it not only in the philosophical idealists, but in the historians and in the positivists. The nineteenth century had, he grants, recognized, though often reluctantly, the fact of growth. Even Hegel's was a philosophy which aspired to explain growth. That, in fact, was just the trouble. In his wilder moments, Nietzsche comes close to saying what some of his Nazi followers put in his mouth, that one must not try to *explain* anything, at least not with words — exclamation-marks are enough. But Nietzsche was often fairly sober, and as critic rather than as prophet, he tried to put into words feelings about the inadequacy of much of the thought of the eighteenth and earlier nineteenth centuries, feelings which were shared by many of his contemporaries.

Nietzsche's major point is that all thinking is an arrangement, an interpretation, of facts (receptor-experiences) which must be tentative, changing, relative. Thinking is not a form of magic by which the thinker somehow gets out of himself and thereby "discovers" static, objective truth. The thing-in-

itself of Kant, the past “as it really happened” (*wie es eigentlich gewesen*) of von Ranke, the eternal and immutable laws of the physical universe of the conventional Newtonian physicist, are all products of the *thinking* of Kant, von Ranke, and in the last case, of Newton filtered down into an ordinary mind. This is not to say that these products of thought are wholly “subjective.” Indeed, the very antithesis of subject and object is merely one of the simple tools of thought, apparently necessary in the past and perhaps still not useless in the present, but an imperfect tool we must try very hard to improve, and certainly no more than a tool — not a final truth, not a certainty. All knowledge, all theories, are but the attempts of human organisms to live; and living is inevitably also dying. We may perhaps live more fully if we give up the quest for the absolute, for certainty. “The question of values is more fundamental than the question of certainty.”⁸

We can, indeed, go further, and as relativists, give a relativist explanation of the search for the absolute. The categories of thought, even the transparent dodges of traditional philosophical thought, have been *useful* — they have helped men get what they wanted. Nietzsche put this neatly in one of the bare notes that were collected after his death and published in *The Will to Power*.

“End and means”
 “Cause and effect”
 “Subject and object”
 “Action and suffering”
 “Thing-in-itself and appearance”

As interpretations (*not* as established facts) — and in what respect were they perhaps necessary interpretations? (as “preservative measures”) — all in the sense of a Will to Power.⁹

⁸ *The Will to Power*, § 588.

⁹ *The Will to Power*, § 589.

We may say then, according to Nietzsche, that the attaining — in words — of the absolute has had a value, since men who say they have attained it seem to act in some respects differently from men who do not say they have attained it. We may justifiably criticize that value, the kind of life it tends to promote. Here we must be concerned rather with moral absolutes than with the kind of absolute the nineteenth-century physicist thought he had attained. Nietzsche sometimes comes near suggesting that conception of scientific laws as absolutes — a conception certainly held by men like Herbert Spencer, though equally certainly not used as a guide by effective practising experimental scientists of his time — is not a useful one for the purposes of scientific investigation. But he himself had no scientific training, and shared the contempt for science common among the aesthetic and the philosophic. He is much more concerned to note that as private citizens most scientists accepted the moral values of their time, and it is these values that he finds most important to attack.

If then we test with Nietzsche these moral “truths,” not by their coherence according to the logic with which they are spun out, but by the standard of life they set, we shall find that they represent “the struggle of sickly, desperate life, cleaving to a beyond, against healthier, more foolish, more false, richer and fresher life. Thus it is not ‘truth’ struggling with life, but *one* kind of life with another kind. — But the former would fain be the *higher* kind! — Here we must prove that some order of rank is necessary, — that the first problem is *the order of rank among kinds of life.*”¹⁰

Here, however, Nietzsche himself becomes an absolutist,

¹⁰ *The Will to Power*, § 592.

becomes Zarathustra. Having demolished as mere disguises for the Will to Power the best and happiest phrases of his predecessors—the thing-in-itself, scientific laws, objective reality, free will, utility, force, justice, God—he insists that the Will to Power is no such disguise. He has found the philosopher's stone, the neat ultimate to which all human experience can be reduced. He has been fooling us all along by pretending to evade the quest for certainty. As if a philosopher—a German philosopher—could be such a renegade! He has merely been feigning indifference, in order to catch certainty off its guard, and pounce upon it once and for all. Kant, it seems to the skeptic, attempted a similar *tour de force*. Having pursued with interminable skill certainty as pure reason (*reine Vernunft*) and proving that it could not be caught, he turned up with its pelt neatly stuffed in a beautiful job of taxidermy called practical reason (*praktische Vernunft*). And now Nietzsche with his Will to Power. Not only the Eternal Recurrence repeats itself!

If you are looking for the key to the universe, the Will to Power may be as good a one as has yet been made. If you must go to the roots of the matter, the Will to Power may be the deepest root. But perhaps there is no key? Perhaps there are no roots?

III

Nietzsche, then, is not only true to his age in his preoccupation with questions of growth, development, flow; he is true to his profession of philosopher in his attempt to find for them a final answer, to sum up in words experiences that are much more than words. The historian and skeptic—the two can

perhaps be combined in one person — may, however, refuse to follow Nietzsche in his final flight to the Will to Power and the Eternal Recurrence, and content himself with noting and commenting upon what Nietzsche fished up out of the flow of all things.

For Nietzsche's conviction that all things can be reduced to manifestations of the Will to Power by no means prevented his recognizing the variety and changefulness of human experience. In fact, the doctrines of the Will to Power and its curious companion and derivative, the Eternal Recurrence, merely served him as buttresses for his private hates and loves, as colossal extensions of his personality. In his more rapt moods, they helped him to live in a prophetic and — to his followers as well as himself — consoling world; in his more polemic moods, they helped him feel sure of the pettiness and undesirability of what he could make out of other people's worlds; and at all times they acted as a limitation on his ability to widen and deepen his experience — that is, they made him intolerant — but perhaps no more than is essential to make sense out of experience. At least a small amount of metaphysics is, like the presence of certain minerals in the human diet, perhaps necessary to human life. And Nietzsche's dose of metaphysics was not a very big one. The common opinion, which refuses to rank him with men like Kant and Hegel as *all* philosopher, but puts him partly in the field of literature, is well justified.

He belongs in the field of literature because, for one thing, he could write. This is a gift not always lacking in philosophers. Plato, James, Santayana, to take a few at random, possess it; Aristotle — to judge from what we have of him — Bentham, and Hegel do not. There are great obstacles in the way of a

German philosopher's writing well. In a sense, no language, living or dead, is an adequate instrument for the philosopher. Unlike the mathematician and the chemist, the philosopher cannot use a special language. Unless he limits himself to symbolic logic, he has to adapt to his purposes an instrument made for the coarser work of ordinary men. This adaptation usually takes the form of a technical jargon superimposed on the conventional vocabulary of the workaday language. The special difficulty of German as a philosopher's language — or so it seems to one who is neither a philosopher nor a German — is that in German the union of the technical jargon and the common tongue is deceptively easy to make. The resultant hybrid looks quite healthy and normal, and only with the lapse of time does it become clear that the hybrid is sterile.

Now Nietzsche often wrote like any other philosophical German. Much of the two volumes of *The Will to Power* are often written in a technical jargon worthy of Kant, and are full of passages that call for labored concentration on the part of the reader. But Nietzsche never meant these notes to be published as they stood, and they are not representative of him at his best. In his earlier work, written under Wagnerian influence, he writes like the earnest young German storming the heavens and sounding the deeps with the aid of a pair of nice words, "Dionysian" and "Apollinian." But with *Human, All Too Human* he learned to shorten his sentences, point them with irony, color them with unexpected images, season them with common words too undignified for the conventional philosopher. With his later works, like *The Twilight of the Idols*, he acquired the knack of making his sentences explode.

Sometimes, indeed, they explode rather hollowly, and even

at his very best Nietzsche's prose always strives a little too hard, protests a little too much. He never achieved ease, simplicity, inoffensive clarity. But of course he did not want to—he wanted to offend. Let others strive for the subtle phrasing that makes every whisper clear—the womanish Sainte Beuve, for instance. Nietzsche will shout like a man. We have already quoted him so much, and in such varied moods, that the reader will hardly need more examples of his writing. As far as the limitations of translation will allow, he can come to his own conclusions on Nietzsche as a writer. But one more specific illustration may be given, one that shows very well his strength and his weakness. He is writing of George Sand:

I have been reading the first "*Lettres d'un Voyageur*": like everything that springs from Rousseau's influence it is false, made-up, blown out, and exaggerated! I cannot endure this bright wallpaper style, any more than I can bear the vulgar striving after generous feelings. The worst feature about it is certainly the coquettish adoption of male attributes by this female, after the manner of ill-bred schoolboys. And how cold she must have been inwardly all the while, this insufferable artist! She wound herself up like a clock—and wrote. As cold as Hugo and Balzac, as cold as all Romanticists are as soon as they begin to write! And how self-complacently she must have lain there, this prolific ink-yielding cow. For she had something German in her (German in the bad sense), just as Rousseau, her master, had;—something which could only have been possible when French taste was declining!—and Renan adores her! . . .¹¹

Always the exclamation-mark, of course; perhaps this too is German in the bad sense—Pelion piled upon Ossa and a few Matterhorns—but, like Wagner's brasses, it wakes you up.

The things Nietzsche wrote about, and the way in which he wrote about them, make him a writer as well as a philosopher. He might, in this respect, be variously catalogued, but we shall

¹¹ *The Twilight of the Idols*, "Skirmishes in a War with the Age," § 6.

consider him briefly as a poet, a critic and — a title he himself very proudly assumed — a psychologist.

Nietzsche wrote a scattering of poems in verse form, which collected make a slender volume. They would not in themselves have made him a great figure in German literature. The most famous of them, "The Drunken Song," "Venice," and a few others, sound well to a foreign ear, and are held by most German critics to be technically admirable. Nietzsche could often make good moody music with words, if not with the medium of formal musical composition. In content his most successful poems are mournfully mysterious contemplations of night, eternity, the weary riddle of existence, poems thoroughly German and romantic. In a lighter vein, poems like the "Songs of Prince Free-as-a-bird" are a little too self-consciously Mediterranean, whistle a little too shrilly.

Also sprach Zarathustra, though written formally in prose, is Nietzsche's highest poetic flight. In this work he is attempting not so much to persuade, nor even to annoy, his audience, as to move it by the incantation of words well beyond logic and the dictionary. *Zarathustra* is a poet-prophet, a divine teacher, a most cultivated medicine-man, and his medium is a didactic, rhapsodic prose that chants along interminably. To many people, he is a great poet, a peer of the Hebrew prophets whose style he has, in the opinion of other people, imitated a little too deliberately. There is, at any rate, hardly any middle ground from which to judge the poetry of *Also sprach Zarathustra*. Either the book seems to you a masterpiece of insight into the highest human aspirations, a brilliant flight into regions forever shut to the pedestrian calculations and limited emotions of the unresponsive, or it seems to you the elevated

maunderings of a man struggling to express the inexpressible.

Nietzsche's gifts as a critic, both of literature and of music, require for their appreciation a less intimate initiation and discipleship than do his gifts as a poet. They are evident throughout all his work, scattered everywhere among the unsystematic reflections that are assembled to make the great majority of his books. He liked in others almost the opposite of what he himself produced in his "creative" flights into music, poetry, and world-shaking in general; that is, he liked clarity, simplicity, naturalness, restraint, incisive wit, mastery of form. To use once more a much-used pair of words, he was a "classic" critic and a "romantic" practitioner of the arts.

No doubt because he was himself so self-conscious and arrogant a romanticist — a romanticist to the point of squeezing the ultimate paradox out of his self-torture — he wrote penetratingly and harshly about European romanticism. In a single passage from *The Will to Power* — again, a mere note jotted down for future development and polishing — he packs into a few words a book of the late Irving Babbitt's.

False "accentuation": (1) In romanticism; this unremitting "*expressivo*" is not a sign of strength, but of a feeling of deficiency;

(2) Picturesque music, the so-called dramatic kind, is above all easier (as is also the brutal scandal-mongering and the juxtaposition of facts and traits in realistic novels);

(3) "Passion" as a matter of nerves and exhausted souls; likewise the delight in high mountains, deserts, storms, orgies, and disgusting details, — in bulkiness and massiveness (historians, for instance); as a matter of fact, there is actually a cult of exaggerated feelings (how is it that in stronger ages are desired just the opposite — a restraint of passion?);

(4) The preference for exciting materials (*Erotica* or *Socialistica* or *Pathologica*): all these things are the signs of the style of public that is

being catered for to-day — that is to say, for overworked, absentminded, or enfeebled people.

Such people must be tyrannised over in order to be affected.¹²

Or in a single sentence, “Romantic art is only an emergency exit from defective ‘reality.’” The substance of this remark can be found in many critical writings before Nietzsche; his own art and skill, his ability to add spice to a commonplace, lie revealed in the little word “emergency.”¹³ Or finally, an aphorism deceptively simple, “Both classically and romantically minded spirits — two species that always exist — cherish a vision of the future; but the former derive their vision from the strength of their time, the latter from its weaknesses.”¹⁴

Nietzsche is at his best in these brief and pungent remarks about his fellow-artists. He has, it is true, a grand, philosophical generalization he often uses as a measuring-rod in criticism, the famous distinction between “Dionysian” and “Apollinian.” He can sometimes pursue the distinction into wordy disquisitions rather remote from concrete works of art, as in the last part of *The Birth of Tragedy*, and in *The Will to Power*, where he returns to worry this, his first philosophic love. But as such distinctions go, his is by no means the most sterile effort that men have made to put into words a contrast as real as any in experience — the contrast between the cathedral of Chartres and the Parthenon, between Shakespeare and Sophocles, between Mozart and Wagner. If there is a possible “philosophy of art,” Nietzsche’s deserves a high rank. Here he can forget to preach, or perhaps better, preach in terms of an emotional

¹² *The Will to Power*, § 826.

¹³ *The Will to Power*, § 829.

¹⁴ *Human, All Too Human*, “The Wanderer and his Shadow,” § 217.

response to things immediately observed, known. Here he can use to the full his craftsman's skill with words, words that evoke for most of us earthly — even earthy — experience in a way that the Will to Power, down-going and over-going to the Superman, and the Eternal Recurrence, do not. When Nietzsche says that the music of Wagner sweats, we think, even if we are offended by having the thought suggested to us in this way, of Wagner's music; when Zarathustra says "All 'It was' is a fragment, a riddle, a fearful chance — until the creating Will saith thereto: 'But thus I would have it!'," we just "think"; unless, indeed, we are already drugged into a happy stupor well beyond, and possibly above, thought.¹⁵

These same craftsman's gifts — they are hard to describe, but they include ability to note accurately how men actually behave, what they do as well as what they say, and to make a synthesis, a coherent description of that behavior, which in turn can be verified in experience — these same gifts appear in Nietzsche's work as a psychologist, or as a *politique et moraliste*. Here again he is by no means content to do the job of the observer, the describer. He is perhaps more interested in getting men to behave as he feels they should behave than in learning how, and if possible why, they behave as they do. The latter job he sometimes described as the petty task of science. But he himself was in some ways too much of a scientist or a "realist" to go ahead planning for men — and Supermen — without paying any attention to the kind of men surrounding him. He had not much skill at mixing with these men, and for the purist in empirical research, he skimmed sadly the first steps in an inquiry, first-hand, intimate, habitual contact with

¹⁵ See above, p. 64 and *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, Part II, chap. xlii.

what is studied. But his shyness and aloofness were rather bars to his using men than to his understanding them. He was not, save in his last few years, an actual recluse. He had excellent opportunities to observe quite a variety of men, especially educated Germans, and his inability to mingle freely and pleasantly with them gave him some of the advantages of detachment — if, indeed, it was not in fact itself a kind of detachment. Witness, for instance, the basic accuracy with which he sized up the people who came to Bayreuth.¹⁶ He describes these Wagnerites in the acid terms of caricature, but it is caricature, and not fantasy. He can always see enough of himself in others to recognize their weaknesses.

Nietzsche's great work as a moralist is the study of the "intellectual" as a type; and here his own experience and his own temperament give him ample clinical materials. The great generalization which he characteristically produced out of his study — we have insisted that as a philosopher he was always aiming at the most comprehensive generalization — is his conclusion that the intellectual *par excellence*, priest in older times, reformer, politician, writer, professor, socialist, democrat, humanitarian in our own, uses the instrument of thought to build up out of his desires a neat picture of what he calls the "true world" (or the beautiful and the good, or right, or the classless society) and then attempts to persuade, or force, everybody to live as in his picture; that he is usually quite unconscious of going through this process; that in the process he commonly neglects facts that simply *are*, and that therefore when he and others try to live as in his picture, they stumble into all sorts of things they hadn't thought were there at all; and finally, that

¹⁶ See above, p. 114.

although in some senses this process seems a necessary part of human life, in the modern world it has been carried to a point where it threatens the existence of what we call civilization.

For men do try to live according to the picture the intellectual makes of the "true world"; or rather, they try to live according to the *pictures* the intellectuals make, for there are many of them, and they are not all the same. It is fortunately true that the overwhelming majority of the things people do, even in modern Europe, are not at all influenced by the work of the intellectuals. The routine of getting a living, of marrying and begetting, of loving and hating and *doing*, is still something older and deeper than our very nicest theories, is something for which we must use unsatisfactorily vague terms like instinctive, habitual, traditional; or in post-Nietzschean terms, these things are a matter of conditioned reflexes, persistent aggregates. But there remains a marginal area in human affairs, and a very important one, since it enters into the activities of men organized in social and political groups, in which the pictures made by the intellectuals seem to have an effect on men's actual conduct.

Here Nietzsche's thought bifurcates. At times he assumes a position which seems the logical result of his previous analysis, as it does that of most contemporary anti-intellectualist attacks on political reform, "planning," constitution-making and other conscious efforts to make blue-prints for conscious political "builders." This is the position of what must be called conservatism. Make no changes, especially no deliberate, logically worked-out changes. Distrust the theorist; trust the practical man, the man of affairs, above all the man who has roots, the peasant and the aristocrat, and the man who has a manual skill,

the artisan and the surgeon. Let nature take its course, even if it is a hard course. There is some power in the world, of which we only know that we cannot yet know it as we know when we think according to logic, but which makes for rightness if we only let it alone. There is a *vis medicatrix naturae*, which, especially in matters moral, economic, political, is a better physician for ailing humanity than Jefferson, or Mill, or Spencer, or — in Nietzsche's eyes the most harmful quack of them all — Saint Paul.¹⁷

Nietzsche does not long occupy a position so sensible and unheroic as this. Having decided that all other physicians to humanity were quacks, he cannot leave humanity without a physician. Having shown the inadequacies of all other pictures of the "true world," he makes one of his own. It is not a very clear picture, but as we shall see, it is well enough drawn for the Nazis to put it to uses the Master would most probably have found very objectionable. It is a picture of a world surely as unreal as ever a German philosopher spun out of his inner consciousness, a world in which, by a final exercise of the will to neglect facts, men become Supermen. It is a grand world of the paradox made flesh, in which the immoral is moral, the weak strong and the strong weak, and the Fact lies down with the Ideal, each having devoured the other.

¹⁷ Nietzsche takes something like this position time and time again throughout his work, especially in praise of "tradition" and in condemnation of "theory." It appears very early: "All states are badly managed when other men than politicians busy themselves with politics, and they deserve to be ruined by these political amateurs." *Thoughts Out of Season*, "Schopenhauer as Educator," chap. vii. An admirable passage on the authority of tradition — "which is obeyed, not because it commands what is useful to us, but merely because it commands" — is in *The Dawn of Day*, § 9. See also the collected fragments, vol. XI of the *Werke* (*Grossoctavausgabe*), 36.

It is not, however, fair to Nietzsche to conclude on such a note as this. His work is packed with admirable observations on how men behave here and now, before they give way to the Supermen. They are one-sided, unsympathetic observations, not by any means to be recommended as a complete course in the study of human nature. But they bring to light perhaps more clearly than anywhere else in our literature, some of the basic illusions men live by. Had Nietzsche never produced anything but *The Genealogy of Morals*, and especially the admirable chapter on "Ascetic Ideals," he would still have to be ranked high among writers who have helped us know ourselves.

IV

Nietzsche's work is a great armory, by no means filled entirely with weapons of precision; there are some fowling-pieces of great age, and even a few sling-shots, as well as some very accurate modern pieces. On the whole, his light guns are more effective than his heavy artillery, though the latter makes a very loud noise. To drop the metaphor: Nietzsche's work contains a great variety of ideas, sometimes mutually contradictory, difficult if not impossible to reduce to a "system," made still more bewilderingly varied by the aphoristic form in which they are cast. This variety is the reflection of a many-sided temperament. Nietzsche had an excellent mind, well if rather bookishly trained, great aesthetic sensibility, a natural gift for writing, strong emotions which he could focus in the *saeva indignatio* we often call moral purpose, an untrained body, an unstable nervous system, a total personality never successfully conditioned to *living together* with anyone — not in the fam-

ily, not in the occupational or social group, not in church or state. He had, finally, a devouring ambition to be admired, a thirst for disciples, a will to shine which, as the Will to Power, he built up into a characteristic philosophical ultimate, and which, syphilis aiding, ended in paranoia.

Among the stresses and strains which compose the unending conflicts that made Nietzsche, and perhaps made him great, there is one which will serve well to sum up the man and his work. This is the conflict between the observer and the reformer, between the artist and the prophet, between Nietzsche and Zarathustra. It is a conflict discernible, no doubt, in less heroic proportions, in the lives of all men. It is a conflict most of us hardly feel, and which we resolve comfortably in the routine of living. It is not, by the way, an ultimate. We are using the dualistic terms in which we describe the conflict as mere conveniences in putting Nietzsche and his work within common experience.

The observer has his eye — and all his other organs of sense — first of all on the immense body of receptor-experiences we call facts. He does not merely passively record or report these facts, but tries to arrange them as uniformities put in relation to a conceptual scheme in such a way that they can be “verified” — that is, experienced again as receptor-experiences by himself and others, but this time in an *order*. The observer’s test for whether his order is “true” is a relational and instrumental one. Its relation with facts must be continuous; if it ties a falling barometer and rain together in the formula, a falling barometer is followed by rain, rain must *always* follow a falling barometer or the order (“theory”) is not altogether true, and *must be modified*, at least to some extent. Its instrumental character is

a more complicated matter, but is always, for the type of person we call the observer, subordinated to its relation with facts.

The reformer, on the other hand, subordinates the relational character of the order he constructs out of experience to its instrumental character. The extreme type of reformer may even refuse to bother himself about the relational character of his "order," his "theories." If he has decided that a falling barometer *ought* to be followed by rain, he will do something about it — almost anything, in fact, but observe the conditions under which rain actually falls. He will construct complicated and lovely barometers, and try to make everybody use them; he will pass a law requiring falling barometers to be followed by rain; he will define rain to include fair weather; he will refuse to admit that it is raining, unless the barometer has fallen, or that the barometer has fallen, unless it is raining.

We have, of course, caricatured the reformer. But any full treatment of the distinction we have attempted to make between the observer and the reformer would run into a volume. The important thing here is to note that though all conscious thinking is an ordering of experience, some kinds of thinking are directed by the thinker rather towards sorting experience into recognizable uniformities which are repetitive, verifiable, predictable, and which seem to the thinker to possess these qualities whether he wants them to or not; and that some kinds of thinking are directed by the thinker towards sorting experience into an order which is a modification of experience into something "better," something which he feels can be *made* true for himself and others, something which he rather proudly holds comes from himself (through God, perhaps) or from "things" independent of himself. We have, perhaps, done no

more than put rather confusingly the well-worn distinction between "objective" and "subjective" which has exhausted generations of philosophers, but seems itself inexhaustible.

It is a useful distinction, even though no one ever put his finger — or his mind — on either a subject or an object. Concretely, we can recognize that a biologist attempting to find order in human heredity is likely to think "objectively" and that a preacher of eugenics attempting to get human beings to breed as he wants them to breed is likely to think "subjectively." The two kinds of thinkers are constantly borrowing one from the other, are indeed frequently the same person. But as types they certainly exist, and not only in the stark contrast between the scientist and the preacher. Literature is as much a matter of good observing as is science, and some very great writers, like Shakespeare, have been much more interested in what is than in what it ought to be. Even philosophers have their gradations; Aristotle was a better observer than was Plato. Nietzsche was a better observer than Zarathustra.

The contrast we have set up between Nietzsche the observer and Nietzsche the reformer is by no means an imaginary one. It was real enough so that it must have contributed to his mental suffering, to have given him a kind of split personality. There are people so immersed in understanding and coping with their experience of what is, that they do not bother themselves much with what ought to be; and there are people so immersed in satisfying themselves about what ought to be that they are not much disturbed by what is. There are people who can live happily in this world, and others who can live happily in any number of other worlds. Nietzsche could do neither. He was too acute an observer, too sensitive an artist, to spin

out theories without regard for facts; and he was too bitten with reforming zeal, too impatient, too exalted, perhaps at bottom too insanely or divinely convinced that he alone was the measure of all things, to accept the humbling limitations imposed by regard for facts. And so he made his unhappy down-going and over-going to that strangest of "true worlds," the world of the Supermen, beyond good and evil, beyond you and me, beyond himself.

But not beyond an Italian socialist hack, not beyond an Austrian corporal. One of the strange, and to some of us, discouraging things about the activities of reformers is the unpredictable effects their labors so often have in practice. The noblest dreams of the prophet turn into nightmares when they come true. Nietzsche called for the Supermen. Mussolini and Hitler answered the call. It does not much matter that in all probability Nietzsche would have scorned them as perverters of his doctrine, would have opposed them bitterly. It does not even matter that had Nietzsche never written these men would in all probability have come to power much as they did. They have found a use for Nietzsche, a use he probably never intended his words to provide. That is a risk all men run who build with words, but it is a risk peculiarly great for those who out of their discontents build with grand words a refuge from this poor world, a noble castle in the philosophic air. Such castles are often roomy and comfortable, but very hard to keep clean.

CHAPTER VII

THE GROWTH OF A REPUTATION

BIOGRAPHERS of Nietzsche, including even Charles Andler, who took six volumes to tell his story, stop most inconveniently with the death of their hero in 1900, or indeed with his entrance into an asylum for the insane in 1889. Yet — and this is hardly a metaphor, and certainly not a paradox — Nietzsche's life only began with his insanity and death. The depressing notion that the really great thinkers are ignored or reviled by their own generation, and appreciated only by the next generation, seems not true generally in the history of thought. But for Nietzsche it is true in all its simplicity. The contrast between the obscurity of his name during his lifetime and the continuing greatness of his reputation since his death is at least as striking as with a very different, and even more obscure, contemporary, Gregor Mendel. Nietzsche is still talked about and written about. Diminishing returns have not yet set in — at least, not to the point of lessening the production of books about him. Heinrich Mann could write in 1939:

One thinker and writer has lived on for fifty years since the conclusion of his work, and nearly forty since his death. As if constantly present, he has occupied the attention of a world less and less interested in the past. One cannot be considered present merely because one's works are still read and historically assimilated. The number of a man's adherents and imitators proves nothing for his work or its fruitfulness. What

is the test? The work of a man who has passed on grows and changes; he is still finishing it from beyond. It has long since moved from the point where we once found it, when we were young and Nietzsche was alive.¹

This passage would no doubt have pleased Nietzsche immensely, so much indeed that he would probably have forborne to point out that much of it is nonsense. For Nietzsche, as we have seen, burned to be read, to have disciples, to make a stir in the world. Before he went mad only a mere handful had read him, only the inept Peter Gast still looked like a disciple, and he had clearly made no stir at all in the world. Two of his boyhood friends, Rohde and Deussen, nice, straightforward German *Herren Professoren* without any of his gifts of thought or style, were actually much better known in German intellectual circles than the author of Zarathustra. Once, long ago, he had been one of the bright young men around the Master of Masters, and such little fame as he had went back to the book in which he had announced Wagner Dionysos as the savior of German culture. Certainly none of Nietzsche's subsequent books were successes. Wagner himself is said to have remarked of the failure of *Human, All Too Human*, "Now you see Nietzsche is read only when he defends our cause; otherwise, no."² Wagner, recently dead, was in apotheosis in the late eighties, and the Wagnerites were conquering the earth. But Friedrich Nietzsche was still as obscure as if there had never been a Tribschen. His books, which were to do better things than Jesus, Buddha, or Mohammed had done, had to be

¹ H. Mann, "Presenting Nietzsche," *The Living Thoughts of Nietzsche* (1939), 1.

² Daniel Halévy, *The Life of Friedrich Nietzsche*, 209.

brought out at the expense of the author. Publication at the author's own expense usually marks the author as a dilettante or an unread scholar, as an unimportant man, perhaps even as a crank, a crackpot, a failure; and Nietzsche knew, with insane certainty, that he was not an unimportant man, not a crank, not a failure.

There were, in the last few years of Nietzsche's active life, some signs of coming fame. Georg Brandes, the Danish critic whose European reputation was already established, probably deserves the distinction of having discovered Nietzsche.³ It is true that Nietzsche himself helped the discovery by having his publisher send copies of *Beyond Good and Evil* to various distinguished literary persons. This by no means uncommon practice is rarely, one suspects, very fruitful. But Nietzsche had the satisfaction of receiving intelligent letters of appreciation from Taine and Brandes, and through Brandes, from Strindberg. Brandes actually lectured on Nietzsche's ideas at Copenhagen, and the two kept up a lively correspondence until Nietzsche went mad. Nietzsche had, then, the pleasure of hearing the first faint rumblings of the great noise his name was to make in the world. But by the time Brandes got around to printing, in 1889, a long article on "Nietzsche: An Essay on Aristocratic Radicalism," his subject was no longer able to understand what fame meant.

There is indeed no danger that the Nietzscheans will let us forget the way the world neglected the Master. We must not exaggerate. Even during his lifetime Nietzsche was not absolutely unheard. The conspicuous critics left him alone, but

³ At any rate, Brandes later claimed the distinction for himself. G. Brandes, *Friedrich Nietzsche*. Translated from the Danish by A. C. Chater (n.d.), 59.

every now and then a magazine brought up his name, and in 1880 a writer in the popular weekly *Die Gegenwart* gave five whole columns to this "modern 'free spirit' . . . , whose name is not unknown to our literature."⁴ His little circle of friends, and the larger number he no longer considered his friends, served to spread his reputation. Brandes's article on Nietzsche the aristocratic radical was translated into German and published in April 1890 in the *Deutsche Rundschau*, equivalent in America to the accolade of the *Atlantic* or *Harper's*. By the beginning of the 1890's little trickles from various sources had begun to unite into a stream. Nietzsche's reputation grew with amazing speed after 1890, but it by no means sprang up over night.

The periodicals took him up first, and made his name quite suddenly the fashion among the kind of people who need to talk fashionably — so much so that when ten years later the distinguished philosopher Hans Vaihinger wrote a book about Nietzsche, he had to defend himself against the charge of writing about "a merely fashionable writer" (*ein blosser Modeschriftsteller*).⁵ *Die Gegenwart* published articles on Nietzsche in 1889 and in 1891, the second by a well-known writer of Swedish origin, Ola Hansson. Lou Salomé could scarcely let a chance like this slip by. It began to look as though Nietzsche had been a great man after all. She published in the Sunday Supplement of the *Vossische Zeitung* during January 1891 some articles on Nietzsche which were shortly after-

⁴H. Herrig, "Ein moderner Freigeist," *Die Gegenwart* (August 7, 1880), XVIII, 85. For other examples see M. Wirth, "Die Zukunft der Reminiscenz: Variationen über Themen von Friedrich Nietzsche," *Die Kunstwart* (1888), II, 52; *Das musikalische Wochenblatt* (1887), XVIII, 441.

⁵H. Vaihinger, *Nietzsche als Philosoph* (1902), 13.

wards expanded into a book. It was by no means a bad book, rather pretentious philosophically, but sensible about Nietzsche as a person. Nietzsche's Wagner heresies were attracting more and more attention in the musical press. They were still heresies — his remarks about Bizet's superiority over Wagner were of course beneath disdain — but they made good copy. The *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums* published in 1892 what is probably the first essay on Nietzsche and the Jewish question. The quality magazines were now working the new vein very hard. The *Deutsche Rundschau, Nord und Süd*, the *Preussische Jahrbücher, Westermanns Monatshefte* assigned to him long articles by well-known writers. One of these was Eduard von Hartmann, a now almost forgotten professor of philosophy, who had synthesized one of the most extraordinary brews ever made, in which Hegel, Schopenhauer, and the inductive method so successful in the natural sciences were mixed — Hartmann's word was "reconciled." Hartmann was already going out of fashion, and Nietzsche was coming into fashion, but as Hartmann was not altogether aware of this, he treats Nietzsche soberly and without bitterness — Nietzsche's "system" he found, of course, inadequate, and not even new.⁶

In 1892 and 1893, the original German volumes of Max

⁶ J. Mähly, "Friedrich Nietzsche," *Die Gegenwart* (Sept. 7, 1889), XXXVI, 148; O. Hansson, "Friedrich Nietzsche und der Naturalismus," *Die Gegenwart* (May 2, 1891), XXXIX, 275; G. Adler, "Friedrich Nietzsche der Social-Philosoph der Aristokratie," *Nord und Süd* (March, 1891), LVI, 225; T. Achelis, "Friedrich Nietzsche," *Westermanns Monatshefte* (April, 1894), LXXVI, 99; E. von Hartmann, "Nietzsches neue Moral," *Preussische Jahrbücher* (May, 1891), XLVII, 505. This is by no means an exhaustive list. See H. Albert, "Friedrich Nietzsche," *Mercure de France* (Jan. 1893), VII, 47, notes 2 and 3 for a good bibliography of the "discoverers" of Nietzsche in Germany.

Nordau's *Degeneration* appeared, and spread rapidly in translation through all the important languages. Nordau's huge public learned that Nietzsche, though undoubtedly a literary genius, had been insane all his life, that his books were written during acute spasms of dementia, that he was a characteristically modern degenerate. Nordau seems to have known nothing of Nietzsche beyond some of his more notorious books, and the contemporary periodical literature we have just described. *Degeneration* at least further stimulated interest in Nietzsche. It seems to have made Elizabeth all the more determined to publish at once what she considered the real truth about her brother, her sound, steady, normal brother, whose health had been destroyed by bad eyesight, hard work, and malevolent enemies. The first of her piously untrustworthy biographies of her brother appeared in 1895.

Nietzsche had become one of the spiritual heroes of the 1890's, a decade which professed to distrust both spirit and heroes. In 1897, Ferdinand Tönnies began a pamphlet on "The Cult of Nietzsche" with the words:

A philosophical writer who is read by many is already a remarkable thing. But suppose this writer should be read with *enthusiasm*, that readers should call themselves disciples, that his thoughts should be received as an emancipation and a revelation, that these people should feel that in the thinker they had found a leader (*Fuehrer*)? ⁷

The kind of people whose pushing adulation of Wagner had so sickened Nietzsche at Beyreuth were now worshipping Nietzsche himself. And the object of their worship, secluded once more under Elizabeth's loving care, was dragging out his life quite unconscious of this sudden glory. It is a situation

⁷ F. Tönnies, *Der Nietzsche-Kultus* (1897), 1.

that tempts to rhetoric; and the Nietzscheans have been quite willing to improve the situation. How the Master, had he known what was going on, would have scorned this unwelcome tribute from the herd! How his irony would have whipped back these fawning fools! Perhaps. But success has achieved some remarkable transvaluation of values on its own account. The gods, we may believe, find pleasing the incense that reaches their nostrils above the sweat of their worshippers. It is possible that Nietzsche would have enjoyed his success.

From Germany Nietzsche's reputation quickly spread to France, a country whose intellectuals have ever since Madame de Staël been much more closely in touch with German thought than is commonly realized — though recent pronouncements from Vichy should drive the fact home to all. Here, too, as in Germany the periodical press led the way, and in the early 1890's called attention to the remarkable writer who could make the ponderous German language flash into aphorisms worthy of a La Rochefoucauld. Barely behind the French were the English, whose magazines and reviews began to take up Nietzsche by the middle of the decade.⁸ With the interest of writers in French and English stirred, Nietzsche's European reputation was made. Translation into the major modern languages soon followed.

At his death in 1900, Nietzsche's reputation had conquered

⁸ For instance: T. de Wyzewa, "Friedrich Nietzsche, le dernier métaphysicien," *Revue bleue* (7 Nov. 1891), XLVIII, 586; J. de Nethy, "Nietzsche-Zarathustra," *Revue blanche* (Apr. 1892), II, 206. G. B. S.[haw], "Nietzsche in English," *Saturday Review* (11 Apr. 1896), LXXXI, 373. The decisive article in English — it is still worth reading — appeared as "The Ideals of Anarchy — Friedrich Nietzsche" in the *Quarterly Review* (Oct. 1896), CLXXXIV, 299.

almost all the elaborate channels of publicity in the modern world. His works were appearing in new editions; books were being written about his life and his ideas; a steady stream of articles and reviews was flowing through the periodical press; and he was about to achieve the final consecration, about to be the subject of a doctoral dissertation.⁹ His name was heard from pulpits and from lecture-platforms. Editorial writers were finding him an admirable subject for indignation. He had arrived. A French critic wrote of him in 1893:

No matter what critical review one thumbs, one finds Nietzsche's name in the table of contents. His work, commented on even in its minor details, exalted to the skies by some, attacked energetically by others, has provoked a whole literature of pamphlets, booklets, articles. Every day the army of his disciples and imitators increases. . . . The anthologies are adorned with his sayings, the poets make use of his magnificent aphorisms as epigraphs for their verses.¹⁰

II

We are today hesitant about referring to the "influence" of a writer, partly no doubt because of the influence of Nietzsche himself. Ideas are no longer for us the wonder-workers they were for our grandfathers. We distrust studies in the affiliation or genealogy of ideas. Some of our more innocent anti-intellectuals apparently hold that all generalizations—except perhaps those of Marx when properly interpreted—are increasingly useless disguises for our simpler lusts. Yet in those impor-

⁹ One of the first of these was W. Jesinghaus, *Der innere Zusammenhang der Gedanken vom Uebermensch bei Nietzsche*. Inaugural Dissertation at the University of Bonn (1901). There have been dozens and dozens of them since and on some very remarkable phases of Nietzsche's life and influence. My own favorite is F. Sprengel, *Nietzsche und das Ding-an-sich* (1933).

¹⁰ H. Albert, "Friedrich Nietzsche," *Mercure de France* (Jan. 1893), VII, 47-48.

tant moments of carelessness which reveal the habits of routine, uninspired, and useful thinking, the most conscientious anti-intellectual is likely to let drop the phrase "influence of the ideas of" so-and-so. Nietzsche's influence on the world, in the sense of mere stir in the world, has been considerable, and very varied. Without attempting yet to come to grips with the problem of what relation — if any — that stir has had on events, on the actions of men, we may try to see first what kind of men the discoverers of Nietzsche were, what they found in him in this first decade of his fame.

The intellectuals of the 1890's were not as wicked as they aspired to be. What strikes one looking back on them from the 1940's is the energy, liveliness, indeed the optimism, with which they sought disillusion. They could defy most enjoyably the philistine conventions of middle-class society. The middle class was still there, apparently solidly established and well worth defying. Anarchism was one of the very best of attitudes for defying the middle class. On the whole, it seemed to give more substantial nourishment to the pride of the defiant artist, writer, and thinker than socialism — though of course, the two together made a nice combination. Nietzsche's ideas seemed to most of those who read him in the 1890's a new and attractive variant of anarchism, an aristocratic, radical, aesthetic anarchism, unsullied by the vulgar conspiratorial atmosphere and silly humanitarian aims of traditional anarchism. Nietzsche appears first, therefore, in the history of opinion as the complete anti-philistine, the emancipated poet of dionysian joy, the master of those who live.

He appears, of course, in no such simple terms. Brandes called him the "aristocratic radical," a phrase which gave

Nietzsche himself much pleasure. To an early English reviewer, he was the "anarchist par excellence." To Mr. Shaw, one of his first English admirers, he was the "champion of privilege, of power, of inequality." To von Hartmann he was the philosopher of "radical egotism," whose Superman was really a modernized version of Plato's philosopher-king, become philosopher-tyrant. To Franz Mehring, already well-known as a Social-Democrat historian, he was "the philosopher of finance-capitalism (*Philosoph des Grosskapitals*)." To Dilthey he had fished up the notion of the Superman from Greek and Renaissance history, and turned it into a characteristically modern form of irrational individualism. To the youthful André Gide he was the immoralist, the man who had cut through conventions in morals as the earlier scientists had cut through the superstitions of astrology and alchemy.¹¹

Not to all his critics were words like "anarchism," "individualism," "egotism," words of praise. Nietzsche shocked and infuriated many people who could not be disarmed by his literary gifts. An early critic named Türck is as violent as any opponent of Nietzsche has ever been. Nietzsche according to Türck is a degenerate madman, an apologist for all sorts of crimes, a perverse scorner of that divinest of human gifts, the mind, an exalter of blind, animal striving, in short, a man who has made the "human beast" a systematic ideal.¹² British war

¹¹ *Quarterly Review* (1896), CLXXXIV, 318; G.B.S. in *Saturday Review* (1896), LXXI, 374; E. von Hartmann, *Preussischer Jahrbücher* (1891), LXVII, 520; F. Mehring, "Nietzsche," *Neue Zeit*, 30. Jan. 1897; W. Dilthey, *Gesammelte Werke* (1898), IV, 528; G. Bianquis, *Nietzsche en France* (1929), 62.

¹² H. Türck, *Nietzsches philosophische Irrwege*, Neue Ausgabe (1894), 63-69.

propaganda during the War of 1914-1918 was not more single-minded and vehement in condemnation of Nietzsche. All over the world, when Nietzsche first is known, he appears as delightfully or horribly shocking, as a disturbing thinker, a rebel not to be dismissed as a mere crank. Almost from the first, he interested all sorts of men, and made all sorts of disciples. One disciple has not infrequently found in the Master the exact contrary — in logic and even in commonsense — of what another disciple has found. This, however, is almost a habit among disciples.

III

To some of the reasons for Nietzsche's charm over his readers we shall return. The amazing variety of things his readers and disciples have said they have found in him is explicable partly by the variety of people his charm has attracted. It is also explicable partly by the fact that his published writings actually do contain varied and in some senses contradictory materials.

In the first place, Nietzsche seems to have changed direction after he left Wagner. Some of his more unyielding worshippers insist that, though he may have developed, he never changed, that all his writings, of youth as well as of maturity, form one splendid unity.¹³ Some such remark has certainly been made of all thinkers, and about all of them it may have a degree of truth. But to many an observer, the Nietzsche of *The Birth of Tragedy* seemed a different man from the aphoristic Nietzsche of *The Dawn of Day*, and the "philosopher with a hammer" of *The Twilight of the Idols* seemed still another man — if, indeed,

¹³ This is now the fashionable view among the Nazis. See R. Oehler, *Nietzsche und die deutsche Zukunft* (1935).

he were a man at all. In other words, Nietzsche's works can be divided into "periods" perhaps a bit more easily than most men's. It is then possible to say that the "real" Nietzsche was the Nietzsche of a certain period, and that the rest of his work is not truly Nietzschean.

Moreover, Nietzsche wrote almost entirely in brief aphoristic passages, composed in moments of high excitement, noted down and strung together into a book. Here, too, critics have had no trouble finding all sorts of underlying unity. But it is a fact that Nietzsche was not tied down by any formal structure in his books, that he had no brief to follow, no special audience to adapt himself to. He had, it must be admitted, a love for neatness and bite in phrasing, a love which he sometimes indulged at the expense of accuracy in reflecting his actual judgments. The works are a mass of reflections, a kind of running note-book, a written Table-Talk, in which anyone can find contradictions.

Finally, any body of written work, at least outside the natural sciences and exact scholarship, lives on at the mercy of fashion. What Nietzsche had to say was necessarily inexact, for he dealt with matters about which men's feelings and habits have always been more trustworthy expressions than their words — though they cannot, if they are men like Nietzsche, give up the desperate task of fitting them to words. Nietzsche's work survives as the subject of great disputes, partly because he failed to say exactly what he meant; and no one who has tried to say the kind of thing Nietzsche tried to say has succeeded much better. We are still disputing about some of the things said by Jesus of Nazareth. And so we ought not to be surprised that men differ on what Nietzsche wrote, differ in some senses al-

most totally. A contemporary Nietzschean writes, perhaps a little too indignantly:

An old game of the human imagination has begun. The past is called into the present, and there begins that ceremony of consultation, of seeking for authority, the end of which is already pretty clear, since the consultant and the consulted are substantially one. For this reason almost all current writing on Nietzsche has interest only as a part of our contemporary history, and one may say of it what Lichtenberg said of other books, "Such works are mirrors; when a monkey gapes into one, no apostle can look back out."¹⁴

All sorts of men have looked into Nietzsche's works, and seen themselves. Any attempt to classify them will be unworthy of their variety. It may be well, therefore, to adopt a frankly dualistic device, a neat conceptual polarity. There are two sorts of Nietzscheans, the gentle and the tough. There are no doubt many in between the extremes, who might almost be called medium Nietzscheans. Though the Master himself was most immoderate, one might without too much violence to good sense find some followers who could be called "moderate" Nietzscheans. But the simple polar distinction between gentle Nietzscheans and tough ones is a useful one, which is about all one may expect of a distinction.

The gentle Nietzscheans regard the Master, in a nowadays cant phrase, as a man of good will. For them, Nietzsche's work is in a central great tradition of ethics marked by Socrates, Jesus, Buddha, Luther, and other children of God. Nietzsche, they hold, wanted men to be good; and by good he meant what the great heroes of religion and morals have always meant by good, good in a somewhat stoic sense. Because men were not

¹⁴ A. Kesser, "Elemente zur Beurteilung Nietzsches," *Neue Schweizer Rundschau* (1937), IV, 535.

good in the nineteenth-century Western world, he lost his temper with them, and broke into prophetic violence. But at heart he wanted them to be peaceful, happy, just, pure, honest, kindly, humane. The gentle Nietzscheans have had to do a lot of explaining. They have taken in stride paradoxes that would have given their Master pause. One of their favorites, phrased in a dozen ways, runs something like this: Nietzsche was a most Christian anti-Christian; he hated the sham Christianity of his age as only a true follower of Jesus could hate it.

The tough Nietzscheans have had rather easier going, at least with their logic. For them the Master was an aristocrat of the heart and the head, a man filled with a great contempt for the pig-men about him, a tortured, sensitive, subtle soul in rebellion against the middle-class stupidities of the nineteenth century. When, according to them, he damned Christianity for its slave-morality, its compassion for the weak, its distrust of the flesh, he meant that he regarded Christianity as a bad thing. They add the gloss that Nietzsche did not object to Christianity as a solace for the masses, who could never be more than masses, but that he hated it for corrupting the minority capable of bright strength and cruelty, for preventing aristocrats from behaving like aristocrats. Their Nietzsche was the dionysian rebel, the unashamed pagan, the joyous fighter, the flashing thinker, the superb ironist, whose wit danced merrily through the bewildered herd, and now and then knocked down some loud bawling beast.

IV

Elizabeth's biography of her brother, together with many magazine articles pointing out Nietzsche's great literary virtues,

no doubt helped to lay the foundations on which the gentle Nietzscheans have built. Yet it was his adoption as a philosopher by German academic philosophers that first gave him the respectability without which the gentle Nietzscheans might have labored in vain. Why these academic philosophers should have accepted him as a philosopher is hard to make out. He did, it is true, frequently refer to himself as a philosopher; but German writers all call themselves philosophers, somewhere, before they get through. He left an unpublished set of aphorisms labelled *The Will to Power*, which he often referred to as his systematic *opus maius*, but which looks and sounds exactly like the rest of his unsystematic works, save that it is much duller. The best of Nietzsche's work is in fact more like that of Montaigne, Pascal, La Rochefoucauld than like that of Kant or Hegel. But the Frenchmen were also philosophers? Perhaps, but you will not find much attention paid them in formal manuals of philosophy.¹⁵

The best of German philosophical writing on Nietzsche has been of a high order. Books like those of Alois Riehl, Hans Vaihinger, Raoul Richter, Richard Meyer have, in a good sense, brought him down to earth, have made him an understandable figure.¹⁶ These writers must, on the whole, be classed as gentle Nietzscheans. Even when, as with Vaihinger, they limit themselves to expounding systematically what Nietzsche wrote in a rush of words, they tend to tame him a bit, to subdue him to

¹⁵ In one of the best — and briefest — critical studies of Nietzsche, Vaihinger insists that Nietzsche is properly designated a philosopher. But he also makes the point I have made above, that Montaigne and his company are properly philosophers. H. Vaihinger, *Nietzsche als Philosoph*, 15. Here there is no use disputing about words.

¹⁶ A. Riehl, *Friedrich Nietzsche, der Künstler und der Denker* (1897); H. Vaihinger, *Nietzsche als Philosoph* (1902); R. Richter, *Friedrich Nietzsche sein Leben und sein Werk* (1903); R. W. Meyer, *Nietzsche* (1913).

the kind of professional sobriety he himself could never attain — or put up with. They classify in terms of individualism, collectivism, evolution, epistemology, metaphysics, culture-history, what Nietzsche had poured out in more concrete, or at least more poetic, terms. Some of them carry this process to distortion. Richter, for instance, classified Nietzsche as an evolutionist essentially in the Darwinian tradition; his “Will to Power” becomes a form of the struggle for life as his century understood that phrase. The Eternal Recurrence, and most of Nietzsche’s metaphysics, can hardly be fitted into such an interpretation.

These gentlemen are not inclined to approve Nietzsche’s wildest flights and proposals. But on the whole they feel that in some valuable way he renewed German philosophy, that he restated fundamental problems fundamentally. They do not however, like the extremists among the gentle Nietzscheans, attempt to make him a Christian in spite of himself. They soften, but they do not bowdlerize him. To their ranks may well be added a Frenchman, Henri Lichtenberger, whose little book on Nietzsche came out in France in 1898. Lichtenberger knew Germany and its intellectual life so thoroughly that he fell quite naturally into the professorial interpretation of Nietzsche.

France is the country which has nursed the gentlest Nietzscheans, and perhaps also the greatest variety of Nietzscheans of all sorts. It is probably impossible to give a satisfactory explanation of the great interest Frenchmen have shown in the writings of Nietzsche.¹⁷ Perhaps they were overcome with admiration at finding a German who wrote like a Frenchman.

¹⁷ The facts are admirably assembled in G. Bianquis, *Nietzsche en France* (1929). The bibliography, pp. 119–126 is especially useful.

Many of them were doubtless attracted to Nietzsche by his violent and well-phrased hatred for Bismarck's new Reich. Others were impressed with his profundity, his prophetic wisdom, his dionysian contempt for stupid geometric "reason" — in short, with the whole apparatus of Zarathustra, which impresses a Frenchman the more because it is utterly incredible in French. Still others were touched by the sorrows of Nietzsche's life; here was a martyr to ideas, to the life of the spirit, a thinker bloody but unbowed. This again has long been a subject which can bring out to the full the great French capacity for sentimentality.

In this latter vein is one of the most popular short lives of Nietzsche, by Daniel Halévy, published in French in 1909 and shortly thereafter translated into English. This life throbs throughout with pity. Nietzsche is the great compassionate one, the tender idealist, embittered by exposure to the vulgarities and crudities of the expanding Germany of his day, driven to mockery by his intelligence and his wounded sensibilities, driven possibly to certain exaggerations. But at heart Nietzsche is for Halévy a witness to the eternal strength of the human spirit, a witness against Bismarck, against Moltke, and the great German industrialists, against Wagner and the vicious pan-Germanists, against the anti-Semites, against the materialist successes of the day. Nietzsche follows in the footsteps of Luther. But Luther was in a worldly way successful. Nietzsche's greatness lies partly in his worldly failure.

The late Charles Andler, however, made something even more extraordinary — and unrecognizable — out of Nietzsche. He made him a Socialist. Whether Nietzsche himself, in the flesh, would have been angrier at being called a Socialist than

at being called a Christian is a nice question. Since the Socialists were committed to even more love for the common man than the Christians of his day, one suspects that he felt a stronger contempt for Socialists than for Christians, and this in general is borne out by his writings. Yet Andler could write "one may legitimately call the system of Nietzsche a socialism." The Master wanted "a European working-class which would be a class of masters."¹⁸ Before Andler worked himself up to this point, he had written four volumes on Nietzsche, in which he had gradually built up a picture much like that of Halévy's. Andler's great work is an invaluable source of information about Nietzsche and his circle. But the man who finally emerges from this huge accumulation of facts looks very little like the Nietzsche most other men have seen. Nietzsche *radical-socialiste* — Nietzsche in the *cartel des gauches* and the *république des professeurs*? Surely the Master never meant his famous phrase, "the transvaluation of all values" to be taken quite so fantastically?

Not all Frenchmen have been as innocent about Nietzsche as Halévy and Andler. André Gide, one of his earliest French discoverers, seems at first glance to be almost a tough Nietzschean. Joy, not sadness, inspires the man, writes Gide; it is a mistake to think of him as a destroyer. Yet Gide soon comes to his own curious formula: Nietzsche is a Jansenist. "Nietzscheanism is at once a manifestation of abundant life . . . and a tendency which, according to the times, has been called

¹⁸ C. Andler, *Nietzsche, sa vie et sa pensée*, V, 321. Andler was not the first to call Nietzsche a Socialist. E. Gystrow, in the *Sozialistische Monatsheft* for October 1900 wrote ecstatically, "He was one of us!" See F. Mess, *Nietzsche der Gesetzgeber* (1930), 183-184.

'Jansenism,' or 'Protestantism,' and which will now be called Nietzscheanism, because Nietzsche dared formulate to the very extreme that which was still latently murmuring in it."¹⁹

One of the most thorough jobs of softening Nietzsche's doctrines was done by an American, the late W. M. Salter, whose *Nietzsche the Thinker* appeared in 1917. Salter is no Andler; he does not try to make Nietzsche out a lover of his fellow-men, nor even a primitive Christian. At no one point does he seem to do much more than quote or paraphrase Nietzsche. Yet the net impression one gets from Salter's book is of a Nietzsche no longer very excited or exciting. All the impatience, all the drum-beating, all the mystic exaltation have disappeared, and we are left with a wise old gentleman thoughtfully pursuing ἀρετή and *virtù* for the good of generations to come.²⁰ Salter feels constantly obliged to defend the personal qualities of his hero — his sanity, modesty, honesty, attractiveness, general all-around balance of character. Nietzsche has to be a sage, and sages have to be mellow, like Goethe or Emerson. But nothing can be more certain than that Nietzsche's personal qualities were most unendearing, that during the decade in which he wrote his great books he was as unpleasant a person as any clinical record of literature can show. Nietzsche's greatness may have come from his more than Promethean suffering; but it is a tortured, frenetic, shrilly intellectual cry that comes from his suffering, a cry one does not hear in Salter's conscientious book.

The English Nietzscheans formed in the earlier years of the century a devoted band, now rather broken up by time and two

¹⁹ Gide, *Oeuvres complètes*, III, 237, "Lettres à Angèle."

²⁰ W. M. Salter, *Nietzsche the Thinker*, especially p. 375.

wars against Nietzsche's fatherland. Some of them were, at least in appearance, tough Nietzscheans. As a band, however, they tended to support, and spread abroad among literate Englishmen, the conception of Nietzsche as at bottom a profound evolutionist, a moralist who really wanted what Herbert Spencer wanted, peace and plenty, but saw that nineteenth-century Englishmen weren't getting it very fast. They were a somewhat disparate and not very popular group, who centered their work around the eighteen-volume translation of the Master into English, edited by Oscar Levy. J. M. Kennedy, who translated some of the volumes, was perhaps their leading pundit. He published during the War of 1914-1918 a short volume on Nietzsche, ironically sub-titled "The Mind that caused the Great War," and aiming to prove that Nietzsche had in no sense influenced the Germans to make war. That evil thing Treitschke had done, not Nietzsche. The good Master, urging force, wrote "with an ideal Europe in mind."²¹ Kennedy indeed, as did most of the English Nietzscheans, took the Master's anti-democratic ideas very seriously. Some of Kennedy's schemes for keeping the lower classes lower sound almost tough. But so do some of Plato's schemes for achieving the same end, and no one ever called Plato tough.

The philosophical and the aesthetic strains are the ones most heard among the gentle Nietzscheans of any country. Brandes, d'Annunzio, André Gide, Havelock Ellis, otherwise a strange gathering, are all gentle Nietzscheans who found the Master first of all a Poet.²² Poets, in spite of the authority of Shelley,

²¹ J. M. Kennedy, *Nietzsche* (1914), 9.

²² Ellis's essay on Nietzsche was published in *Affirmations* (1898) and remains an admirable specimen of the aesthetic touch applied to the Master.

are not commonly legislators. Few of the gentle Nietzscheans have specific programs of reform for a world they feel needs a spiritual rebirth deeper than any program. Now and then there are exceptions. Andler and his followers in France have tried to tie Nietzsche into a popular front. Some of the German Nietzscheans hoped to translate the Master's ideas into action in ways not strictly conforming to Nazi achievements. Such, for instance, is Dr. Mess, who saw Nietzsche as a kind of potential German Lycurgus, a law-giver who might inspire a code for a stratified society, a society of Supermen, but not of storm troopers and Labor Fronts.²³

The tradition of Nietzsche as a man of good will, once established, has continued in spite of the tough Nietzscheans, and in spite of the identification various interested persons, from propagandists to philosophers, have tried to make between the ideas of Nietzsche and the practises of modern German governments. It has been largely instrumental in making Nietzsche a great and respected figure in the world of culture, a figure about whom a small library has already been written. It has, especially in the last twenty years, given rise to many admirable studies, some of which are actually more interested in understanding Nietzsche than in defending him. At long last, Nietzsche's contributions to our knowledge of how human beings behave have been pointed out and evaluated. Nietzsche's place in the history of thought has been studied without undue emphasis on the uniqueness of that place.²⁴ There are signs

²³ *Nietzsche der Gesetzgeber* (1930). The book is almost, but not quite, good Nazi doctrine. It is a wonderful example of the Teutonic gift for spinning endless and exact details—in the air.

²⁴ For instance, M. Scheler, *Über Ressentiment und moralisches Werturteil* (1912); K. Joel, *Nietzsche und die Romantik* (1923).

that the gentle Nietzscheans as a sect are dying out. But they are far from extinct. The increasing use of Nietzsche's name by the German National Socialists in defense of the way of life of the Third Reich, the attempt to make of him a kind of John the Baptist for the Savior Hitler, has infuriated the gentle Nietzscheans, and made them vocal again. One of them writes:

The herald of "The Higher Man," of the "roaming blond beast," this aberration from the main line of his productivity, is played up [by the Nazis] against the "good European," which he remained his whole life long. . . . He, who appreciated the chivalrous greatness of the English spirit just as he did the deep leaning to psychology of the Russians, he the enthusiastic worshipper of Stendhal, the admirer of Sterne, Heine, Voltaire, is above every suspicion of having glorified Power in the sense of nationalistic racial arrogance. What final tragic fate it is, that this martyr of thought, whose life has been an eternal battle against the traditional and the outworn in his own heart, this actual martyr to truthfulness, should be held aloft as their approving prophet by the untruthful of today.²⁵

And a French Nietzschean of the gentlest sort, a follower of the Left in politics, devotes a whole book to defending the Master against the wicked calumniators who maintain that Hitler actually learned from Nietzsche. He begins by remarking that great spirits are always hounded by the pack: for Socrates the hemlock, for Christ the cross, for others silence, calumny. Nietzsche has undergone all three forms of persecution. But like Socrates and Christ . . . The rest is unfortunately not silence.²⁶

²⁵ P. Gutmann, "Nietzsche, The 'Good European,'" *Queen's Quarterly* (Spring, 1938), XLV, 21.

²⁶ M. P. Nicolas, *De Nietzsche à Hitler* (1936), 9. English translation published as *From Nietzsche Down to Hitler* (1937).

V

The tough Nietzscheans were at first recruited from literary and artistic circles, and their toughness was entirely a matter of words. Early admirers like Brandes were perpetual adolescents in rebellion, on the hunt for new Byrons like themselves. And here was Nietzsche, by far the best prospective Byron in a generation, the best since Heine! Here was a Byron incredibly mixed with a Buddha. The old line of romantic heroes was dying out, and some new touch was needed to renew the popularity of the wicked, defiant rebel, the picturesque egotist, the scorner of convention, the eternal Artist crucified in a world of Business Men. Nietzsche gave the nineties a new variation on the old theme. Gabriele d'Annunzio took him up: Nietzsche had reached his lowest point.

George Bernard Shaw still looks like a tough Nietzschean, one of the better ones. He seems to have discovered Nietzsche around 1894, when he had already made a place for himself in dramatic and musical criticism. Most of his habits of mind had already been formed, and it is highly unlikely that Nietzsche changed Shaw in any important sense. Moreover, as an ardent Wagnerite, Shaw could not accept one whole side of Nietzsche's work. Shaw had no gift or stomach for German metaphysics, and was annoyed by Nietzsche's elaborate distinctions between Dionysian and Apollinian, and the rest of the German professor's apparatus which Nietzsche never wholly discarded. Whether Shaw learned anything of the art of self-advertising from the author of the chapters on "Why I am so clever" and "Why I write such good books" in *Ecce Homo* is perhaps debatable. Certainly "Man and Superman" owes to Nietzsche

more than the last word of the title. Shaw on women, Shaw on middle-class morality, Shaw on Christianity, Shaw on noble words sounds so much like Nietzsche on these subjects that we are confronted, if not with a case of influence, at least with a most touching meeting of noble minds. Shaw was, however, wiser than some of the French Nietzscheans. The rather volatile set of beliefs he called his socialism he kept fairly well out of the way of Nietzsche.

Some, if not most of the inner circle of English Nietzscheans — a circle rather too confining for Shaw — may be classified as tough in the literary sense. As a lot they look rather seedy, rather on the unpicturesque side of the lunatic fringe. One of the best-known of them is Anthony Ludovici, who in younger days made a specialty of knowing about women. Ludovici agreed with Nietzsche that women are dangerous and unscrupulous sentimentalists in politics and such high matters, but sensible and realistic technicians in their proper sphere of family life. That England should actually propose to give women the vote was to him a final sign of English decadence. His social and political ideas are more closely patterned after Nietzsche's loudest affirmations on such matters than is usual outside Nazi circles; he was against democracy, industrialism, socialism, pacifism, feminism, and in general all the fashionable pre-occupations of English intellectuals of Edwardian times. Like his Master he was for the rule of the true aristocrats — not the Cecils or the Howards, of course, nor even the Asquiths and the Morleys, but the Ludovicis. He went over, consistently enough, to the Nazis, and wrote in 1937 that Hitler was working to restore the true "biological" values of mankind, to bring

back on earth that pre-Socratic lustiness and innocence the Master praised as Dionysian.²⁷

Nietzsche crossed the Atlantic with almost as much ease as he had crossed the Channel. The first decade of the new century saw his name familiar to most of our literary scouts. If in W. M. Salter we produced an admirably tender Nietzschean, in H. L. Mencken we produced a much more amusing specimen of the tough Nietzschean. Mr. Mencken's first book was a study of Nietzsche, published in 1908, when he was still far from the temporary deanship of American letters to which he was called in the 1920's. The prose style of the book is subdued, though now and then one gets a glimpse of the coming Father of the American language. Mr. Mencken refused to follow Nietzsche into the Eternal Recurrence, and he had his doubts about some of Zarathustra's finer moments. But he delighted, in 1908, in Nietzsche's advice to go to women with a whip, and he shared to the full Nietzsche's soul-satisfying dislike for the English, for pious improvers of all sorts, for dull Christian folk, for the as yet unnamed Babbitts of the world. The book is still one of the best and liveliest accounts of Nietzsche's ideas taken literally, cheerfully, and with a fine disregard for the bowing and scraping to Philosophy and Depth so common in German writing on Nietzsche.

Another American Nietzschean, the late Willard Huntington Wright, deserves mention, for he illustrates Nietzsche's peculiar appeal to the balked intellectual. Wright, who was associated with Messrs. Mencken and Nathan on the old *Smart Set*, hankered after the good literary life impossible in vulgar America.

²⁷ A. Ludovici, "Hitler and Nietzsche," *English Review* (January and February 1937), XLIV, 44-52; 192-202.

He flourished, but only at the price of becoming S. S. Van Dine, and creating the best-seller detective Philo Vance. Wright had early found consolation in Nietzsche, and before he turned to pot-boiling he published in 1915 *What Nietzsche Taught*, a conscientious summary of the Master, but one so dull, sober and humorless that it seems almost to be the work of a gentle Nietzschean.

Tough Nietzscheans in the literary tradition are hard to find in Germany. The Germans are an earnest people, and the literary life is to them more than a consolation or an amusement. German books explaining Nietzsche have unfortunately, since 1889, ceased to be written by Nietzsche himself; the followers have not the literary gifts of the Master. Theirs are occasionally good books, but never light books, and they are very frequently written to prove that Nietzsche's philosophical system is a happy anticipation of the author's, or that Nietzsche can be wrapped up in a few choice and moving German abstractions as an "eleusischer Mystagoge, als grosse Erzieher durch Geheimnisse zum Geheimnis."²⁸

It is true that beneath all the verbiage that learned Germans have consecrated to Nietzsche in the last forty or fifty years a reader sufficiently patient and imaginative can distinguish a kind of ground-swell of sentiment, a ground-swell stronger and stronger as the triumph of the Nazis approaches. This is the identification of Nietzsche with something basically German, something better than narrow French logic or stupid British empiricism, something grand and nameless, not so much irra-

²⁸ "an Eleusinian Mystagogue, as a great educator through mysteries to the Mystery." E. Bertram, *Nietzsche* (1919), 354-355. There is lots more like this, and better.

tional as supra-rational. It is a claim not new in German intellectual history, but it has rarely been made more exorbitantly or more loosely than by such commentators on Nietzsche as Ludwig Klages, for whom Nietzsche was the great pioneer in transferring the current of living thought from dead logic to the living unconscious.²⁹ From a reasonably gentle aesthetic Nietzscheanism to a tough if rather ecstatic Nietzscheanism, the course in Germany is clear. Vaihinger, Riehl, and Richter gave place to Klages and Bertram. The really tough Nietzscheans are not far off. They are no longer nice professors.

The tough Nietzscheans in contemporary Germany are generally the people who try to use Nietzsche's ideas in actual life, the politicians, the journalists, the educators of the triumphant revolutionary party that came to power in 1933. The need and therefore the test of actually applying in concrete cases their fine notions have never confronted the lively Nietzscheans of other countries. Mr. Ludovici in power is simply not conceivable. Mr. Shaw in power, at the height of his maturity, is just barely within the bounds of human imagination. One suspects that his actions would have been those of an Anglo-Irish gentleman, not those of a tough Nietzschean. As for Mr. Mencken, he is not in any sense a political figure. But were he magically given power, one suspects that he would have left the "booboisie" unpurged. In other words, even with the liveliest of our tough Nietzscheans outside Germany, ideas flow on in a more than academic irresponsibility. Not so in contemporary Germany. There important people profess to be guided in action by

* See S. Aberdam, "Nietzsche et le 3^me Reich," *Mercure de France* (15 April, 1937), CCLXXV, 232. Aberdam adds, "The influence of Klages on the mystagogs of Nazism is difficult to exaggerate."

Nietzsche, not the martyred Nietzsche of Halévy and Andler, but the triumphant Nietzsche of Zarathustra, "glowing and strong, like a morning sun coming out of gloomy mountains." These are Nietzscheans such as we have not yet seen; they are worth a separate chapter.

CHAPTER VIII

NIETZSCHE AND THE NAZIS

THE earliest disciples and lovers of Nietzsche were, as we have seen, all intellectuals who drew a pure intellectual joy from their Master's work. There was a joy in knowing you were a master-man among the slave-men of the herd. But the knowledge was enough. You didn't go about spitting in the faces of the herd, or beating their flanks, or trying to stampede them. As a matter of fact, you kept as far away from them as possible, savoring your superiority. Even when, fairly shortly, there arose the division between gentle Nietzscheans and tough Nietzscheans, the Master was still regarded by both sorts of followers as essentially a poet, a consolation and inspiration for the few, a philosopher in the great and happily useless tradition of philosophy.

It is true that from the very first some critics of Nietzsche paid him the clear compliment — or is it a dubious one? — of assuming he meant what he said. These critics were in the early days almost all bitterly opposed to Nietzsche, may, indeed, well be labelled anti-Nietzschean. They did not like what they understood him to mean. When he wrote in praise of immoralism, when he praised cruelty, lying, treachery, they understood him to mean that he thought it good for some men to be cruel, dishonest, tricky. When he wrote rejoicingly about the "blonde beast," they thought he was actually exulting about the bloodshed and rapine achieved by flesh-and-blood German soldiers.

When he wrote that war is good, they took him to mean by war real fighting in which men get killed and maimed, and by good that he approved of it. When he wrote of herd-men and slaves they held he must have meant men like themselves, if not men like you and me. That his followers should deny this the anti-Nietzscheans considered annoying, but not surprising. Indeed, one anti-Nietzschean who wrote as early as 1899 felt that the Nietzscheans were applying to the work of their Master an exegetical skill and impertinence worthy of the Bible itself.¹

The outbreak of the Four Years' War in 1914 gave the anti-Nietzscheans something concrete to point to as a product of Nietzsche's wicked doctrines. Yet there is little to indicate that these doctrines in their original sources were ever taken up by the small group that made policy under William II. No doubt numbers of young Germans had read their Nietzsche, and may have got partly from him a resolve to be hard, realistic, aggressive, not the metaphysical, sentimental, music-loving beer-drinkers of tradition. Yet no organized group, either of intellectuals or of politicians, had as yet taken up Nietzsche, save only the hopelessly impractical and faithful workers of the *Nietzsche-Archiv*. Any influence Nietzsche may have had in producing what seems, in comparison with Hitler, the modest little aggression of William II, is imponderable if not doubtful. For once, we may perhaps grant that the Nietzscheans, both gentle and tough, were right in their indignant replies to the accusation that Nietzsche brought on the war in 1914.

The accusation was made in many forms and in many differ-

¹O. Henne am Rhyn, *Anti-Zarathustra* (1899), IX. Henne am Rhyn was especially grieved by a gentle Nietzschean who had asserted that Nietzsche preached "Freedom and the Dignity of Woman."

ent organs, from *The Times* to popular broadsheets. The English were most vocal, with the French much less certain that Nietzsche was worth blaming when there were plenty of live Germans to attack. In the first few months of the war, Nietzsche, Treitschke, and von Bernhardi were linked together in British propaganda as mainly responsible for working the Germans, leaders and led alike, up to an immoral lust for conquest never yet seen on this earth. Dr. Oscar Levy, who had edited the English edition of Nietzsche, then just completed in eighteen volumes, reports that he found one morning on his doorstep a copy of "The Scotsman" containing a leader attacking Nietzsche as a ruthless preacher of violence, on which someone had indignantly written in ink "You have brought this poison to England." He adds that in one Piccadilly bookshop window a bookseller had spread out all eighteen volumes with a large sign "The Euro-Nietzschean War. Read the Devil in order to fight him better."² Even *Punch* took up the cudgels, and announced that "One touch of Nietzsche makes the whole world sin." Dr. Levy seems to have taken this pun seriously; but the inner circle of the English Nietzscheans always were a beleaguered lot, well fortified against puns.

The little band around Dr. Levy stood by their principles — or illusions — and insisted that Nietzsche loathed the German Empire and would have loathed *Schrecklichkeit*. Havelock Ellis also, putting out a second edition of his *Affirmations* early in 1915, stated the position of the gentle Nietzscheans as clearly and as innocently as it has ever been stated.

²O. Levy, "Nietzsche im Krieg," *Die weissen Blätter* (1919), VI, 277-278. This article contains a good list of those who attacked and those who defended Nietzsche in relation to "war-guilt."

The idea of Power and the idea of War both entered into the work — the later work, it is important to remember — of Nietzsche. But in his hands they became spiritualized and transformed. Power was no longer the force of success in this world, and War was no longer a method of overcoming mere human enemies, but both alike belonged to the sphere of the evolving soul. . . . My study of Nietzsche is not a study of the Nietzsche of the moment but of the essential and significant Nietzsche.³

It is remarkable that Ellis refrained from adding the “eternal Nietzsche.” He probably thought it unnecessary. Even in war-guilty Germany, the followers of Nietzsche refused to believe him in any way responsible for the war. Professor Messer of Giessen used almost the same words as Ellis.

The chapter ‘Of War and Warriors’ [in *Zarathustra*] is to be taken throughout as based on a *spiritual* sense of War — He who will take the trouble to sound the depths of Nietzsche’s ideal of the Superman, will find there something quite other than mere worship of the ‘physically strong man.’⁴

This line of defense has been continued to the present day, whenever the acts of a German government seemed to illustrate simple exercise of the Will to Power. When Nietzsche praised war, the argument runs, he meant a nice spiritual War, not a bloody one. Another line of apology has been the old assertion that Nietzsche was a poet, that his work has solely an aesthetic significance. Still another argument rests fundamentally on the assertion that Nietzsche was in no sense a German nationalist, that he was a good European who would have condemned the march into Belgium. This position can be backed by citing Nietzsche’s biting criticisms of everything and everybody suc-

³ Ellis, *Affirmations*, Preface to the second edition, xii.

⁴ A. Messer, “Nietzsche und der Militarismus,” *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 15 Oct. 1914.

cessful in late nineteenth-century Germany. Some of what was successful in 1890 was still successful in Germany in 1914, so Nietzsche can readily be quoted in condemnation. He wrote much against Germany and the Germans, against nationalism, against anti-semitism, against intellectuals. In a positive sense it is harder to find anything in Nietzsche to gainsay those who insist that he preaches violence and aggression. He wrote very little in favor of the milder virtues. The gentle Nietzscheans delight, however, to point out that personally he was in no sense frightful, that he lived simply, indeed ascetically, that he looks, in short, more and more like a saint as we gaze on him more steadily — and from a greater distance. They delight in such stories as the one about how, during the first onset of madness in Turin, he saw a poor old nag maltreated by its driver, rushed out in the street, and, weeping, threw his arms around the poor creature's neck.⁵ Surely, the gentle Nietzscheans say, a man who could behave this way was at heart a kindly soul, and no militarist.

Freud had not yet become fashionable save in very forward-looking circles in 1914, and the study of semantics was still in the stage of infancy. About all the anti-Nietzscheans could do in rebuttal to the above arguments was to reiterate that they thought the actions of the Kaiser illustrated the Will to Power, and that the Germans who were doing such unspeakable things in Belgium were examples of the "wrath of the blond Teuton beast." As the war went on, Nietzsche, Treitschke, and von Bernhardi tended to fade out of the picture a bit, to be replaced by more immediate matters. They were revived again in their full horror in the middle of the war, when it became necessary to key the Americans up to the fight.

⁵ Podach, *Nietzsches Zusammenbruch*, 82.

Nietzsche's role in the Four Years' War is, however, for various reasons less interesting and less enlightening for us today than his role in the contemporary German revolution. The Nazi revolution was produced partly by the activities of a relatively small group, the National Socialist Party and its leaders, whose professions of faith are much easier to determine than the vaguer hopes that spread through all classes of Germans in the years before 1914. Nietzsche's thought was revolutionary in many senses of that inexact word, and its currency can best be tested in a revolutionary period. The year 1933 saw a real revolution in Germany, a revolution in which men definitely appealed to the words of Nietzsche, among others, for justification. The year 1914 did not see a revolution in Germany. Neither, as we can now see, did 1918. At most the Four Years' War and the Weimar Constitution began a long disturbance in German life, the end of which we cannot yet predict. Nietzsche was in 1914 brought into court by British propagandists anxious to paint the Germans as black as possible; he was not in Germany itself appreciably more conspicuous than he had been before.⁶ Since the rise of Hitler, however, the philosopher has been talked of and written about as one of the Early Fathers of National Socialism. The problem of Nietzsche's relations to the Four Years' War is then but an introduction to that of his role in Germany today, a sample of the difficulties among which we must now try to thread our way. At the very least, the facts of Nietzsche's vogue in Nazi Germany are much clearer than the facts of his vogue in the Germany of 1914.

* The current war has seen in allied countries and in America a mild revival of the old argument that Nietzsche is to blame for everything evil in German actions. Witness, for example, the following headlines: "Hitler War Urge Blamed on Insane Philosopher: Nietzsche Nazi Chief's Favorite Author, Catholic Women Told," *Boston Evening Transcript*, April 24, 1940.

II

National Socialism, like almost all successful revolutionary movements, has in it elements which are also found in religious bodies. One of these is the possession of holy writings. The National Socialist canon is not yet completed, has not yet indeed reached even the rough state of fixity attained by wholly established religions. This is perhaps no more than to say that National Socialism is still a growing and active faith. *Mein Kampf* is already the central piece of the Nazi canon; but Hitler's gospel needs some reinforcing. It needs antecedents, and if possible antecedents that will give it a philosophical respectability it does not in itself seem — especially to the unconverted — to have. Gobineau, H. S. Chamberlain, Treitschke, Spengler, Alfred Rosenberg have all made their contributions to the articles of faith. Nietzsche, too, has been drafted into service. There can be no doubt that there is being made by important people in contemporary Germany a conscious effort to enlist Nietzsche as one of the pillars of the Nazi society.

The books and articles published on Nietzsche in Nazi Germany are in themselves quite adequate evidence that such an effort is being made. It should be clear from what has already been said in this study about the vogue of Nietzsche since the mid-nineties that there is nothing new in the mere fact that articles and books on the Master keep appearing. But hitherto, especially in Germany, such writing has been mainly addressed to scholars, philosophers, lovers of the beautiful; and even when it has been directed at popularizing the Master, it has been the work of gentle Nietzscheans. What is striking in the Nietzsche literature of the last dozen years in Germany is the emergence

of short popular books expressly intended to make Nietzsche clear to ordinary literate Germans, and to show just how his ideas fit into the Nazi *völkische Weltanschauung*.⁷

Fair samples of such books are Alfred Baeumler's *Nietzsche der Philosoph und Politiker* (Nietzsche the Philosopher and Political Thinker), published in 1931 in *Reclams Universal-Bibliothek*, which is a sort of German equivalent of our Home University Library; Hans Prinzhorn's *Nietzsche und das XX Jahrhundert* (Nietzsche and the Twentieth Century), which in 1928 already anticipates official Nazi interpretations of Nietzsche's work; Dr. Gottlieb Scheuffler's *Friedrich Nietzsche im Dritten Reich* (Friedrich Nietzsche in the Third Reich), published late in 1933, in celebration of the linking of the spiritual children of Nietzsche, the two great natural aristocrats, Hitler and Mussolini; Richard Oehler's *Friedrich Nietzsche und die deutsche Zukunft* (Friedrich Nietzsche and the German Future), published in 1935; and the handbook which Heinrich Haertle brought out in 1937 under the title of *Nietzsche und der Nationalsozialismus* (Nietzsche and National Socialism). This last went into a second edition in 1939. Nietzsche's name appears frequently in current German periodicals, and by no means solely in philosophical and other learned journals. Here again it is clear that the writers are working to impress Nietzsche into the service of the new Nazi society.⁸

⁷ A good Nazi writer says this specifically: "And now it has come about that the hitherto purely learned interest in the philosopher Nietzsche has been broadened into love and reverence towards the man." F. Erdmann, in the *Ostdeutsche Monatshefte* (1936), XVIII, 515. Erdmann is reviewing the first volumes of the *historisch-kritische Ausgabe* of Nietzsche. He adds that *now* everything of Nietzsche must be printed. His work has become too sacred for mere editors to pick and choose from it.

⁸ For instance, "Nietzsche und wir" (Nietzsche and Ourselves), by M. O.

The *Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe* of the works and the letters of Nietzsche is coming along slowly with the aid of the *Nietzsche-Archiv* in Weimar. It is being undertaken with the care, reverence, and detail given usually only to great men of letters or great prophets. The four volumes of the works so far issued reach only to Nietzsche's days as a student at Leipzig — they are all, in fact, mere juvenilia or philological apprentice-work and notes. Apparently any scrap of paper on which he traced his childish fancies or student needs seems to the editors worth reprinting. The war has undoubtedly slowed up this edition, but only a catastrophe will stop it. As a thorough editorial job — and also, though this must be an accident, somewhat in format and general appearance — this *Gesamtausgabe* resembles another famous *Gesamtausgabe* that used to come out of Germany before 1933, that of Marx and Engels. There may be something symbolic here.

Finally, the Fuehrer himself has publicly gone on record as having learned from Nietzsche. Hitler does not specifically mention Nietzsche among the authors he read in his Vienna days of unemployment, but it seems quite likely that many of Nietzsche's notions filtered down to him second-hand even before he went actively into politics. Since the revolution of 1933, Hitler has made several public visits to the *Nietzsche-*

Johannes in *Hammer* for January 1938 [*Hammer* is a well-known anti-semitic organ]; "Nietzsche über Staat und Volk" (Nietzsche on State and Folk), by K. Kassler in *Deutschlands Erneuerung*, Vol. XX (1934); F. Dehn's "Nietzsches Prophetie der Gottlosigkeit" (Nietzsche's Prophecy of Atheism) in *Die Furche*, vol. XXIII (1937); O. Haug, "Nietzsche und das Judentum" (Nietzsche and Jewry) in *Weltkampf*, Vol. XIV (1937). He has penetrated even into the trade journals: see *Stahl und Eisen* (Steel and Iron) for 1935, 56th Jahrgang, II, 772.

Archiv in Weimar and has had himself photographed there. One of these photographs, printed as the frontispiece in Richard Oehler's *Nietzsche und die deutsche Zukunft*, may have quite unintentional symbolism. It shows the Fuehrer in profile, staring with an expression of bilious and determined reverence at a bust of the Master. But though Hitler's face is fully shown, the photographer cut Nietzsche's in half, leaving one stone mustache curving off into nothing.

The *Nietzsche-Archiv* itself, as custodian of the Master's tradition, has not hesitated to identify itself with the "world revolution" of the Fascists and the Nazis. Elizabeth, then a very old lady, actually had the *Archiv* send Mussolini on his fiftieth birthday the following telegram:

To the noblest disciple of Zarathustra, whom Nietzsche had dreamed of, the inspired re-awakener of aristocratic values in Nietzsche's sense, the *Nietzsche-Archiv* sends in deepest respect and admiration the warmest good wishes.⁹

The professional Nietzscheans can hardly contain themselves. Their hero has now come into his own. Even the academic Nietzscheans — the academic ones who are good Nazis — burst into ecstasy. "And when we call out to this youth, marching under the swastika: Heil Hitler! — at the same time we greet with this call Friedrich Nietzsche!"¹⁰

Yet liberal and cultivated Germans, gentle Nietzscheans by education, are still reluctant to admit that Hitler owes anything personally to Nietzsche's work — even to Nietzsche's work misinterpreted. One of them writes from exile in Massachusetts:

⁹ G. Scheuffler, *Friedrich Nietzsche im Dritten Reich* (1933), 7.

¹⁰ A. Baeumler, "Nietzsche und der Nazionalsozialismus," in his *Studien zur deutsche Geistesgeschichte* (1937), 294.

Nothing is more absurd than to see in him [Hitler] a disciple of Nietzsche, the philosopher of "the hammer." . . . "The hammer" of which Nietzsche wrote was the hammer of antiquity, the other which Hitler swings is the hammer of Thor.¹¹

It is, indeed, likely that Wagner's direct influence on Hitler personally is much greater than Nietzsche's. But, justly or unjustly, the makers of public opinion in Nazi Germany have called Nietzsche to their aid. Of that there can be no doubt. They are, as we shall see, quite capable of putting Thor's hammer and a lot of other old Germanic war-gear in Nietzsche's hands.

Nietzsche, then, has been admitted into the Nazi pantheon, and his works have become a part of Nazi education. The number and popular nature of recent German works on his life and writings are facts which make this clear. Indeed, Haertle in the introduction to the second edition of his little handbook on *Nietzsche and National Socialism* is evidently a little irritated by the continued existence of remnants of old-fashioned, aesthetic, perhaps even gentle, Nietzscheans. He is writing for no "Nietzsche-circle," but for Nazi youth. He is making "an attempt to render Nietzsche's spiritual treasure fruitful for the development of the national socialistic attitude towards the world" (*nationalsozialistische Weltanschauung* — a quite untranslatable phrase). "I do not," he continues, "belong to any group of esoteric devotees of Nietzsche; I wish merely to show the worth of Nietzsche as a great ally in the spiritual warfare of the present age."¹²

Many others agree with Haertle as to that worth. We need

¹¹ Auernheimer, Raoul, *Prince Metternich* (New York: 1940), p. viii.

¹² Haertle, *Nietzsche und der Nationalsozialismus*, 2. Auflage (1939), 7.

not here attempt to fathom their reasons. On the surface it is clear that Nietzsche brings to the miscellaneous and unimpressive collection of works which make up the Nazi holy writings an element otherwise almost lacking in them. For Nietzsche, hated though he may be, is yet commonly accepted in the Western world as a person who counts, as a sensitive artist, a master of German prose, a philosopher, a Great Mind. No such distinction has yet been conferred by the outside world upon the race-theorists, the anti-Semites, the crank sociologists and philosophers of history of the Hitlerite movement. Rosenberg, the most favored intellectual of the movement, seems hardly more respectable, more *sérieux* in comparison with the long tradition of Western thought, than Hitler himself. As for *Mein Kampf*, however holy it might seem to the faithful, to outsiders it is at the very mildest a book lacking in the final distinctions of literary form and philosophical penetration. It too is the book of a crank, a man outside the pale. With Nietzsche, however, the Nazis have been able to acquire, if not respectability, at least distinction. Nietzsche belongs.

III

Nazi exegetes have been obliged to quote Nietzsche directly and exactly — in these days of cheap printing, simple falsifying of such texts is difficult. It should be plain, even from the necessarily brief and schematic outline of Nietzsche's ideas given in previous chapters of this study, that they can find much in the Master which they can appropriate directly for their own uses. Whatever their ultimate destiny, the Nazis are revolutionists, and they are revolting against a society Nietzsche had earlier revolted against. A good Nazi curls his lips as

scornfully around the word "bourgeois" as any Marxist does. Nietzsche's contempt for the nineteenth century and all its works, his attacks on Christianity, on humanitarian movements, on parliamentary government, that "destructive" part of his writings which in verve and clarity is the best of his work — all this is just what the convinced Nazi wants to hear.

Democracy has in all ages been the form under which organizing strength has perished. . . . Liberalism, or the transformation of mankind into cattle. . . . Modern democracy is the historic form of the decay of the state. . . . The two opposing parties, the socialist and the national — or whatever they may be called in the different countries of Europe — are worthy of each other; envy and laziness are the motive powers in each of them. . . . The equality of souls before God, this lie, this screen for the *rancunes* of all the baseminded, this anarchist bomb of a concept, which has become the last revolution, the modern idea and principle of the destruction of the whole social order — this is *Christian* dynamite.¹³

There is also much in Nietzsche that helps to picture, with proper vagueness, the new society which, like all revolutionaries, the National Socialists are sure they are building. If the old society was parliamentary, pacific, at least in hope, tolerant of individual differences, devoted — at least in principle — to free speech and other civil rights, and contented with an unheroic and comfortable present, the new society will be authoritarian, militant, contemptuous of such outmoded eighteenth-century notions as those of natural rights and individual happiness, a society harsh and heroic, a new Sparta of Supermen. Nietzsche's praise of war and the soldier is already a commonplace:

The future of German culture rests with the sons of Prussian officers. . . . Peace and letting other people alone — this is not a policy for which

¹³ *Twilight of the Idols*, "Skirmishes in a War with the Age," § 39, 38; *Human, All Too Human*, Part I, § 472, 480; *Antichrist*, § 62.

I have any respect whatever. To dominate (*herrschen*) and to help the highest thought to victory—that would be the only thing that could interest me in Germany. . . . The same discipline makes the soldier and the scholar efficient; and, looked at more closely, there is no true scholar who has not the instincts of the true soldier in his veins. . . . Ye shall love peace as a means to new wars—and the short peace more than the long. . . . War and courage have done more things than charity. Not your sympathy but your bravery hath hitherto saved the victims. . . .¹⁴

Now and then in the midst of Nietzsche's aphorisms there stands out a passage that might have been written today—has, indeed, been written a hundred times today:

Is it not high time, now that the type "gregarious animal" is developing ever more and more in Europe, to set about rearing, thoroughly artificially, and consciously, an opposite type, and to attempt to establish the latter's virtues? And would not the democratic movement itself find for the first time a sort of goal, salvation, and justification, if someone appeared who availed himself of it—so that at last, beside its new and sublime product, slavery (for this must be the end of European democracy) that higher species of ruling and Caesarian spirits might also be produced, a kind of men who would stand upon it, hold to it, and would elevate themselves through it? This new race would climb aloft to new and hitherto impossible things, to a broader vision, and to its task on earth.¹⁵

The *Fuehrerprinzip* has nowhere been better stated. Here, notably, is an ambiguity useful, if also dangerous, to Nazi leaders. "Caesarian" suggests that the superiors are very few and rule over Germans as well as other peoples; "race" suggests that they are fairly numerous, and that all Germans may "climb aloft" over the inferior peoples without the Gospel.

The Nazis can also find support for their current racial doc-

¹⁴ *Genealogy of Morals*, "Peoples and Countries," § 14, 17; *Will to Power*, § 912; *Zarathustra*, Part I, chap. 10.

¹⁵ *The Will to Power*, § 954.

trines in the work of Nietzsche. One passage is especially famous, since Allied propaganda in the Four Years' War singled it out:

It is impossible not to recognize at the core of all these aristocratic races the beast of prey; the magnificent blonde brute, avidly rampant for spoil and victory; this hidden core needed an outlet from time to time — the Roman, Arabic, German, and Japanese nobility, the Homeric heroes, the Scandinavian Vikings, are all alike in this need. It is the aristocratic races who have left the idea "Barbarian" on all the tracks in which they have marched. . . . The profound, icy mistrust which the German provokes as soon as he arrives at power, even at the present time, is always still an aftermath of that inextinguishable horror with which for whole centuries Europe has regarded the wrath of the blonde Teuton beast.¹⁶

Haertle quotes this passage with explicit approval in his handbook, and stops short, as do most tough Nietzscheans who quote it, at the "blond Teuton beast." Actually Nietzsche continued, ". . . although between the old Germans and ourselves there exists scarce a psychological, let alone a physical, relationship." This suppression is indicative of one of the ways in which Nietzsche can be adapted for direct political use in the Third Reich.¹⁷

There is even more concretely apposite material for Nazi educators in Nietzsche. There is no doubt that the Master dabbled in notions of *Rassenhygiene* (race-hygiene). He wrote a good deal about the degeneration of the European upper-classes, which he thought came from the reckless breeding of true noble families with those who had succeeded in such vulgar pursuits as business, banking, the law and medicine. His

¹⁶ *Genealogy of Morals*, Part I, § 11. Note that already in 1883, the Japanese are apparently "honorary Aryans."

¹⁷ Haertle, *Nietzsche und der Nationalsozialismus*, 62.

views, especially in so far as they depend on a knowledge of genetics, are not as *unzeitgemässe* as he liked to think. Nietzsche accepts the notion of blended inheritance in its simpler forms. Occasionally he comes very close indeed to the Nazi program, as in the following recommendations in a matter of which he probably had less actual experience than is usual, even among German philosophers:

Concerning the future of marriage — A super-tax on inherited property, a long term of military service for bachelors. . . . Privileges of all sorts for fathers who lavish boys upon the world, and perhaps plural votes as well. A medical certificate as a condition of marriage, endorsed by the parochial authorities, on which a series of questions addressed to the parties and the medical officers must be answered ("family histories"). As a counter-agent to prostitution, or as its ennoblement, I would recommend leasehold marriages, to last for a term of years or months, with adequate provision for the children.¹⁸

Scattered through Nietzsche's work is a good deal of material suitable for anti-semitic use. Nietzsche himself had Jewish friends — if one may use the word friendship of any relation between Nietzsche and another human being — and some Jewish writers have for years been among the most ardent and uncritical of Nietzscheans. Yet most of the stock of professional anti-semitism is represented in Nietzsche: the Jews are intellectuals with a grievance, hence destroyers of what makes for stability in society; they run the press and the stock-exchange, to the disadvantage of the slower-witted but more honest and healthy Gentiles; they are parasites, decadents; they are responsible for the three great evils of modern civilization — Christianity, Democracy, Marxism.¹⁹

¹⁸ *Will to Power*, § 733.

¹⁹ For examples, see *The Joyful Wisdom*, § 301; *Twilight of the Idols*,

Even when Nietzsche is trying his best, according to his own standards, to be fair to the Jews, to be moderate and even-tempered, he provides good ammunition for Nazi leaders, who have only to excise a few of his qualifying phrases. Take for instance one of his most famous and often-quoted passages on the Jewish question:

I have never yet met a German who was favorably inclined to the Jews: and however decided the repudiation of actual anti-semitism may be on the part of all prudent and political men, this prudence and policy is not perhaps directed against the nature of sentiment itself, but only against its dangerous excess, and especially against the distasteful and infamous expression of this excess of sentiment:—on this point we must not deceive ourselves. That Germany has amply *sufficient* Jews, that the German stomach, the German blood, has difficulty (and will long have difficulty) in disposing of this quantity of “Jew”—as the Italian, the Frenchman, and the Englishman have done by means of a stronger digestion:—that is the unmistakable declaration and language of a general instinct, to which one must listen and according to which one must act. “Let no more Jews come in! And shut the doors, especially towards the East (also towards Austria)!”²⁰

Nietzsche, then, fits into National Socialist needs both in what he damned and in what he praised. He damned democracy, pacifism, individualism, Christianity, humanitarianism, both as abstract ideals and as, in some vague way, actual descriptions of modern European society. He praised authority, racial purity, the warrior spirit and practise, the stern life and the great health, and urged upon his fellow-citizens a complete break with their bad old habits and ideas. The spirit in which he

Part IV, § 26; *Will to Power*, § 184, 864; *Beyond Good and Evil*, § 251; and especially *Antichrist*, 24–27.

²⁰ *Beyond Good and Evil*, § 251. Clearly a discerning Nazi would need to make suppressions here, but the substance is good Nazi doctrine.

urged this break, and the book which he hoped would be the bible of the new dispensation, are both worth our attention here. It may well be that the relatively concrete hatreds and hopes we have just been outlining are more fundamental in current Nazi education than such Nietzschean abstractions as the "transvaluation of all values," the "Superman" and the "Will to Power," or such Nietzschean poetic and prophetic strains as resound in *Also sprach Zarathustra*; none the less, both Nietzsche's metaphysics and his prophetic writings are popular in contemporary Germany, and throw additional light on the nature of National Socialist plans for the Good Society.

In fact, most of Nietzsche's grand abstract terms, though they can be given a variety of interpretations, contain overtones, implications, admirably suited to Nazi uses. The famous phrase "Will to Power" suggests ruthlessness, aggression, a policy of expansion perfectly illustrated since Hitler's accession to power. The concept of a new race of Supermen, though Nietzsche himself left it as obscure in form and in detail as are most such eschatological concepts of recent invention, has proved very flattering to an aspiring Nazi elite, who have considered that they were at least making possible the development of a new race of men.²¹

This most famous Nietzschean doctrine is, however, dangerous as well as useful for the purposes of Nazi leaders. It does, as we have seen, sketch out a *Fuehrerprinzip*; but it also suggests an inner conflict which may give them real trouble. Hitler himself does not conceal that he shares the contempt for

²¹ This notion is strong in Oehler, *Nietzsche und die Deutsche Zukunft*, and is discernible even in so restrained a book as Haertle's *Nietzsche und der Nationalsozialismus*.

the masses which is an essential part of the Nietzschean doctrine. Such scorn is clear in the famous chapter on "War Propaganda" in *Mein Kampf* and in the exposition of the *Fuehrerprinzip* in the chapter on *Persönlichkeit und völkischer Staatsgedanke*. The organization of the State "must in itself be the embodiment of the endeavor to put the heads above the masses and to subject the masses to the heads," since the masses are "incapable of thinking (*nicht denkfähig*) or incapable of doing so competently," but can attain what is best for them "only under the leadership of those whom Nature has endowed with special gifts."²²

And yet, surely eighty million Germans cannot be regarded as mere members of the herd, subject to slave-morality! What good is Aryan supremacy if only a chosen few are to share it? The fact is that, however attractive Nietzsche's rather intellectualized and ascetic ideas of aristocratic leadership may be to Nazi leaders, they are hard to adapt to the popular teaching of a party which has carefully preserved the word "socialist" in its official name. Official Nazi propaganda, in the midst of *Kraft durch Freude* and Labor Fronts, cannot prudently dilate upon the theme that ignoble workers exist only for the sake of the Supermen above them. Clearly, there are problems in adapting Nietzsche to the common men he loathed so vocally.²³

The "transvaluation of all values" is a phrase admirably revo-

²² Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (1932), 497.

²³ Haertle is fully aware of this difficulty. Nietzsche, he admits, "denies democracy in itself." This will not do. "Historical experience and the [Nazi] organic idea of the *Volks* make it impossible for us to follow Nietzsche here." But, Haertle continues, Nietzsche was absolutely right in his uncompromising struggle against the vicious liberal *Egalitäts-Demokratie* of the West. Haertle, *Nietzsche und der Nazionalsozialismus*, 23.

lutionary in character. Indeed, Nietzsche was obsessed with the desire for a catastrophic renewing of the world for which the word "revolution" is much too mild. As to what could be done to achieve this renewal, this transformation, Nietzsche was appropriately vague. Nonetheless, as an attack on what may be roughly called Christian values, Nietzsche's work is one of the most thorough ever made. It seemed in his day — and still seems — much fresher and more effective than the usual complaints of weary nineteenth-century Voltaireans or positivists, or even of Marxians, since it was directed not merely against the theological dogmas but the moral temper and basic values of Christianity. The Nazis have found in his philosophy a much better base for sniping at organized Christianity than in mere conventional free-thinking, partly because it goes so well with Nazi scorn for so "Latin" (or "Jewish") an activity as reason.

Positively, they have had a hard time finding much help in Nietzsche in their task of restoring Thor and Woden to German worship. Amongst so much else, Nietzsche did throw off various remarks in praise of the dionysian spirit of the early Germans, and commentators like Baeumler have embroidered these remarks and for all, and rather more than all, they are worth.²⁴ However doubtful and obscure Nietzsche's own "Germanismus" may have been the Nazis can see it clearly now. And what is more important, they find Nietzsche's spirit usefully contagious. The passion for remaking, for renewing, the desire to be born again, which is found in all great revolutionary movements, and especially among the revolutionary elite, finds

²⁴ Baeumler, *Nietzsche der Philosoph und Politiker*, especially Part II, section I, "Germanische Grundhaltung."

among the Nazis a justification and a vocabulary in the words of Nietzsche.

Zarathustra has long been the most read of Nietzsche's books, in Germany and out. It is an obscure and deliberately prophetic book. Yet the long white robes, prophetic beard, and phosphorescent glance of Zarathustra, though, to anyone with eyes trained to look distrustingly on prophets, they look like the stage-trappings they are, have unquestionably helped Nietzsche to his present prestige in a Germany made by post-war difficulties a place increasingly suitable for the activities of prophets. Zarathustra does not have a program. He never comes out in the open with a specific suggestion for reform. But most of the ideas Nietzsche works out more sharply in his more analytical books appear in *Also sprach Zarathustra*, impressively shrouded in poetic inspiration. Here Nietzsche trumpets loudly his greatest discovery: "God is dead!" Here he calls out: "I teach you the Superman. Man is something that is to be surpassed. . . . What is the ape to man? A laughing-stock, a thing of shame. And just the same shall man be to Superman, a laughing-stock, a thing of shame. . . . Verily a polluted stream is man. One must be a sea, to receive a polluted stream without becoming impure. Lo, I teach you the Superman: he is that sea; in him can your great contempt be submerged." Now and then a passage or two stands out, ready for immediate use as a Nazi text: "No people could live without first valuing; if a people will maintain itself, however, it must not value as its neighbor valueth."²⁵ Zarathustra sounds as far-off as any Hebrew prophet, and much more unreal. All the better for Nazi use. The vagueness, the dithyrambic energy, the mantic arts, the

²⁵ *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, Prologue, chaps. ii, iii; Part I, chap. xv.

tortured rhetoric of Nietzsche-Zarathustra seem able to move men in a way no concrete proposals at the level of mere laws or arrangements ever can move them.

IV

So much for what the Nazis find good and immediately quotable in the work of Nietzsche. There is all told a very great deal of it, especially in *The Will to Power* and in some of the unpublished fragments which Baeumler has published under the title *The Innocence of Becoming*.²⁶ Yet there is a lot more that it would be indiscreet, and indeed dangerous, to announce publicly in Germany today without very careful attribution to Nietzsche, and some very ingenious explanation to boot. Here are a few passages of the sort that the gentle Nietzscheans have been flinging back at the tough ones for forty years:

The Germans may well be the most mixed of all peoples. . . . Bismarck a Slav. Let anyone look upon the face of the Germans. Everything that had manly, exuberant blood in it went abroad. Over the smug populace remaining, the slave-souled people, there came an improvement from abroad, especially by a mixture of Slavic blood. . . . What a blessing a Jew is among Germans! See the obtuseness, the flaxen hair, the blue eye, and the lack of intellect in the face, the language, and the bearing . . . among Germans. . . . The Jews are beyond all doubt the strongest, toughest, and purest race now living in Europe.²⁷

Similarly with much more that Nietzsche has to say about the Germans, about the Jews, about nationalism, patriotism, obedience to law, the future of Europe, and many other topics.

²⁶ A. Baeumler, ed., *Die Unschuld des Werdens: Der Nachlass* (1931).

²⁷ *Genealogy of Morals*, "Peoples and Countries," § 13; *Beyond Good and Evil*, § 251.

The Nietzsche who wrote about "we good Europeans" would doubtless be in danger of spending a term in a concentration camp, were he alive in contemporary Germany. Whether this Nietzsche or the Nietzsche who wrote the following remarkably timely passage is the "real" man is not for us to decide:

I observe more inclination towards greatness in the feelings of the Russian nihilists than in those of the English Utilitarians. We require an intergrowth of the German and Slav races, . . . for us to become masters of the world.

(a) The sense of reality.

(b) A giving-up of the English principle of the people's right of representation. We require the representation of the great interests.

(c) We require an unconditional union with Russia, together with a mutual plan of action which shall not permit any English notions to obtain the mastery in Russia. No American future?

(d) A national system of politics is untenable, and embarrassment by Christian views is a very great evil. In Europe all sensible people are skeptics, whether they say so or not.²⁸

This was written in the 1880's. The ellipsis indicated by the three dots in the second sentence above is not Nietzsche's. It marks our own deliberate omission of the following words: "and we require, too, the cleverest financiers, the Jews." No Nazi leader would dare utter those words as Nietzsche wrote them. The Master cannot be used without omissions, or exegesis. The point is clear. Nietzsche wrote much the Nazis find delightful; he also wrote much they cannot bear to hear, and certainly cannot bear to have repeated. In this predicament the gentlemen who have set themselves up as interpreters of Nietzsche to the people of the Third Reich have pursued various courses, some not altogether consistent one with another.

²⁸ *Genealogy of Morals*, "Peoples and Countries," § 17.

The simplest solution would of course be to suppress those passages in Nietzsche's works which, like those we have just quoted on the Jews and the Germans, are flagrantly in violation of the best-known and firmest Nazi doctrines. It would be almost as simple to deny that Nietzsche ever wrote the offending passages, and to reinforce the denial by asserting that the offending passages are forgeries, or "Jewish conspiracies," wickedly intended to undermine faith in Nazi saints. The Nazis might discover — perhaps they have discovered — that the Jew Paul Rée inserted the offending passages without the Master's knowledge. It is still, however, too early for such steps to succeed. We are still too near Nietzsche's own time, and know too much about the Master. Moreover, the invention of printing and the consequent wide distribution of books may actually make such suppression or falsification forever impossible. This seems a lot to hope for, but perhaps we have grown too despondent over other failures of invention and enlightenment in this world.

Some Nazi use of Nietzsche's work is at the fairly innocent and almost honest level of neglecting the difficulties, of omitting all reference to them. Oehler appears to belong in this category. His book, *Nietzsche and the German Future*, is frankly adulatory, almost the work of a gentle Nietzschean. One hardly feels, reading it, the *suppressio veri* on which it is based. Whether or not it is good propaganda only the faithful can judge. It is full of passages like this:

And so we might turn a sharp passage in the *Antichrist* quite around, and get thereby simply a National Socialist confession of faith.

"The Cross [*Kreuz*] as sign . . . against health, beauty, sense, bravery, intellect, kindliness of soul — against *Life itself*."

The Swastika [*Hakenkreuz*] as sign for health, beauty, sense, bravery, intellect, kindness of soul — for *Life itself*.²⁹

If, indeed, Nietzsche's ideas are "sublimated" sufficiently in interpretation, they can suit almost anyone and serve almost any use. Even in Hitler's Germany, the old professorial tradition of the gentle Nietzscheans goes on, and the war he preached is still for these kindly souls the sublime war of the spirit. It is a war anyone can fight, for it makes no demands on food, munition, or oil supplies.

If suppression outright is impossible, and neglect sometimes dangerous, good careful editing can be very useful. Anthologies of wisdom from Nietzsche can be constructed out of the most impeccable material, and the dangerous passages can be left out. Baeumler has done just this with Nietzsche in an ingenious popular work entitled "Nietzsche's philosophy as witnessed by himself," which is composed of extracts from all the philosopher's works arranged in two parts, "The System" and "Europe's Crisis."³⁰ It need hardly be said that the nice orderly system Baeumler finds in Nietzsche has no place for shocking remarks about the virtues of the Jews. Baeumler's carefully chosen five hundred-odd passages are all of a kind that could be taught any young Nazi.

Yet the whole works of Nietzsche exist in thousands of copies in Germany. The offending passages are there, and may fall at any time under eyes ill prepared to distinguish between good

²⁹ Oehler, *Nietzsche und die deutsche Zukunft*, 24.

³⁰ A. Baeumler, *Nietzsches Philosophie in Selbstzeugnissen* (1931). This is the fourth volume of *Nietzsches Werke: Auswahl in 4 Bänden* published in a popular low-priced edition by the Reclam house. Baeumler's *Nietzsche der Philosoph und Politiker*, though also published separately, is bound in with this fourth volume of the Reclam edition of Nietzsche's selected works.

and evil, and certainly not prepared to go beyond good and evil. There are still serious problems before Nazi educators who wish to use Nietzsche properly. Probably the commonest solution is to blame Nietzsche's errors on his environment. Haertle, for instance, admits that Nietzsche did make mistakes. He is quite frank about the matter. Some parts of Nietzsche's writings, he admits, are really the *opposite* of Nazi truth. "In the measure that the interest in Nietzsche grows, the danger of misunderstanding grows" — that is, the danger that young Germans may actually accept what is anti-Nazi in him as just as valid as what is pro-Nazi. Haertle therefore lists "errors" very carefully, under headings such as "race," "the Jewish question," "state" and so on. But he minimizes their place in Nietzsche's work, and always he is able to explain them, usually as an effect of the nineteenth-century environment. Nietzsche saw many and great truths; but he saw them as from the midst of a swamp, the swamp of nineteenth-century liberalism and democracy, and inevitably the rising mists obscured his vision. When he agrees with the Nazis, he is the prophet to whom is granted the true vision of things to come; when he disagrees with them, he is the mortal who cannot be expected to rise entirely above his environment.³¹

There are variations on this explanation. Such, for instance, is the assertion, dear to Baeumler, that Nietzsche had to push his thoughts to paradoxical and violent extremes in order to make any impression on so stupid an age; that, for instance, he had to pretend to see some good things in the Jews and many bad things in organized anti-semitism, in order to get any

³¹ Haertle, *Nietzsche und der Nationalsozialismus*, especially Part I, "Einleitung."

attention, and in order to shake his contemporaries out of their fatuous complacency over Bismarck's Reich. Baeumler even goes so far as to assert that, since so much of Nietzsche's published work is necessarily cut to fit the author's Machiavellian purposes in his warfare with the age, his unpublished work is therefore a more trustworthy index of what he really thought. Herr Baeumler has, accordingly, published and arranged Nietzsche's copious literary remains.³² In the Master's unpublished work Baeumler discerns a perfect unity, and points out the way in which Nietzsche may ultimately be shown to be infallible — something always desirable, if not absolutely essential, in a Founding Father. Baeumler, whose labors in the cause have won him a chair in the University of Berlin, is the leading expert in the exegetical study of Nietzsche. He does not, unfortunately, possess any of the Master's grace and vigor of style. In fact, his German is heavier and more lumbering than is usual even in the learned world. He has, however, great determination in dialectic, and a lack of humor which in many ways makes up for a lack of finesse.

Baeumler's method is best shown by specific examples. He does, it is true, proceed on the blanket assumption outlined above — that Nietzsche's work is perfectly consistent and perfectly Nazi, and that where it seems to conflict with the party doctrine we have either misinterpreted the Master, or misunderstood his immediate purpose in the conflict he waged single-handed against an age steeped in liberal and democratic error. Baeumler's point-by-point analysis is, however, his really great achievement. Nietzsche, for instance, wrote a great deal that

³² See the preface to Baeumler's edition, *Nietzsche, Die Unschuld des Werdens: Der Nachlass*, ix–xl.

seems on the surface to be the kind of individualism, even anarchism, popular with the superior aesthetic souls of the late nineteenth century.³³ Nietzsche has even, by unenlightened critics, been coupled with Max Stirner, the author of *The Ego and Its Own*. Certainly one of the things Mr. H. L. Mencken and Mr. G. B. Shaw found to admire in Nietzsche was this insistence that really strong men are not to be tied down to any sentimental identification of themselves with the state or with society, or with any other group composed largely of stupid men.

Now in the Nazi state, individualism, anarchism, distrust of the state, are forbidden doctrines. Baeumler feels that he has to show that Nietzsche *under proper conditions* would have identified himself as whole-heartedly with the state as does any good brownshirt. When Nietzsche says he scorns the state, Baeumler glosses, he is thinking of the second Reich. The second Reich was a state based on the defeat and subordination of the German people by Roman and Christian elements. It was based on nearly two thousand years of corruption. Nietzsche rightly hated this romanized Teutonic (*deutsch*) state, and when he writes that he is "unpolitical" he means he is unpolitical in such a state. Similarly, whenever he says cruel things about the Germans, he is thinking of these romanized and christianized Germans. But Nietzsche always admired the basic German

³³ "We are feeling the consequences of the doctrine, preached lately from all the housetops, that the state is the highest end of man and that there is no higher duty than to serve it: I regard this not as a relapse into paganism, but into stupidity." *Thoughts out of Season*, "Schopenhauer as Educator," chap. iv. Needless to say this passage, which could be duplicated in essentials from any of Nietzsche's works, save perhaps *The Will to Power* and others of his very latest period, is not used as a text by the Nazi preachers.

(*germanisch*) qualities of virility, joy, simplicity, strength, and so on. Were there on earth a state *germanisch* instead of *deutsch*, Nietzsche would at once submit himself gratefully to such a state. There is now such a state, the Third Reich, and Nietzsche is undoubtedly smiling down upon it from Valhalla. Baeumler then clinches his argument: Nietzsche hated a Reich governed by a *Kaiser*, a bad Teutonic copy of the Roman Caesar; he would have loved a Reich governed by a head ineffably German, a *Fuehrer*.³⁴

It is hardly necessary to pursue Baeumler much further. The dialectical skill reported above is characteristic enough. Nothing, in fact, stumps him. Did Nietzsche call himself something that sounds like "freethinker," and does freethinker suggest to the uninitiated Voltaire, Tom Paine, and other clearly non-German writers? Mistake. "Not Latin freethinking (*lateinische Freigeisterei*) but Siegfried stands back of Nietzsche's attack on Christianity." Even when Nietzsche praises the Renaissance, he is praising nothing Latin. He is praising the fighting spirit of the period; moreover, the north and central Italians Nietzsche admired came of the nobility, and were "extremely probably" of German blood. Baeumler ends with a little prophetic flight of his own: "The German state of the future will not be a continuation of the work of Bismarck; it will rather be built out of the spirit of Nietzsche and the spirit of the Great War."³⁵

The Italians themselves have made Nietzsche a good fascist.

³⁴ Baeumler, *Nietzsche*, 88-97.

³⁵ Baeumler, *Nietzsche*, 103; 97; 183. My own favorite bit of Baeumler is the following: "Only with Nietzsche did the Middle Ages *really* come to an end" (p. 12).

These honorary Nordics have also to exercise great skill in dialectic. One of them writes in a vein worthy of Baeumler:

Dell'intelletto, inteso piuttosto nell'arido senso francese, che nel gran senso romano (chè allora, come vide lo stesso Nietzsche, non è più intelletto, ma superiore ragione) Nietzsche fu nemico asperissimo: e tutta la sua vita e tutto il suo pensiero fu piuttosto una musica, musica religiosa e cosmica, che tutto distrugge e ricrea dalle fondamenta: musica che sorge dal golfo mistico dell'essere, e profonda l'essere nella notte pura del sentimento, nel puro volere, sintesi infinita d'infiniti opposti, rottura d'ogni forma, gorgo d'infiniti nemi di possibilità di vita.³⁶

The form, as well as the matter, of this sentence seems to show that the fascists are actually trying to write Italian as if it were German — and succeeding pretty well.

In fact, the easiest and most satisfactory way to use Nietzsche is to emphasize grand words and passages which contain a preponderance of the kind of words some modern anti-intellectuals like to call "meaningless." These words are not, of course, meaningless in any but a very narrow sense; their meanings are as many as, and as complex as, the "occasions of experience" in which they arise. "Freedom" will do as a sample — clean German *Freiheit*, not the vicious Liberty Latins and Anglo-Saxons use. Haertle writes:

Against the liberal conception of Freedom, which destroys all organic relations, breaks up all natural sense of community, and finally leads to

³⁶ G. Cogni, "Nietzsche e la Germania," *Bibliografia fascista* (May, 1935), X, 452. (Of the intellect, taken rather in the arid French sense than in the grand Roman sense (for then, as Nietzsche himself saw, it is no longer intellect, but higher reason) Nietzsche was the bitterest enemy; and all his life and all his thought was indeed a music, religious and cosmic music, which destroys and rebuilds all, from the foundations, music which springs from the mystic gulf of being, and sounds the depths of being in the pure night of feeling, in pure will, infinite synthesis of infinite opposites, breaking up of all forms, whirlpool of infinite storm-clouds of possibilities of life.)

anarchy or to its counterpart, despotism, against this atomistic conception of Freedom, Nietzsche puts squarely the *Freedom of the Warrior*, which grows out of overcoming, out of struggle, *Freedom as Victory*.⁸⁷

This passage needs no comment. It is sound, uninspired preaching, for which Nietzsche makes as ready inspiration as any other thinker who has great prestige in Nazi Germany.

Though Baeumler is among Nazi philosophers perhaps the ablest at the subtleties of Nietzschean exegesis, even innocent folk-teachers like Haertle are obliged to argue and explain: Nietzsche's anti-anti-semitism is a particularly hard obstacle for Haertle, but one which he has to surmount, for he has decided that Nietzsche was a Jew-hater. "Priest means for him a stylized, typified Jew. . . . The Jews are the bearers of slave-morality, the Nordic race the bearers of master-morality."⁸⁸ Why then, was Nietzsche not with those who were seeking to stamp out the Jews? Easy. Nietzsche was a Lamarckian, and believed in the inheritance of acquired characteristics, in the possibility of achieving physiological change by willed changes in environment. He therefore thought it possible to make the Jews good Germans. This belief was very excusable in 1880. But were Nietzsche alive now, he would no longer be a Lamarckian. He would no longer believe that the Jewishness of German Jews could be altered. He would be a good Nazi, eager to cleanse Germany of the Jewish race.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Haertle, *Nietzsche und der Nazionalsozialismus*, 14. That "organic-German" and "atomistic-Western" contrast is one of the staples of German intellectual life.

⁸⁸ Haertle, *Nietzsche und der Nazionalsozialismus*, 50. He writes, "ein stilisierter, typisierter Jude." How these corrupt Mediterranean words will creep into a Nordic's vocabulary!

⁸⁹ Haertle, *Nietzsche und der Nazionalsozialismus*, 44-50.

The Nazis then, and their fascist followers are tough Nietzscheans in a more than literary and aesthetic sense. Nietzsche is held in high honor today in his native land. He has become one of the Early Fathers of the revolutionary Nazi faith. Point for point he preached, along with a good deal else which the Nazis choose to disremember, most of the cardinal articles of the professed Nazi creed — a transvaluation of all values, the sanctity of the will to power, the right and duty of the strong to dominate, the sole right of great states to exist, a renewing, a rebirth, of German and hence European society. More vaguely, Nietzsche preached the coming of the Superman; and though many different ethical values can be, and have been, attached to this concept of the Superman, both the Nazi idea of the Master-race and the Nazi appeal to the principle of leadership (*Fuehrerprinzip*) are among the most obvious and congruous derivatives of that concept. Finally, the emotional tone of Nietzsche's life and writings, as distinguished from his ideas, is much like what we hear of the emotional tone of inner Nazi circles. The unrelieved tension, the feverish aspiration, the driving madness, the great noise Nietzsche made for himself, the Nazi elite is making for an uncomfortably large part of the world. But these are vague, grand terms. The situation can be described much more simply. Nietzsche, like the Nazi leaders, was never really house-broken.

CHAPTER IX

NIETZSCHE IN WESTERN THOUGHT: PROPHECY ON A PROPHET

NIETZSCHE'S work has been given different interpretations. That, at any rate, seems a safe induction from experience. Baumlér and Haertle find something very different in Nietzsche from what Andler found, and Andler found something very different from what Brandes found. But Nietzsche was a definite person, and it ought to be possible to agree on what he meant? Perhaps, but if there really was a Nietzsche-in-himself, a "true" Nietzsche, he is gone, and what lives after him in his books is not one thing but many. Or so it seems to the relativist critic.

No doubt the relativist who likes to be uncompromising — a paradoxical position, but there *are* absolute relativists — might assert that there are as many Nietzsches as there are readers of Nietzsche, that his work is therefore subject to n interpretations, all of them "true." We shall not attempt here to defend so extreme and so meaningless a position. It is possible, however, to make several rough classifications of what men have done with Nietzsche. We have already developed at some length one of them, the distinction between the "gentle" and the "tough" Nietzscheans. This is a useful distinction, but it needs refining and supplementing. We shall here suggest another, which in part cuts across the simple dualism of "gentle" and "tough" Nietzscheans, and which attempts to classify interpretations of

the Master's works according to the uses to which they are put by those who read him today. It is by no means an exhaustive classification — no useful classification ever is. But after fifty years, it is fairly clear that men go to Nietzsche's writings for three different purposes, put them to three different uses, which are not mutually exclusive. Some go to Nietzsche for an aesthetic experience at once tonic and sedative, exalting and consoling. Others go to him for his contributions to a "realistic" study of the behavior of men in society, for his tentative sketches of a "natural history of morals." Still others go to him for support in what looks now like a new religious faith, the faith of the Nazis and the fascists.

Ever since the young and the would-be young rebels of the nineties discovered him, Nietzsche has been a refuge and a hope for young men and women undergoing the manifold troubles of adolescence. To the bright and sensitive youngster who is just coming to appreciate with how little wisdom the world is governed, how dull, muddled, and unenterprising his once-reverenced elders really are, how unending and unearthly are the hidden possibilities of life these elders have withheld from him, Nietzsche is an incomparable ally. The lad learns with delight that in communion with Nietzsche he becomes a free spirit, a master; and that his parents and teachers remain no more than browsing animals among the herd. He finds consolation in the midst of dull and pointless studies when he learns from Nietzsche that the Supermen will be above science, grammar and history as well as beyond good and evil. His day-dreams are now more than mere day-dreams; they are down-goings and over-goings with Zarathustra, as harsh, stoic, and masculine as reality — indeed, harsher, more stoic and more

masculine than the petty realities of his daily life. *Thus Spake Zarathustra* has been for many an adolescent a magic land in which he at last begins to live. Everything in it is right — its poetry is chanting ecstasy, its philosophy a white light, its message a final evangel. Safe in Zarathustra's bosom, his doubts and pains are resolved in a transcendent wisdom. He can face his fellow-men, looking down upon them.

Not, usually, for long; so lofty a position involves a strain. The boy grows up, and finds that he is not a Superman, and that it is rather tiring to keep on pretending, even to himself, that he is one. The world in all its dullness and imperfection floods in upon him, and he finds it not unacceptable without Nietzsche. There are, of course, perpetual adolescents. There are those who, having found Poe a great poet when they are sixteen, continue at sixty to find him a great poet. So too with some of those who, at sixteen, find Nietzsche a great poet. But most of them either find greater poets, or cease to concern themselves with poetry.

There are, however, always fresh generations of adolescents, and for them Nietzsche still remains a discovery of their own. There is no one who can quite take his place. Aesthetic fashions do, it is true, change somewhat, and in our own time some youths have found a rather different sort of consolation in the poetry of Anglo-Catholicism or in that of high Marxism. But if Nietzsche did not exist, it would seem almost necessary to invent him. No matter how much simple romanticism may be out of fashion, no matter how many good causes invite to doing or dying, there seems to be among the young a *Weltschmerz* — a syndrome, not a simple disease — for which Nietzsche is almost a specific, a better one than Byron, or Heine, or Poe, or Schopenhauer. These latter are useful, of course, and,

since cases are so varied, sometimes even more useful than Nietzsche. And there is another specific, often taken along with Nietzsche, and valuable as a counter-agent to his excessively tonic effects. Nietzsche would not have liked it so, but *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, at least in the English-speaking world, belongs in the medicine-cabinet of the adolescent along with another near-Eastern brew, Fitzgerald's version of the *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam.

We have already pointed out that, especially in *Beyond Good and Evil* and *The Genealogy of Morals*, as well as in many aphorisms of his middle period, Nietzsche made no inconsiderable contribution to the study of how men behave, and more particularly to the study of the relation between their actual behavior and their professed beliefs and systems of belief, their religions, ethics, philosophies. Much of his work belongs to the cumulative study of such problems, of which in our Western tradition we have examples as far back as Thucydides and Aristotle, and which seems to many of us today to be genuinely cumulative, to be on the point of consolidation into something like a science of sociology.¹ If we are right, then Nietzsche's attempt at a "natural history of morals" will have the permanent value of all successful pioneering in scientific work. Its theorems, so far as they are still useful, will be incorporated in the general structure of the science, and will be modified and improved upon by those who are seeking to advance the science. And, even if they are largely superseded, they will continue to have a place in the history of the science.

If, however, we are wrong, and if in spite of Pareto, Freud,

¹ Talcott Parsons, in *The Structure of Social Action* (1937) endeavors to bring out this common cumulative character in the work of men as different as Weber, Alfred Marshall, Durkheim, and Pareto.

Nietzsche, and many another worker in the field, the study of man should continue to be rather a part of literature and philosophy than of science, should continue to vary as do taste and fashion rather than to grow cumulatively as do the sciences, even then Nietzsche's work as a student of men would seem likely to have permanent value. For the "realist," the observer, the skeptic, the cynic — if you prefer bad names — Nietzsche's work will probably continue to have a kind of attractiveness perhaps not wholly different from the attractiveness it has for the romantic adolescent. This second, or "realistic," group is naturally on an average rather older in years than our first, or "romantic" group. Indeed, it not infrequently happens that an individual grows out of the first group into the second. The youth for whom Nietzsche was above all the poet of *Thus Spake Zarathustra* becomes the man for whom he is above all the subtle aphorist of *The Dawn of Day*, the admirable psychologist of *The Genealogy of Morals*. As long as men are attracted by the writings of Machiavelli, Montaigne, La Rochefoucauld, the Duc de St. Simon, as long as they find the pleasant tang of unpleasant truth in such remarks as "there is something not altogether displeasing to us in the misfortunes of our friends," they will be attracted by the Nietzsche who could write: "Our sense of observation for how far others perceive our weaknesses is much more subtle than our sense of observation for the weaknesses of others. It follows that the first-named sense is more subtle than is necessary."²

To the third sort of use men have made of Nietzsche's work

² La Rochefoucauld, *Maxims*, "Dans l'adversité de nos meilleurs amis, nous trouvons toujours quelque chose qui ne nous déplaît pas." This is the twenty-first maxim in the so-called "maximes supprimées." Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, "The Wanderer and his Shadow," § 257.

we have already consecrated a long chapter. Some of the things he wrote have been incorporated into the canons of a hitherto very successful revolutionary faith. Whether the treatment given Nietzsche's works by the totalitarian world-revolutionists is a legitimate use or a shocking abuse is a question for our present purpose quite beside the point. Enough that Nietzsche's distinction between master-men and herd-men is on the lips, and probably also in the heart of many a good Nazi and helps give him that sense of justification without which revolutionists are mere rioters or conspirators. Enough that Nietzsche's Will to Power, immoralism, his Yea-saying with a hammer, all his lofty and prophetic rhetoric of violence, help to keep Germans and Italians keyed to battle, the battle of the laboratory, factory, farm, office, and home as well as the more deadly, but in a sense less exhausting, battle of actual war. Enough that Nietzsche's writings help — and help perhaps more than any other writings — to give to Germans especially a feeling of mission, of alliance with God, Destiny, the World-Spirit, an unbreakable alliance with an undefeatable ally. Enough that at the present moment Nietzsche-Zarathustra does really look to many ordinary Germans — and not merely to the very literate or the very adolescent — like the prophet of a new religion.

Will this role of Nietzsche's also last? If it does, it will prove far more important than his other roles, will perhaps quite overshadow them. If it does, Nietzsche will be remembered not as a poet, critic, and psychologist, but as a prophet, a founder of religion. He will be ranked not with Goethe or Schopenhauer or La Rochefoucauld, but with Buddha, with Christ, with Mohammed.

We cannot sensibly attempt to prophesy very confidently

about Nietzsche's future as a prophet. Far too many variables are involved, for Nietzsche's place as a prophet depends on the success of a totalitarian world-revolution, or at least on its partial success, and on what happens to it under the stimulus — and sedative — of success. The social sciences do not yet afford us instruments adequate to handling such variables, and in matters so complex and far-reaching, rule-of-thumb wisdom is a poor substitute for scientific knowledge. Furthermore, an American writing in 1940 is extremely likely to make his prediction the child of his hopes and fears; he can hardly help wanting to have the totalitarians fail, to have them and all their works perish from the earth.

We may, however, risk a few tentative conclusions based, as well as we can base them, on the way revolutionists endeavoring to establish a new society and a new set of religious and moral beliefs have behaved in the past. This may be an unjustified procedure. The totalitarians may have achieved something new and unprecedented — instruments of social control, machines, military power that make revolt impossible, some combination of means to perpetuate the new order they are working for. Nietzsche's doctrines may in themselves have some new compelling power. But none of these possibilities seems at all like a probability. The armies of the totalitarian powers, their Gestapos, their one-party organizations, their factories, their labor-fronts, their elaborate controls over the sentiments and opinions of their citizens — that is, their various substitutes for the Church — are all run by human beings. And it is still fairly safe to assume, as the historian must assume, that in the long run human beings will continue to behave like human beings.

We may, then, hazard the opinion that even if the totali-

tarians are victorious in the present struggle; even if under German hegemony the totalitarian revolutions are as successful in establishing for the immediate future the spiritual values of the Western world as were for us the English, American and French revolutions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; and even if Nietzsche comes to be a sort of Locke-Rousseau-Jefferson for the new order—even then there will be no Nietzschean “transvaluation of values.” If established Christians failed to be heroically compassionate, it is likely that established Nazis will fail to be heroically cruel. If established democrats failed to make men quite equals, it is unlikely that established totalitarians will succeed in making them quite unequals. We may appeal from Nietzsche the prophet to Nietzsche the observer, and urge with the latter that a natural history of morals shows that men have never lived up to their moral professions, and that there is a kind of moral equilibrium of average human conduct, neither very “good” nor very “bad” in terms of any moral code ever devised. This equilibrium seems to be determined by social and biological factors very slow to change rather than by theories, ideas, ideals, preachings, which can change very rapidly. When under the impetus of revolution this equilibrium suffers a disturbance, all sorts of men are temporarily lifted or impelled into “living dangerously,” into a desperate attempt to bring Heaven or Hell to this earth. But with almost the regularity and certainty of a physico-chemical reaction, the impetus exhausts itself, and something like the original equilibrium returns.⁸

⁸ I have attempted to study this general process in more detail as regards the English, American, French, and Russian revolutions in my *Anatomy of Revolution* (1938).

In the kind of crisis the world is now undergoing, there seems something unpleasantly, and indeed dangerously, Laodicean in such reflections. There's no use trying to beat the Nazis, we may seem to imply; they will beat themselves anyway. Better sit back and do nothing; the equilibrium will take care of itself—it always has. Any such interpretation, however, contains a serious misunderstanding of what we have been trying to bring out. Any such interpretation is a shocking simplification, even of logic. The equilibrium is no static absolute. It changes, develops, certainly in part under the impetus of revolutions, certainly in part under the control of thinking and feeling men, certainly in part even under the influence of prophets like Nietzsche-Zarathustra. No sensible person would maintain that because it is impossible, even with all our practical and scientific knowledge of animal husbandry, to make a sheep into a gazelle, it is therefore impossible, if we want to, to breed more agile and graceful sheep, or even, by careful training, feeding and other kinds of control, to make existing sheep a trifle more agile and graceful. The Nazis will not make men into Supermen; they will not even very greatly change them. But they may change them, indeed they already have probably changed some of them, slightly in directions that must seem to most persons brought up in the United States very undesirable directions.

It may be that in order to oppose most effectively what the Nazis are trying to do, we must believe they are devils about to transform all humanity into devils. It may be that we cannot fight effectively unless we are all of us conditioned to belief in absolutes, to intolerance, to a single-minded concentration on the task of achieving the impossible. We may have to be

fanatics to prevail over fanatics, drunken to beat the drunken. But one of the strongest strains in the intellectual tradition we like to think of as that of the Western world is the rational and scientific strain. We are committed by that tradition to attempt to understand the social process and to guide that process slowly, realistically, and with as little violence as possible, by rational means towards rational ends. And neither Nazi means nor Nazi ends, as expressed in the deeds of their leaders and the words of their prophets, can seem to us rational. We cannot believe that their means will possibly attain the ends they profess to be working for; but we must believe that their means are bad ones, and that they should be checked. We may not succeed in checking them. Certainly we understand pathetically little about social change, but we must work with what little we have, or Nietzsche will indeed be enthroned as a prophet.

There is certainly a difficulty not too well concealed in all these fine words. It is probably a difficulty insoluble in words. We have argued that if we try to think rationally, "scientifically," about what the Nazis are doing, we come to the conclusion that they are not behaving sensibly. But does that mean anything more than that they are not behaving as we should like to have them behave? Or to put it another way, granted that it is possible to make sense out of the phrase "rational means," is it at all possible to make sense out of the phrase "rational ends"? Is not the scientific method limited to the study of means? Is it not therefore silly to maintain that a preference for democracy over totalitarianism can find any justification in the scientific attitude?

Certainly we are driven back ultimately to questions of value, of ends, of which we can only say, we want it so. Even the

device, a favorite one with rationalists and empiricists, of calling an end "useful" instead of "good" is perhaps only a dodge. But we live by dodges, unless we are philosophers. And the absolute can be dodged; we can make even our superlatives comparative. We can, with an effort, put the most attractive paradoxes out of our minds, if only by having recourse to a final paradox: the unattainable is unattainable.

Simply as a matter of faith, if you like, we may unworriedly assert that our way of life is more rational than the Nazi way of life. And we may unworriedly try to make our way of life prevail, even though we think that, since it *is* rational, it is bound to prevail. Indeed, experience gives excellent grounds for believing that men get more nearly what they want when they think they are bound to get what they want because God, Destiny, Nature, or Dialectical Materialism is on their side. We need not be ashamed to claim that Science and Reason are on our side. They are rather pale and colorless, as gods go, but they have got on well for quite a while with other gods — the Christian God, for instance. They promise less, but they may give more, than the god — the Supergod — of Nietzsche and the Nazis.

For this god is a little too new, a little too shiny and brassy. A really effective god is very hard to invent. Indeed, it was Nietzsche's failure to realize this that made his notion of the "Jewish conspiracy" so inadequate an explanation of the origins of Christianity. It does not seem that even in an attenuated form, even in a "transvaluation," Nietzsche's positive doctrines — the Supermen, the Will to Power, the transvaluation of all values, the Eternal Recurrence, and the rest — can be made the stuff of a religion to hold large numbers of men together. Great

religions may be a striving after the impossible, but not a striving after the paradox. There is something abstractly, noisily — yes, and coldly — intellectual about Nietzsche's work that makes it almost unadaptable to the religious needs of ordinary men. His excitements, his transportments are cerebral; his absolute a little squirrel running frantically about the cage of Nietzsche's mind. There is nothing earthy in this scorner of the Christian heaven. Even his madness is not divine, not even commonplace, but intellectual. The Supermen, if they come, will probably forget him, along with the rest of history. Until they come, his work will doubtless continue to look rather more like a *Rubaiyat* than a *Koran*.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

There are already hundreds of books on Nietzsche, and probably thousands of articles. Most writing about Nietzsche is in German but all the modern languages are well represented. The following bibliography represents a very considerable winnowing process. It is meant chiefly to afford the student a guide to the intensive study of Nietzsche, and is directed especially at English-speaking students. I have marked with an asterisk books I consider essential to the minimum basic Nietzsche collection. The division between works primarily biographical and those primarily critical is, of course, no more than a rough one. Most big books on Nietzsche are, like Andler's, both critical and biographical.

I

NIETZSCHE'S WORKS

A. THE WRITINGS

Die Geburt der Tragödie (The Birth of Tragedy), 1872.

Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen (Thoughts out of Season), 1873-1876.

Menschliches, Allzumenschliches (Human, All Too Human), 1878.

With the above in most current editions are now included: *Vermischte Meinungen und Sprüche* (Miscellaneous Maxims and Opinions), 1879, and *Der Wanderer und sein Schatten* (The Wanderer and his Shadow), 1879.

Morgenröte (The Dawn of Day), 1881.

Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft (The Joyful Wisdom), 1882.

Also sprach Zarathustra (Thus Spake Zarathustra), 1883-1884.

Jenseits von Gut und Böse (Beyond Good and Evil), 1886.

Zur Genealogie der Moral (The Genealogy of Morals), 1887.

Der Fall Wagner (The Case of Wagner), 1888.

Götzendämmerung (Twilight of the Idols), 1889.

Der Antichrist (The Antichrist), 1902.

Nietzsche contra Wagner, 1901.

Ecce Homo, 1908.

The three last titles above, published posthumously, are works designed as such by Nietzsche himself.

Der Wille zur Macht (The Will to Power), 1909-1910.

This book is a collection of Nietzsche's fragments, put together under his sister's directions. It is no more than scattered materials for the book of that name Nietzsche planned as his great work.

Nietzsche, Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe: Werke (Munich: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1933-).

This is the standard collected edition. Unfortunately only the following have appeared up to 1940: Vol. I, *Jugendschriften, 1854-1861*; Vol. II, *Jugendschriften, 1861-1864*; Vol. III, *Schriften der Studenten- und Militärzeit, 1864-1866*; Vol. IV, *Schriften der Studenten- und Militärzeit. Letzte Leipziger Zeit, 1866-1868*. A most complete and scholarly edition. But at present it stops short of Nietzsche's real work.

Nietzsche's Werke, 19 vols. (Leipzig: 1895-1913).

This is the so-called *Grossoctavausgabe*, edited by Nietzsche's sister. It includes, besides the usual books, three volumes called *Philologikā*, now vols. III and IV of the new *historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe* just mentioned. There is also a *Kleinoctavausgabe* with the same pagination, in which *Philologikā* is not available. Both these sets are now out of print.

Nietzsche, Die Unschuld des Werdens: Der Nachlass, edited by A. Baeumler, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Philipp Reclam, 1931).

This is a valuable collection of odds and ends of Nietzsche's remains, some not elsewhere available.

There are numerous German reprints of separate works, especially of *Also sprach Zarathustra*, pocket editions, and so on.

**The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*, edited by Dr. Oscar Levy, 18 vols. (London: 1909-1913).

This is the authorized English edition. It really is "complete" save for the juvenilia, the philological writings, and some fragments. The translations, by various hands, are usually adequate, sometimes excellent.

**The Philosophy of Nietzsche*, a "Modern Library Giant," with an introduction by W. H. Wright (New York: 1937).

A single volume, an admirable choice of the most representative of

Nietzsche's writings—*Zarathustra*, *Beyond Good and Evil*, *The Genealogy of Morals*, *Ecce Homo*, and *The Birth of Tragedy*—and quite sufficient for a general reader who wants a direct acquaintance with Nietzsche.

B. CORRESPONDENCE

Nietzsche, Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe: Briefe (Munich: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1938-).

Of this only the following have appeared: Vol. I, *Briefe der Schüler und Bonner Studentenzeit, 1850-1865*; Vol. II, *Briefe der Leipziger und ersten Basler Zeit, 1865-1869*. This is in some ways more valuable than the *Werke* in the same edition, for a great deal of careful annotation makes the edition very easy to use; and there are no other adequate editions of the letters.

Friedrich Nietzsche's Gesammelte Briefe, 5 vols, Vol. V in two parts (Berlin and Leipzig). The separate volumes exist in different printings, up to 1909.

This edition is the work of Nietzsche's sister. It certainly contains Nietzsche's most important letters. But it omits many proper names of then living persons. There are many scattered letters which presumably will be brought together in the new *historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe*. Meanwhile, many of them are listed in K. Jaspers, *Nietzsche* (Berlin and Leipzig: 1936).

**Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche*, edited by Dr. Oscar Levy (London: William Heinemann, 1921).

Based on the five-volume edition in German mentioned above. The translator is A. M. Ludovici. These are the best collected letters available in English.

La vie de Frédéric Nietzsche d'après sa correspondance, textes choisis et traduits par Georges Walz (Paris: Rieder, 1932).

This is a more generous choice of Nietzsche's letters than is available in English.

An indispensable tool for a thorough study of Nietzsche is the concordance to the works, by R. Oehler, published as Vol. XX of the *Grossoctavausgabe* in 1926 and separately as *Nietzschereregister* (Leipzig: F. Kröner, 1926). It refers to pages and volumes of either the *Gross* or the *Kleinoctavausgabe*.

II

MAINLY BIOGRAPHICAL

*Andler, Charles, *Nietzsche, sa vie et sa pensée*, 6 vols. (Paris: Bossard, 1920-1931).

Vol. II, *La jeunesse de Nietzsche* and Vol. IV, *La maturité de Nietzsche jusqu'à sa mort* are mainly biographical. This is the most scholarly study of Nietzsche's life. It neglects no important evidence, and tries to hold the balance between the *Nietzsche-Archiv* and Bernoulli-Overbeck. But it is frankly adulatory, the work of a very gentle Nietzschean. Andler actually thinks Nietzsche was at heart a socialist!

Andréas-Salomé, Lou, *Friedrich Nietzsche in seinen Werken*, new edition (Dresden: C. Reissner, 1927).

Unaltered reprint of the original edition of 1894. Lou "reveals" less personally than might be expected. Remains an interesting source for Nietzsche's biography.

*Bernoulli, C. A., *Franz Overbeck und Friedrich Nietzsche: Eine Freundschaft*, 2 vols. (Jena: 1908).

This, with its opposite, the work of Elizabeth Förster-Nietzsche, is the basis of any study of Nietzsche biography. Bernoulli has on the whole kept himself out of his book, content to put together material Overbeck had accumulated. Overbeck was a sensible man, who liked and admired Nietzsche, but who was aware of, and reported, traits not brought out by Elizabeth. The publication of this book began a most undignified feud, carried on in the best traditions of the German learned world, between Elizabeth and Bernoulli. Elizabeth got a court judgment suppressing from Vol. II of *Overbeck und Nietzsche* certain letters of Peter Gast's which the court decided were her property, as Nietzsche's heir. These passages are inked over in most copies of this volume, but with patience the words can be made out beneath the inking. They are not important.

Brann, H. W., *Nietzsche und die Frauen* (Leipzig: Meiner, 1931).

A very fair treatment of a difficult subject. Inevitably a certain amount of psychiatric and psychological jargon. Brann's general view is that Nietzsche wanted very much to have a normal sexual life, and that his failure to attain that purpose further disturbed his mental and physical balance.

Cohn, P., *Um Nietzsches Untergang* (Hannover: Morris-Verlag, 1931).

A modernized version of the pietistic *Nietzsche-Archiv* attitude towards Nietzsche's health.

- *Förster-Nietzsche, E., *The Life of Nietzsche*, translated by A. M. Ludovici, 2 vols. (London and New York: 1912-1915). Vol. I, *The Young Nietzsche*; Vol. II, *The Lonely Nietzsche*.

This is for most purposes the most useful of the various biographical writings his sister Elizabeth devoted to Nietzsche. It is pure worship, straight hagiographical writing. Elizabeth had all of her brother's determination, energy, and sense of being right. Otherwise, she was very stupid. She has no capacity at all for handling ideas. The book does, however, give biographical details nowhere else available.

- Halévy, D., *The Life of Friedrich Nietzsche*, translated from the French by J. M. Hone (London: 1911).

This is a good translation of a well-known French short life of Nietzsche, published in France in 1909. It is based largely on Elizabeth Förster-Nietzsche's work, but put together with infinitely more literary skill and tact. It is most sympathetic towards Nietzsche, who is pictured as a heroic martyr to Truth and Beauty in a vulgar, anarchic society. Halévy writes with full French sentimentality.

- Meyer, R. M., *Nietzsche, sein Leben und seine Werke* (Munich: 1913).
One of the pleasantest and soberest of German lives.

- Mügge, M. A., *Friedrich Nietzsche. His Life and Work*, third edition (London: 1911).

Part IV, pages 385-442, is headed "Bibliography and Iconography." It is very thorough, covering magazine articles in the major European languages. That a bibliography in 1911 could be so huge is symptomatic. It could no doubt be tripled in length today. Mügge's *Life* is not a distinguished one.

- Podach, E. F., *Nietzsches Zusammenbruch* (Heidelberg: N. Kampmann, 1930). French translation, *L'Effondrement de Nietzsche* (Paris: Librairie Gallimard, 1931). English translation, *The Madness of Nietzsche* (London and New York: Putnam, 1931).

The soundest general treatment of Nietzsche's physical and mental ills. Podach's notes incorporate a very full bibliography of the subject up to 1930.

- Der Kranke Nietzsche: Briefe seiner Mutter am Franz Overbeck*, edited by E. F. Podach (Vienna: Bermann-Fischer Verlag, 1937).

These letters from his mother to Overbeck cover the years 1889 to 1897, and give all sorts of details of Nietzsche's last illness.

III

MAINLY CRITICAL

A. NIETZSCHE'S IDEAS

*Andler, C., *Nietzsche, sa vie et sa pensée*.

Vol. III, *Le pessimisme esthétique de Nietzsche*, Vol. V, *Nietzsche et le transformisme intellectualiste*, Vol. VI, *La dernière philosophie de Nietzsche* are concerned with the exposition and criticism of Nietzsche's ideas. This part of Andler's work has been especially criticized in Germany, on the ground chiefly that Andler is not "philosopher" enough, that he is mere literary historian. There is no doubt some nationalistic feeling involved here. Andler's work is somewhat un-systematic and rambling. Its chief defect is its softening of Nietzsche's doctrines into the spiritual equivalent of French radical socialism.

*Baeumler, A., *Nietzsche der Philosoph und Politiker* (Leipzig: Philipp Reclam, 1931).

The orthodox, modern Nazi interpretation. The section on Nietzsche as philosopher is not too obviously tied up with politics.

Bertram, E., *Nietzsche: Versuch einer Mythologie* (Berlin: G. Bondi, 1918). Translated into French as *Nietzsche, Essai de Mythologie*, by R. Pitrou (Paris: Rieder, 1932).

This is a very popular work in Germany, where it has gone through many editions. It is literary, imaginative, "profound," in the tradition of German gentle Nietzscheans, with post-war elaborations. Like the later work of Jaspers, it gives glimpses of what the Nazis were to make of Nietzsche, but it is basically contrary to Nazi ideas and practices.

Brock, W., *Nietzsches Idee der Kultur* (Bonn: F. Cohen, 1930).

Büscher, G., *Nietzsches Wirkliches Gesicht* (Zürich: A. Rudolf, 1928).

One of the relatively few thoroughly hostile German works on Nietzsche. Incidentally, it was published in Zürich.

Carus, Paul, *Nietzsche* (New York: 1914).

A very hostile book. Carus attacks from the point of view of a nineteenth-century "progressive," a positive empiricist. Nietzsche himself was very fond of ridiculing these people, having begun with David Strauss. Not a good, nor even a well-composed book. Nietzsche's opponents generally have not been of the intellectual calibre of his supporters.

*Faguet, E., *En lisant Nietzsche* (Paris: 1904).

A very neat job of exposition, in some ways the best French writing on Nietzsche. Insufficiently appreciated by most Nietzscheans.

Figgis, J. N., *The Will to Freedom, or the Gospel of Nietzsche and the Gospel of Christ* (London: 1917).

The author of *From Gerson to Grotius* is not at his best in this book, which is badly organized and hastily written. But it is a good example of Nietzsche's hold over men of culture everywhere. Figgis resists Nietzsche, but feels his "charm."

Fischer, Hugo, *Nietzsche Apostata oder die Philosophie des Aergernisses* (Erfurt: K. Steuger, 1931).

Havenstein, M., *Nietzsche als Erzieher* (Berlin: E. S. Mittler and Sohn, 1922).

Treats rather of Nietzsche as philosopher than as "educator" in a specific sense; on the whole not out of the ruck of German books on Nietzsche, of which there are many too many.

Horneffer, E., *Nietzsche-Vorträge* (Leipzig: A. Kröner, 1920).

Jaspers, K., *Nietzsche* (Berlin and Leipzig: W. de Gruyter, 1936).

One of the last, and most subtle and thorough studies of Nietzsche in the German academic tradition, essentially a form of "gentle" Nietzscheanism. Jaspers is almost willing to admit that Nietzsche is what the reader finds in Nietzsche—but not quite. This book also has an admirable bibliography, in which Jaspers goes beyond conventional listing of books into a discussion of what kinds of writing on Nietzsche we still need.

Joel, K., *Nietzsche und die Romantik*, 2te Auflage (Jena: E. Diederichs, 1923).

Klages, L., *Die Psychologischen Errungenschaften Nietzsches* (Leipzig: J. A. Barth, 1926).

A long over-due study of Nietzsche's place as a psychologist, and his part in modern anti-intellectualism. An important book, if only for its influence. Klages is a romantic wildman, who sees Nietzsche as freeing men from the tyranny of *Geist* and giving them over to the unconscious, irrational, ecstatic capacities civilization has not wholly stifled—at least, not in Germany.

Knight, A. H. J., *Some Aspects of the Work of Nietzsche, and Particularly of his Connection with Greek Literature and Thought* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1933).

Sound, pleasant scholarship.

Lasserre, P., *Les idées de Nietzsche sur la musique* (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1919).

*Lichtenberger, H., *The Gospel of Superman*, translated from the French by J. M. Kennedy (New York: Macmillan, 1926).

For English-speaking students, this is the handiest form of Lichtenberger's *La philosophie de Nietzsche*, first published in French in 1898. It has the advantage of containing a later preface (1925) by the author. Lichtenberger was one of the early French Nietzscheans, but he remained a sensible and restrained one. He is less maudlin about the Master's gentle soul than Halévy or Andler; but he is sure Nietzsche is *un homme de bonne volonté*.

*Mencken, H. L., *The Philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche*, third edition (New York: 1913).

One of Mr. Mencken's earliest literary efforts. A good, colorful, exposition, assimilating Nietzsche to Mr. Mencken's own comfortable, hearty contempt for democratic mediocrity.

Mess, F., *Nietzsche der Gesetzgeber* (Leipzig: F. Meiner, 1930).

An enthusiastic jurist sees in Nietzsche a law-giver, Lycurgean rather than Hitlerian.

More, P. E., *Nietzsche* (Boston: 1912).

A slender booklet, one of the relatively few thoroughly repudiating Nietzsche's whole work. Unlike Figgis, More was not "charmed" by Nietzsche. More's position is that of a cultivated Christian admirer of Plato, on whom almost every sentence of Nietzsche's grates painfully.

Obenauer, K. J., *Friedrich Nietzsche, der ekstatische Nihilist* (Jena: E. Diederichs, 1924).

Richter, R., *Friedrich Nietzsche: sein Leben und sein Werk*, 3te Auflage (Leipzig: F. Meiner, 1917).

Sixteen lectures delivered at the University of Leipzig. Emphasizes Nietzsche as a philosopher of growth, evolution. Clear, a bit heavy.

Riehl, A., *Friedrich Nietzsche, der Künstler und der Denker* (Stuttgart: 1897).

One of the best of the early critical expositions of Nietzsche's philosophy.

Rittelmeyer, *Friedrich Nietzsche und die Religion. Vier Vorträge* (Ulm: 1904).

This is a good example of the respect German protestant ministers often held for Nietzsche.

- Salter, W. K., *Nietzsche the Thinker: A Study* (New York: 1917).
Thorough, conscientious exposition and defense of Nietzsche as a gentleman and seer, written partly against the Anglo-American clamor about Nietzsche's responsibility for the War of 1914.
- Stein, L., *Friedrich Nietzsches Weltanschauung und ihre Gefahren* (Berlin: 1893).
An early cry of alarm.
- Vaihinger, H., *Nietzsche als Philosoph* (Berlin: 1902).
An admirable analysis and commentary.
- Wright, W. H., *What Nietzsche Taught* (New York: 1915).
The creator of Philo Vance here makes a routine analysis of Nietzsche's writings, book by book.

B. NIETZSCHE'S RELATIONS WITH OTHER THINKERS

The whole field of Nietzsche's *Belesenheit*, of his reading, his intellectual debts to predecessors and contemporaries, is best covered by Andler. The whole of Vol. I, *Les précurseurs de Nietzsche*, is a meticulous, sometimes far-fetched, study of possible "influences" on Nietzsche. The other five volumes touch frequently on Nietzsche's intellectual debts. All such studies in the affiliation of ideas are, of course, weakened by the fact that we don't know very much about how ideas breed. Andler's assumptions as to the origins of ideas and their spread are those of the ordinary nineteenth-century French scholar trained as a literary historian.

- Belart, H., *Friedrich Nietzsche und Richard Wagner* (Berlin: 1907).
One of the standard brief treatments. Of course all the biographers of Nietzsche have paid particular attention to the Wagner episode. This is true of the major three: Elizabeth Förster-Nietzsche, C. A. Bernoulli (Overbeck) and Charles Andler.
- Dippel, P. G., *Nietzsche und Wagner* (Berlin: P. Haupt, 1934).
(Reprinted from *Sprache und Dichtung*, Vol. LIV.)
General essay on their relations, main interest psychological.
- **The Nietzsche-Wagner Correspondence*, edited by E. Förster-Nietzsche, translated by Caroline V. Kerr (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1921).
Elizabeth's pathetic attempt to agree with Wagner and her brother at the same time.

Griesser, L., *Nietzsche und Wagner* (Vienna: Hölder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1923).

A rather prolix account of their psychological and "ideological" relations.

Hildebrandt, K., *Wagner und Nietzsche: Ihr Kampf gegen das XIX Jahrhundert* (Breslau: F. Hirt, 1924).

An indication of the coming National Socialist use of both of these German culture-heroes.

Lessing, T., *Schopenhauer, Wagner, Nietzsche* (Munich: 1906).

One of the best comparative studies of the ideas of Nietzsche and his two "masters."

Löwith, K., *Kierkegaard und Nietzsche* (Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1933).

Podach, E. F., *Gestalten um Nietzsche* (Weimar: E. Lichtenstein, 1932).

Extremely valuable work on some of Nietzsche's friends and their relations with him — that on Gast is especially good.

Rosengarth, W., *Nietzsche und George* (Leipzig: R. Hadl, 1934).

Simmel, G., *Schopenhauer und Nietzsche*, 3te Auflage (Munich: Duncker and Humblot, 1923).

Strecker, K., *Nietzsche und Strindberg* (Munich: G. Müller, 1921).

IV

NIETZSCHE'S REPUTATION AND INFLUENCE

A. GENERAL

It is too bad that the late Charles Andler, who knew more about Nietzsche than any scholar ever has known, did not add a volume on *Le rayonnement des idées de Nietzsche*. This most important study of what men have made of Nietzsche's ideas is the most neglected phase of Nietzschean scholarship. I have had to piece together my chapters on Nietzsche's reputation and influence from very diverse materials. Here I list only those books that deal with fairly large aspects of Nietzsche's influence.

Benda, J., *La trahison des clercs* (Paris: B. Grasset, 1927). Translated into English by R. Aldington as *The Treason of the Intellectuals* (New York: W. Morrow, 1928).

Nietzsche is for Benda one of the most important of the literary men of our time who have "betrayed" us.

Bianquis, Geneviève, *Nietzsche en France* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1929).

By a disciple of Andler. Thorough and very useful. Good bibliography.

Deesz, Gisela, *Die Entwicklung des Nietzsche-Bildes in Deutschland* (Würzburg: K. Triltsch, 1933).

A doctoral dissertation, and rather slender. Deals chiefly with the interpretation of Nietzsche by German academic philosophers from Vaihinger to Baeumler. A useful, if limited, summary.

Gundolf, E. and Hildebrandt, K., *Nietzsche als Richter unser Zeit* (Breslau: F. Hirt, 1923).

Horneffer, E., *Nietzsche als Vorbote der Gegenwart* (Düsseldorf: A. Bagel, 1935).

Nicolas, M. P., *De Nietzsche à Hitler* (Paris: Fasquelle, 1936). English translation, *From Nietzsche down to Hitler* (London: W. Hodge and Company, 1938).

A warm defense of Nietzsche from "abuse" by the Nazis. Nicolas insists that nothing in Nietzsche's writings can be legitimately and logically given a sense favorable to the Nazis. The notes cover a good range of the literature on Nietzsche.

Spengler, O., "Nietzsche und sein Jahrhundert," in his *Reden und Aufsätze* (Munich: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1937). More of Spengler.

Spénlé, J. E., "Nietzsche médiateur spirituel entre la France et l'Allemagne," *Mercure de France* (Paris), CCLXXVI (1937), 275.

Alas!

Stewart, H. L., *Nietzsche and the Ideals of Modern Germany* (London: 1915).

A good example of a book produced by the Four Years' War. Stewart thinks Nietzsche had a large part in preparing Germany to make the aggression of 1914.

B. NIETZSCHE AND THE NAZIS

A bibliography here, especially if extended to magazine articles, would be very extensive. The following will, I think, give the reader a satisfactory notion of the official place Nietzsche now (1940) has in the "ideology" of the Nazi movement.

Aberdam, S., "Nietzsche et le 3^me Reich," *Mercure de France* (Paris), CCLXXV (1937), 225.

The old French Nietzschean tradition, always dear to the *Mercure de France*. Nietzsche was really *doux, tendre*, and the Nazis are abusing his memory. Contains some useful material.

Baeumler, A., *Nietzsche der Philosoph und Politiker* (Leipzig: Philipp Reclam, 1931).

A brief popular statement, now become authoritative in view of Baeumler's present chair at the University of Berlin.

Baeumler, A., "Nietzsche und der Nationalsozialismus" in his *Studien zur deutschen Geistesgeschichte* (Berlin: Junker and Dünhaupt, 1937).

Cogni, G., "Nietzsche e la Germania," *Bibliografica fascista* (Rome), 10th year (1935), 451.

A long review of the French translation of Bertram's *Nietzsche*, with many side-lights on the fascist view of Nietzsche.

Gawronsky, D., *Nietzsche und das Dritte Reich* (Bern: Herbert Lang, 1935).

Günther, H. F. K., *Der nordische Gedanke unter den Deutschen* (Munich: J. F. Lehmann, 1927).

Haertle, H., *Nietzsche und der Nationalsozialismus*, 2te Auflage (Munich: F. Eher Nachfolger, 1939).

A veritable handbook, listing what of Nietzsche a good Nazi can accept, and what he must reject. First published in 1937, it has already had a second edition.

Kirchner, E., "Nietzsches Lehren im Lichte der Rassenhygiene," *Archiv für Rassen- und Gesellschaftsbiologie* (Berlin), XVII (1926), 379.

Lauret, R., "Nietzsche et le 3^me Reich," *Le Temps* (Paris, October 22, 1934).

Lefebvre, H., *Nietzsche* (Paris: Editions sociales internationales, 1939).

Chapter iii is entitled "Nietzsche et notre temps." Lefebvre on the eve of the current war concludes that Nietzsche was in no sense a fascist, Nazi, or totalitarian. He was a socialist, and his ideas "fall naturally in with the Marxist conception of man." Lefebvre and Haertle (see above) are almost word for word and on almost every point in complete contradiction as to what Nietzsche meant: this, no doubt, is a sign of Nietzsche's final success as a philosopher.

Lonsbach, R. M., *Nietzsche und die Juden* (Stockholm: Bermann-Fischer Verlag, 1939).

Lonsbach is a gentle Nietzschean, who maintains that Nietzsche meant the nice things he said about the Jews, but that the bad things he said about them must be worked into a higher synthesis. The book was *not* published in Germany.

Ludovici, A., "Hitler and Nietzsche," *English Review* (London), LXIV (1937), 44, 192.

Ludovici was rather more than an appeaser at this time—he was frankly pro-Hitler. He holds that the Nazis have restored the "biological" and "pre-Socratic" values, and are hence good Nietzscheans.

Miéville, H. L., *Nietzsche et la volonté de puissance, ou l'aventure Nietzscheenne et le temps présent* (Lausanne: Payot, 1935).

Mis, L., "Nietzsche et Stefan George, précurseurs de 3^{me} Reich," *Revue d'histoire de la philosophie* (Paris), nouvelle serie, fascicule 11 (July 15, 1935), 204.

Oehler, R., *Friedrich Nietzsche und die deutsche Zukunft* (Leipzig: Armanen-Verlag, 1935).

Prinzhorn, Hans, *Nietzsche und das XX Jahrhundert* (Heidelberg: N. Kampmann, 1928).

Scheuffler, G., *Friedrich Nietzsche im Dritten Reich* (Erfurt: E. Scheuffler, 1933).

A little pamphlet, emphasizing the curious notion that Nietzsche would have approved especially the National Socialist effort to do away with classes.

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