

was once difficult to become a Christian, now I believe it becomes increasingly difficult year by year, because it has now become so easy that the only ambition which stirs any competition is that of becoming a speculative philosopher. And yet the speculative philosopher is perhaps at the farthest possible remove from Christianity, and it is perhaps far preferable to be an offended individual who nevertheless sustains a relation to Christianity than a speculative philosopher who assumes to have understood it. In so far there is hope that there will be some resemblance left between a Christian now and in the earliest days, so that it will again be regarded as folly for anyone to entertain the notion of becoming a Christian. In the earliest days the Christian was a fool in the eyes of the world, and to Jews and pagans alike it seemed folly for anyone to seek to become one. Now we are Christians as a matter of course, but if anyone desires to be a Christian with infinite passion he is judged to be a fool, just as it is always folly to put forth an infinite passionate exertion for the sake of becoming what one already is; as if a man were to sacrifice all his wealth to buy a jewel—which he already owned. Formerly a Christian was a fool in the eyes of the world, and now that all men are Christians he nevertheless becomes a fool—in the eyes of Christians.

Nietzsche: "LIVE DANGEROUSLY"

[*Preface:* Friedrich Nietzsche was born in Germany in 1844 and died in 1900. Few thinkers of any age equal his influence. In England and in the United States it was long customary to associate him with the Nazis, which is rather like linking St. Francis with the Inquisition in which the order he had founded played a major role. Otherwise, to be sure, the two men have little in common. What is unique about Nietzsche's impact is not that the Nazis, who had no use at all for any of his books as a whole, brazenly used him, too, but that within a generation of his death he had profoundly influenced such men as Rilke, Hesse, Thomas Mann, Stefan George, Shaw, Gide, and Malraux—indeed the whole climate of German and French literature and thought. The existentialism of Jaspers, Heidegger, and Sartre is only one facet of this multifarious impact.

The purpose of the following selections is not to illustrate this multiplicity but rather to bring out that aspect of his thought which makes his inclusion in the story of existentialism imperative.

The initial selection is from the "untimely meditation" on *Schopenhauer as Educator* which was published when Nietzsche was 30 and still a professor of classical philology at Basel. Like some of the following selections, too, it was especially translated for this volume. The four items of the second selection come from *The Dawn*, section 173, and *The Gay Science*, sections 125, 283, and 290. The titles are

Nietzsche's own—also in the case of the immediately following chapter from his *Zarathustra*.

The Will to Power is a book composed by Nietzsche's sister out of the notes he left, some still unutilized, some long employed in the writing of his books. The preface is one of several drafts for a major work he hoped to write. The beginning of Book I, as it now stands, is literally only jottings for a book he did not live to write. *Ecce Homo*, completed in 1888, was published only in 1908 after many of the misconceptions which the author had tried frantically to forestall had taken firm root.]

1. "The Challenge of Every Great Philosophy"

A traveler who had seen many countries and peoples and several continents was asked what human traits he had found everywhere; and he answered: men are inclined to laziness. Some will feel that he might have said with greater justice: they are all timorous. They hide behind customs and opinions. At bottom, every human being knows very well that he is in this world just once, as something unique, and that no accident, however strange, will throw together a second time into a unity such a curious and diffuse plurality: he knows it, but hides it like a bad conscience—why? From fear of his neighbor who insists on convention and veils himself with it. But what is it that compels the individual human being to fear his neighbor, to think and act herd-fashion, and not to be glad of himself? A sense of shame, perhaps, in a few rare cases. In the vast majority it is the desire for comfort, inertia—in short, that inclination to laziness of which the traveler spoke. He is right: men are even lazier than they are timorous, and what they fear most is the troubles with which any unconditional honesty and nudity would burden them. Only artists hate this slovenly life in borrowed manners and loosely fitting opinions and unveil the secret, everybody's bad conscience, the principle that every human being is a unique wonder; they dare to show us the human being as he is, down to the last muscle, himself and himself alone—even more, that in this rigorous consistency of his uniqueness he is beautiful and worth contemplating, as novel and incredible as every work of nature, and by no means dull. When a great thinker despises men, it is their laziness

that he despises: for it is on account of this that they have the appearance of factory products and seem indifferent and unworthy of companionship or instruction. The human being who does not wish to belong to the mass must merely cease being comfortable with himself; let him follow his conscience which shouts at him: "Be yourself! What you are at present doing, opining, and desiring, that is not really you." . . .

I care for a philosopher only to the extent that he is able to be an example. . . . Kant clung to the university, subjected himself to governments, remained within the appearance of religious faith, and endured colleagues and students: it is small wonder that his example produced in the main university professors and professors' philosophy. Schopenhauer has no consideration for the scholars' caste, stands apart, strives for independence of state and society—this is his example, his model, to begin with the most external features. . . . He was an out and out solitary; there was not one really congenial friend to comfort him—and between one and none there gapes, as always between something and nothing, an infinity. No one who has true friends can know what true solitude means, even if the whole world surrounding him should consist of adversaries. Alas, I can see that you do not know what it means to be alone. Wherever there have been powerful societies, governments, religions, or public opinions—in short, wherever there was any kind of tyranny, it has hated the lonely philosopher; for philosophy opens up a refuge for man where no tyranny can reach: the cave of inwardness, the labyrinth of the breast; and that annoys all tyrants. That is where the lonely hide; but there too they encounter their greatest danger. . . .

This was the first danger that overshadowed Schopenhauer's development: isolation. The second danger is to despair of truth. This danger confronts every thinker who begins from Kant's philosophy, assuming that he is a vigorous and whole human being in his suffering and aspiration and not merely a clacking thinking- or calculating-machine. . . . As soon as Kant would begin to exert a popular influence, we should find it reflected in the form of a gnawing and crumbling skepticism and relativism; and only among the most active and noble spirits, who have never been able to endure doubt, you would find in its place that upheaval and despair of all truth which Heinrich von Kleist, for example, experi-

enced as an effect of Kant's philosophy. "Not long ago," he once writes in his moving manner, "I became acquainted with Kant's philosophy; and now I must tell you of a thought in it, inasmuch as I cannot fear that it will upset you as profoundly and painfully as me. We cannot decide whether that which we call truth is really truth or whether it merely appears that way to us. If the latter is right, then the truth we gather here comes to nothing after our death; and every aspiration to acquire a possession which will follow us even into the grave is futile. If the point of this idea does not penetrate your heart, do not smile at another human being who feels wounded by it in his holiest depths. My only, my highest aim has sunk, and I have none left." When will human beings again have the natural feelings of a Kleist? When will they learn again to measure the meaning of a philosophy by their "holiest depths"?

This, however, is necessary to estimate what, after Kant, Schopenhauer might mean to us. He can be the guide to lead us out of the cave of skeptical irritation or critical resignation up to the height of a tragic view, with the starry nocturnal sky stretching endlessly over us; and he was the first to lead himself this way. His greatness was that he confronted the image of life as a whole in order to interpret it as a whole, while the subtlest minds cannot be freed from the error that one can come closer to such an interpretation if one examines painstakingly the colors with which this image has been painted and the material underneath. . . .

The whole future of all the sciences is staked on an attempt to understand this canvas and these colors, but not the image. It could be said that only a man who has a firm grasp of the over-all picture of life and existence can use the individual sciences without harming himself; for without such a regulative total image they are strings that reach no end anywhere and merely make our lives still more confused and labyrinthine. In this, as I have said, lies Schopenhauer's greatness: that he pursues this image as Hamlet pursues the ghost, without permitting himself to be distracted, as the scholars do, and without letting himself be caught in the webs of a conceptual scholasticism, as happens to the unrestrained dialectician. The study of all quarter-philosophers is attractive only insofar as we see how they immediately make for those spots in the edifice of a great philosophy where the scholarly pro and con, and reflection, doubt, and

contradiction are permitted; and thus they avoid the challenge of every great philosophy which, when taken as a whole, always says only: this is the image of all life, and from this learn the meaning of your life! And conversely: Read only your own life, and from this understand the hieroglyphs of universal life!

This is how Schopenhauer's philosophy, too, should always be interpreted first of all: individually, by the single human being alone for himself, to gain some insight into his own misery and need, into his own limitation . . . He teaches us to distinguish between real and apparent promotions of human happiness: how neither riches, nor honors, nor scholarship can raise the individual out of his discouragement over the worthlessness of his existence, and how the striving for these goals can receive meaning only from a high and transfiguring over-all aim: to gain power to help nature and to correct a little its follies and blunders. To begin with, for oneself; but eventually through oneself for all. That is, to be sure, an aspiration which leads us profoundly and heartily to resignation: for what, and how much, can after all be improved in the individual or in general? . . .

2. "The Gay Science"

The eulogists of work Behind the glorification of "work" and the tireless talk of the "blessings of work" I find the same thought as behind the praise of impersonal activity for the public benefit: the fear of everything individual. At bottom, one now feels when confronted with work—and what is invariably meant is relentless industry from early till late—that such work is the best policy, that it keeps everybody in harness and powerfully obstructs the development of reason, of covetousness, of the desire for independence. For it uses up a tremendous amount of nervous energy and takes it away from reflection, brooding, dreaming, worry, love, and hatred; it always sets a small goal before one's eyes and permits easy and regular satisfactions. In that way a society in which the members continually work hard will have more security: and security is now adored as the supreme goddess. And now—horrors!—it is precisely the "worker" who has become dangerous. "Dangerous individuals are swarming all around." And behind them, the danger of dangers: the individual.

The Madman Have you not heard of that madman who lit a lantern in the bright morning hours, ran to the market place, and cried incessantly, "I seek God! I seek God!" As many of those who do not believe in God were standing around just then, he provoked much laughter. Why, did he get lost? said one. Did he lose his way like a child? said another. Or is he hiding? Is he afraid of us? Has he gone on a voyage? or emigrated? Thus they yelled and laughed. The madman jumped into their midst and pierced them with his glances.

"Whither is God?" he cried. "I shall tell you. *We have killed him*—you and I. All of us are his murderers. But how have we done this? How were we able to drink up the sea? Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the entire horizon? What did we do when we unchained this earth from its sun? Whither is it moving now? Whither are we moving now? Away from all suns? Are we not plunging continually? Backward, sideward, forward, in all directions? Is there any up or down left? Are we not straying as through an infinite nothing? Do we not feel the breath of empty space? Has it not become colder? Is not night and more night coming on all the while? Must not lanterns be lit in the morning? Do we not hear anything yet of the noise of the grave-diggers who are burying God? Do we not smell anything yet of God's decomposition? Gods too decompose. God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him. How shall we, the murderers of all murderers, comfort ourselves? What was holiest and most powerful of all that the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives. Who will wipe this blood off us? What water is there for us to clean ourselves? What festivals of atonement, what sacred games shall we have to invent? Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must not we ourselves become gods simply to seem worthy of it? There has never been a greater deed; and whoever will be born after us—for the sake of this deed he will be part of a higher history than all history hitherto."

Here the madman fell silent and looked again at his listeners; and they too were silent and stared at him in astonishment. At last he threw his lantern on the ground, and it broke and went out. "I come too early," he said then; "my time has not come yet. This tremendous event is still on its way, still wandering—it has not yet reached the ears of man. Lightning and thunder require time, the light of the

stars requires time, deeds require time even after they are done, before they can be seen and heard. This deed is still more distant from them than the most distant stars—and yet they have done it themselves."

It has been related further that on that same day the madman entered divers churches and there sang his *requiem aeternam deo*. Led out and called to account, he is said to have replied each time, "What are these churches now if they are not the tombs and sepulchers of God?"

Preparatory men I welcome all signs that a more manly, a warlike, age is about to begin, an age which, above all, will give honor to valor once again. For this age shall prepare the way for one yet higher, and it shall gather the strength which this higher age will need one day—this age which is to carry heroism into the pursuit of knowledge and wage wars for the sake of thoughts and their consequences. To this end we now need many preparatory valorous men who cannot leap into being out of nothing—any more than out of the sand and slime of our present civilization and metropolitanism: men who are bent on seeking for that aspect in all things which must be overcome; men characterized by cheerfulness, patience, unpretentiousness, and contempt for all great vanities, as well as by magnanimity in victory and forbearance regarding the small vanities of the vanquished; men possessed of keen and free judgment concerning all victors and the share of chance in every victory and every fame; men who have their own festivals, their own weekdays, their own periods of mourning, who are accustomed to command with assurance and are no less ready to obey when necessary, in both cases equally proud and serving their own cause; men who are in greater danger, more fruitful, and happier! For, believe me, the secret of the greatest fruitfulness and the greatest enjoyment of existence is: to *live dangerously!* Build your cities under Vesuvius! Send your ships into uncharted seas! Live at war with your peers and yourselves! Be robbers and conquerors, as long as you cannot be rulers and owners, you lovers of knowledge! Soon the age will be past when you could be satisfied to live like shy deer, hidden in the woods! At long last the pursuit of knowledge will reach out for its due: it will want to *rule and own*, and you with it!

One thing is needful "Giving style" to one's character—

a great and rare art! It is exercised by those who see all the strengths and weaknesses of their own natures and then comprehend them in an artistic plan until everything appears as art and reason and even weakness delights the eye. Here a large mass of second nature has been added; there a piece of original nature has been removed: both by long practice and daily labor. Here the ugly which could not be removed is hidden; there it has been reinterpreted and made sublime. . . . It will be the strong and domineering natures who enjoy their finest gaiety in such compulsion, in such constraint and perfection under a law of their own; the passion of their tremendous will relents when confronted with stylized, conquered, and serving nature; even when they have to build palaces and lay out gardens, they demur at giving nature a free hand. Conversely, it is the weak characters without power over themselves who *hate* the constraint of style. . . . They become slaves as soon as they serve; they hate to serve. Such spirits—and they may be of the first rank—are always out to interpret themselves and their environment as *free* nature—wild, arbitrary, fantastic, disorderly, astonishing; and they will do well because only in this way do they please themselves. For one thing is needful: that a human being attain his satisfaction with himself—whether it be by this or by that poetry and art; only then is a human being at all tolerable to behold. Whoever is dissatisfied with himself is always ready to revenge himself therefor; we others will be his victims, if only by always having to stand his ugly sight. For the sight of the ugly makes men bad and gloomy.

3. On Free Death

Many die too late, and a few die too early. The doctrine still sounds strange: "Die at the right time!"

Die at the right time—thus teaches Zarathustra. Of course, how could those who never live at the right time die at the right time? Would that they had never been born! Thus I counsel the superfluous. But even the superfluous still make a fuss about their dying; and even the hollowest nut still wants to be cracked. Everybody considers dying important; but as yet death is no festival. As yet men have not learned how one hallows the most beautiful festivals.

I show you the death that consummates—a spur and a

promise to the survivors. He that consummates his life dies his death victoriously, surrounded by those who hope and promise. Thus should one learn to die; and there should be no festival where one dying thus does not hallow the oaths of the living.

To die thus is best; second to this, however, is to die fighting and to squander a great soul. But equally hateful to the fighter and the victor is your grinning death, which creeps up like a thief—and yet comes as the master.

My death I praise to you, the free death which comes to me because *I* want it. And when shall I want it? He who has a goal and an heir will want death at the right time for his goal and heir. And from reverence for his goal and heir he will hang no more dry wreaths in the sanctuary of life. Verily, I do not want to be like the ropemakers: they drag out their threads and always walk backwards.

Some become too old even for their truths and victories: a toothless mouth no longer has the right to every truth. And everybody who wants fame must take leave of honor betimes and practice the difficult art of leaving at the right time.

One must cease letting oneself be eaten when one tastes best: that is known to those who want to be loved long. There are sour apples, to be sure, whose lot requires that they wait till the last day of autumn: and they become ripe, yellow, and wrinkled all at once. In some, the heart grows old first; in others, the spirit. And some are old in their youth: but late youth preserves long youth.

For some, life turns out badly: a poisonous worm eats its way to their heart. Let them see to it that their dying turns out that much better. Some never become sweet; they rot already in the summer. It is cowardice that keeps them on their branch.

All-too-many live, and all-too-long they hang on their branches. Would that a storm came to shake all this worm-eaten rot from the tree!

Would that there came preachers of *quick* death! I would like them as the true storms and shakers of the trees of life. But I hear only slow death preached, and patience with everything "earthly".

Alas, do you preach patience with the earthly? It is the earthly that has too much patience with you, blasphemers!

Verily, that Hebrew died too early whom the preachers of slow death honor; and for many it has become a calamity

that he died too early. As yet he knew only tears and the melancholy of the Hebrew, and hatred of the good and the just—the Hebrew Jesus: then the longing for death overcame him. Would that he had remained in the wilderness and far from the good and the just! Perhaps he would have learned to live and to love the earth—and laughter too.

Believe me, my brothers! He died too early; he himself would have recanted his teaching, had he reached my age. Noble enough was he to recant. But he was not yet mature. Immature is the love of the youth, and immature his hatred of man and earth. His mind and the wings of his spirit are still tied down and heavy.

But in the man there is more of the child than in the youth, and less melancholy: he knows better how to die and to live. Free to die and free in death, able to say a holy No when the time for Yes has passed: thus he knows how to die and to live.

That your dying be no blasphemy against man and earth, my friends, that I ask of the honey of your soul. In your dying, your spirit and virtue should still glow like a sunset around the earth: else your dying has turned out badly.

Thus I want to die myself that you, my friends, may love the earth more for my sake; and to earth I want to return that I may find rest in her who gave birth to me.

Verily, Zarathustra had a goal; he threw his ball: now you, my friends, are the heirs of my goal; to you I throw my golden ball. More than anything, I like to see you, my friends, throwing the golden ball. And so I still linger a little on the earth; forgive me for that.

Thus spoke Zarathustra.

4. The Beginning of "The Will to Power"

PREFACE

I Of what is great one must either be silent or speak with greatness. With greatness—that means cynically and with innocence.

II What I relate is the history of the next two centuries. I describe what is coming, what can no longer come differently: *the advent of nihilism*. . . . Our whole European culture is moving for some time now, with a tortured tension that is growing from decade to decade, as toward a catastro-

phe: restlessly, violently, headlong, like a river that wants to reach the end, that no longer reflects, that is afraid to reflect.

III He that speaks here has, conversely, done nothing so far but to reflect: as a philosopher and solitary by instinct who has found his advantage in standing aside, outside . . .

IV . . . Why has the advent of nihilism become necessary? Because the values we have had hitherto thus draw their final consequence; because nihilism represents the ultimate logical conclusion of our great values and ideals—because we must experience nihilism before we can find out what value these "values" really had.—We require, at some time, new values.

BOOK ONE: EUROPEAN NIHILISM

I Nihilism stands at the door: whence comes this uncanniest of all guests? Point of departure: it is an error to consider "social distress" or "physiological degeneration," or corruption of all things, as the cause of nihilism. Ours is the most honest and compassionate age. Distress, whether psychic, physical, or intellectual, need not at all produce nihilism (that is, the radical rejection of value, meaning, and desirability). Such distress always permits a variety of interpretations. Rather: it is in one particular interpretation, the Christian moral one, that nihilism is rooted.

II The end of Christianity—at the hands of its own morality (which cannot be replaced), which turns against the Christian God: the sense of truthfulness, highly developed by Christianity, is nauseated by the falseness and mendaciousness of all Christian interpretations of the world and of history; rebound from "God is the truth" to the fanatical faith "All is false"; an active Buddhism.

III Skepticism regarding morality is what is decisive. The end of the moral interpretation of the world, which no longer has any sanction after it has tried to escape into some beyond, leads to nihilism. "All lacks meaning." (The untenability of one interpretation of the world, upon which a tremendous amount of energy has been lavished, awakens the suspicion that all interpretations of the world are false.) . . .

IV Against this "meaninglessness" on the one hand, against our moral prejudices on the other: to what extent was all science and philosophy so far influenced by moral judgments? and will this not arouse the hostility of science?

or an anti-scientific mentality? . . . A critique of Christian morality is still lacking.

v . . . Since Copernicus man is rolling from the center toward x.

5. From "Ecce Homo"

In the end, nobody hears more out of things, including books, than he knows already. For that to which one lacks access from experience, one has no ears. Let us then imagine an extreme case: that a book speaks of all sorts of experiences which lie utterly beyond any possibility of frequent, or even rare, experiences—that it represents the first language for a new sequence of experiences. In that case, simply nothing is heard; and people have the acoustic illusion that where nothing is heard there *is* nothing.

This has been my usual experience and, if you will, the originality of my experience. Whoever thought that he had understood something of me had merely construed something out of me, after his own image. Not infrequently, it was an antithesis of me—for example, an "idealist"—and those who had understood nothing of me would deny that I should even be considered.

The word "overman," meant to designate a type that has turned out supremely well, by way of an antithesis to "modern" men, to "good" men, to Christians and other nihilists—a word which, coming from a Zarathustra, the annihilator of morality, becomes a very thoughtful word—has almost universally been understood with the greatest innocence in line with the very values whose antithesis has been embodied in the figure of Zarathustra: I mean, as an "idealistic" type of a higher kind of human being, half "saint," half "genius." Other scholarly oxen have suspected me of Darwinism in this connection. Even the "hero worship" of that great unconscious and involuntary counterfeiter, Carlyle, which I repudiate so maliciously, has been read into it.

* * *

In the end, why should I not give expression to my suspicion? Faced with a tremendous destiny, the Germans will once again make every attempt, in my case, too, to give birth to a mouse. So far, they have compromised themselves in relation to me; I doubt that in future they will do better. Oh,

how I wish to be a bad prophet this once!—My natural readers and listeners are even now Russians, Scandinavians, and Frenchmen. Will it always be that way?

In the history of knowledge the Germans are inscribed with a series of ambiguous names: they have never produced anything but "unconscious" counterfeiters. (Fichte, Schelling, Schopenhauer, Hegel, Schleiermacher deserve this term no less than Kant and Leibniz: all of them are mere Schleiermacher—veil-makers.) They shall never have the honor that the first *honest* spirit in the history of the spirit—the spirit in whom truth has come to sit in judgment over the counterfeiting of four thousand years—should be identified with the German spirit. The "German spirit" is for *me* bad air: I find it hard to breathe near this uncleanness *in psychologicis* which has become instinctive and betrays itself in the words and mien of every German. They have never gone through a seventeenth century of hard self-examination like the French: men like La Rochefoucauld or Descartes are a hundred times superior in honesty to the most eminent Germans. To this day, they have had no psychologist. But psychology is almost the measure for the *cleanliness* or *uncleanliness* of a race. . . .

What is called "deep" in Germany is precisely this instinctive uncleanliness in relation toward oneself of which I am speaking: one does not *want* clarity about oneself.

I do not *want* "believers"; I think I am too sarcastic to believe in myself; I never speak to masses.

I have a terrible fear that some day one will pronounce me *holy*: one will guess why I bring out this book *before*; it shall prevent that one raises the devil with me.

I do not want to be a saint, rather even a buffoon.—Perhaps I am a buffoon.—Nevertheless—or rather, *not* nevertheless, for to date nothing has been more mendacious than saints—the truth speaks out of me.