

ON PHILOSOPHY AT THE UNIVERSITIES

Ἡ ἀτιμία φιλοσοφία διὰ ταῦτα προσπέπτωκεν. ὅτι οὐ κατ' ἀξίαν αὐτῆς
ἄπτονται· οὐ γὰρ νόθους ἔδει ἄπτεσθαι, ἀλλὰ γνησίους.

Plato, *The Republic*, Book VII.

['Philosophy has fallen into contempt because people are not engaged in it to the extent that it merits; for not spurious, but genuine, philosophers should devote themselves to it.']

Arthur Schopenhauer, "On Philosophy at the Universities," in *Parerga and Paralipomena* Vol. 1, trans. by E. F. J. Payne (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), 137-197.

On Philosophy at the Universities

THE teaching of philosophy at universities certainly benefits it in various ways. Thus it obtains an official existence and its standard is raised before the eyes of men whereby its existence is constantly brought to mind and men are made aware of it. But the main advantage from this will be that many a young and capable mind is made acquainted with it and is encouraged to study it. Yet it must be admitted that, whoever is capable and thus in need of it, would also come across it and make its acquaintance in other ways. For those who cherish one another, and are born for one another, readily come together; kindred souls already greet one another from afar. Thus such a man will be more powerfully and effectively stirred by every work of any genuine philosopher which happens to come into his hands than is possible through the lectures of a chair-philosopher, such as are given by the day. Plato should also be carefully read on the classical side of schools because he is the most effective means for stimulating the philosophical mind. But, in general, I have gradually formed the opinion that the above-mentioned use of the chair-philosophy is burdened with the disadvantage which philosophy as a profession imposes on philosophy as the free investigation of truth, or which philosophy by government order imposes on philosophy in the name of nature and mankind.

In the first place, a government will not pay people to contradict directly, or even only indirectly, what it has had promulgated from all the pulpits by thousands of its appointed priests or religious teachers; for in so far as such a proceeding were effective, it would inevitably render ineffective the former organization. For it is well known that judgements cancel one another not merely through contradictory, but also through merely contrary, opposites. Thus for example, the judgement 'the rose is red' is contradicted not merely by 'it is not red', but also by 'it is yellow', a judgement that in this respect achieves just as much or even more. Hence the maxim *improbant secus docentes*.¹ But through this circumstance university

¹ ['We reject and condemn the man who teaches something different.']

philosophers land themselves in a very curious position whose open secret may here receive a few words. In all the other branches of knowledge the professors are obliged only to teach as far as possible and to the best of their ability what is true and correct. But only in the case of professors of philosophy are we to understand the matter *cum grano salis*.² Thus we have here a curious state of affairs due to the fact that the problem of their science is the same as that about which religion also in its way gives us information. I have, therefore, described religion as the metaphysics of the people. Accordingly, the professors of philosophy are also, of course, supposed to teach what is true and correct; but this must be fundamentally and essentially the same as that which is also taught by the established religion that is likewise true and correct. This is the origin of that naïve utterance, already quoted in my 'Criticism of the Kantian Philosophy', which was made in 1840 by quite a reputable professor of philosophy. He said: 'If a philosophy denies the fundamental ideas of Christianity, then either it is false, or, *even if true, it is of no use.*' From this we see that in philosophy at the universities truth occupies only a secondary place and, if called upon, she must get up and make room for another attribute. And so at universities it is this that distinguishes philosophy from all other branches of knowledge that are taught there.

In consequence of this, university authorities will always permit only such a philosophy to be taught so long as the Church lasts. Framed with general regard to the established religion, this philosophy runs essentially parallel thereto; and so, being perhaps intricately composed, curiously trimmed, and thus rendered difficult to understand, it is always at bottom and in the main nothing but a paraphrase and apology of the established religion. Accordingly, for those teaching under these restrictions, there is nothing left but to look for new turns of phrase and forms of speech by which they arrange the contents of the established religion. Disguised in abstract expressions and thereby rendered dry and dull, they then go by the name of philosophy. Yet if someone or other wants to do anything besides this, he will either wander off into neighbouring branches of knowledge or have recourse to all kinds of

² ['With a grain of salt'.]

innocent fudge, such as carrying out difficult analytical computations on the equilibrium of mental pictures in the human head, and similar jests. Meanwhile, university philosophers, restricted in this way, are quite happy about the matter, for their real concern is to earn with credit an honest livelihood for themselves and also for their wives and children and moreover to enjoy a certain prestige in the eyes of the public. On the other hand, the deeply stirred mind of the real philosopher, whose whole concern is to look for the key to our existence, as mysterious as it is precarious, is regarded by them as something mythological, if indeed the man so affected does not even appear to them to be obsessed by a monomania, should he ever be met with among them. For that a man could really be in dead earnest about philosophy does not as a rule occur to anyone, least of all to a lecturer thereon; just as the most sceptical Christian is usually the Pope. It has, therefore, been one of the rarest events for a genuine philosopher to be at the same time a lecturer on philosophy.* In the second volume of my chief work, chap. 17, I have already discussed with reasons and results why Kant himself presented this exceptional case. Moreover, Fichte's well-known fate affords proof of the conditional existence of all university philosophy which I have just revealed, although at bottom this man was a mere sophist and not a real philosopher. Thus in his philosophizing he had dared to disregard the doctrines of the established religion with the result that he was dismissed and, in addition, insulted by the mob. In his case the punishment proved to be effective since, after his subsequent appointment in Berlin, the absolute Ego or I was most obediently converted into the good Lord, and the whole doctrine generally assumed an extremely Christian complexion; evidence of this is furnished in particular by

* It is quite natural that the more godliness, the less erudition is required of a professor, just as in Altenstein's day it was enough for a man to be acquainted with Hegel's nonsense. But since in the appointment to professorships godliness can be substituted for erudition, these gentlemen do not trouble themselves about the latter. The *Tartuffes* or sanctimonious hypocrites should restrain themselves and ask: 'who will believe us when we say that we believe this?' That *these gentlemen* are professors is a matter of interest to those who appointed them; I know them to be simply bad authors against whose influence I am working. I have been looking for *truth*, not for a professorship. On this rests, in the last resort, the difference between me and the so-called post-Kantian philosophers. This will be more and more recognized with the passing of time.

'Instructions on how to live a happy life'. It is a remarkable circumstance of his case that he was charged mainly with saying that God is nothing but the moral world-order itself; whereas such a statement differs only slightly from the utterance of St. John: 'God is love'. In 1853 a similar fate befell Dr. Fischer, a *privat docent*³ of Heidelberg, who had his *jus legendi* withdrawn because he taught pantheism. Hence the solution is: 'eat up thy pudding, slave, and give out as philosophy Jewish mythology!' But the jest of the matter is that these men call themselves philosophers and as such pass judgement on me; in fact with an air of superiority they cut a dash at my expense. For forty years they did not deign to look down at me, regarding me as not worth their notice. But the State must protect its own people and should, therefore, pass a law forbidding anyone to make fun of professors of philosophy.

Accordingly, it is easy for us to see that, under such circumstances, the chair-philosophy cannot very well help acting like

A long-legged grasshopper appears to be,
That springing flies, and flying springs;
And in the grass the same old ditty sings.⁴

The hazardous part of the business is also the mere possibility, still to be admitted, that the ultimate insight into the nature of things attainable by man, into his very being and that of the world, might not coincide exactly with the doctrines which were in part made known to the former little race of the Jews and in part appeared in Jerusalem eighteen hundred years ago. In order to dispel this doubt once for all, the professor of philosophy called Hegel invented the expression 'absolute religion' with which he also attained his object, for he knew his public. For the chair-philosophy it is also actually and really absolute, in other words, such as should and must be absolutely and positively true, or else . . . ! Again, others of these investigators of the truth weld philosophy and religion into one centaur which they call philosophy of religion; they too are in the habit of teaching that religion and philosophy are really the same thing. Such a statement, however, appears to be true only in the sense in which Francis I is supposed to have said in a very

³ [A *privat docent* is an unsalaried lecturer at a German university.]

⁴ [Goethe's *Faust*, Pt. 1, Bayard Taylor's translation.]

conciliatory tone with reference to Charles V: 'what my brother Charles wants is also what I want', namely Milan. Others again do not stand on such ceremony, but talk bluntly about a Christian philosophy, which is much the same as if we were to speak of a Christian arithmetic, and this would be stretching a point. Moreover, epithets taken from such dogmas are obviously unbecoming of philosophy, for it is devoted to the attempt of the faculty of reason to solve by its own means and independently of all authority the problem of existence. As a science, philosophy has nothing whatever to do with what may or should or must be *believed*, but merely with what can be *known*. Now if this should turn out to be something quite different from what we have to believe, then even so faith would not be impaired, for it is so by virtue of its containing what we *cannot* know. If we could also know this, then faith would appear as something quite useless and even ridiculous, just as if a dogma were set up over the themes of mathematics. If, however, we are convinced that the truth, whole and entire, is contained and expressed in the established religion, then we should restrain ourselves and give up all philosophizing; for we should not pretend to be what we are not. The pretence of the impartial investigation of truth, with the resolve to make the established religion the result, indeed the measure and control, of truth, is intolerable and such a philosophy, tied to the established religion like a dog to a chain, is only the vexatious caricature of the highest and noblest endeavour of mankind. Meanwhile, that very philosophy of religion, described as being like a centaur, is one of the principal articles offered for sale by university philosophers. In its way, it really amounts to a kind of gnosis or knowledge, to a philosophizing on certain favourite assumptions that are not confirmed at all. Programme-titles such as *De verae philosophiae erga religionem pietate*,⁵ a suitable inscription over such a philosophical sheepfold, clearly indicate the tendency and motives of professorial philosophy. It is true that these tame philosophers occasionally make a dash that appears to be perilous; but we can with composure bide our time, convinced that they will arrive at the goal they have fixed once for all. Indeed at times we feel tempted to think that they had finished with their seriously meant philosophical

⁵ ['On the piety of true philosophy compared with religion'.]

investigations even before their twelfth year and that at that age they had for the rest of their lives settled their view on the nature of the world and on everything pertaining thereto. We feel so tempted because after all the philosophical discussions and dangerous deviations under venturesome leaders, they always come back to what is usually made plausible to us at that tender age and appear to accept this even as the criterion of truth. All heterodox philosophical doctrines, with which they must at times be concerned in the course of their lives, appear to them to exist merely to be refuted and thus to establish those others the more firmly. We are bound even to admire the way in which they have managed to retain so unsullied their inner philosophical innocence, spending their lives as they do among so many mischievous heresies.

Anyone who, after all this, is still in doubt concerning the spirit and aim of university philosophy, should consider the fate of Hegel's pretended wisdom. Has it in any way been discredited by virtue of the fact that its fundamental ideas were the absurdest fancy, a world turned upside down, a philosophical buffoonery,⁶ or by virtue of its contents being the hollowest and most senseless display of words ever lapped up by blockheads, and its presentation, as seen in the works of the author himself, being the most repulsive and nonsensical gibberish, recalling the rantings of a bedlamite? No, not in the least! On the contrary, it has flourished these twenty years as the most brilliant chair-philosophy that has ever brought in fees and emoluments; it has grown fat and been proclaimed throughout Germany in hundreds of books as the final pinnacle of human wisdom and the philosophy of philosophies; in fact it has been lauded to the skies. Students were examined in it and professors appointed to teach it. Anyone not wishing to go with the rest was declared to be a 'fool on his own responsibility'⁷ by the impudent tutor of its author, as docile as he is dull; and even the few who ventured a feeble opposition against such mischief, were diffident and shy in face of the recognition and acknowledgement of the 'great mind and boundless genius'—that preposterous philosophaster. Proof of what is here said is

⁶ See my 'Criticism of the Kantian Philosophy' at the end of the first volume of my chief work.

⁷ [From Goethe, *Den Originalen.*]

furnished by the whole literature of this pretty business which, now as completed documents, passes through the outer court of sneering and mocking neighbours to that seat of judgement where we all meet again, to the tribunal of posterity. Among other weapons wielded by that tribunal, a bell of infamy is tolled which can be rung even for a whole age. Now what has finally happened to bring that glory so suddenly to an end, to occasion the fall of the *bestia trionfante*, and to disperse a whole host of its mercenaries and simpletons, except a few remnants who, herded together as stragglers and marauders under the banner of the *Halle'sche Jahrbücher*, were still permitted for a while to carry on their mischief, to the extent of a public scandal, and with the exception of a few miserable duffers who even today believe in and hawk round what was imposed on them in the years of their youth? Simply that someone had the mischievous idea to point out that this is a university philosophy agreeing with the established religion only apparently and in the letter, but not actually and in a real sense. By itself this reproach was well founded, for it was this that *Neo-Catholicism* subsequently demonstrated. *German or Neo-Catholicism* is thus nothing but popularized *Hegelry*. Like this, it leaves unexplained the world which is just there without any further information. The world merely receives the name *God*, and mankind the name *Christ*. Both are an 'end in itself', in other words, they exist so that one can have a good time as long as this brief life lasts. *Gaudeamus igitur!*⁸ And the Hegelian apotheosis of the State further leads to communism. A very complete description of Neo-Catholicism in this sense is given by F. Kampe, in his *Geschichte der religiösen Bewegung neuerer Zeit*, vol. iii, 1856.

But that such a reproach could be the Achilles' heel of a prevailing philosophical system, shows us

You know the quality that can
Decide the choice, and elevate the man,⁹

or what is the real criterion of truth and the admissibility of a philosophy at German universities and on what it depends. Moreover, an attack of this kind, even apart from the

⁸ ['Therefore let us rejoice!']

⁹ [Goethe's *Faust*, Bayard Taylor's translation.]

contemptible nature of every charge of heresy, was bound to have been quite briefly disposed of with *οὐδὲν πρὸς Διόνυσον*.¹⁰

Whoever requires yet further proofs of the same view, should consider the sequel to the great Hegel farce, namely Herr v. Schelling's immediately following and extremely well-timed conversion from Spinozism to bigotry and his subsequent transfer from Munich to Berlin, accompanied by the trumpetings of all the newspapers. According to their hints and allusions, one might imagine that he was bringing the personal God in his pocket for whom there was such a great demand; whereupon the throng of students became so great that they even climbed through the windows into the lecture-room. Then at the end of the course, the great diploma for men was most submissively handed to him by a number of professors of the university who had attended his lectures; and altogether he kept up without a blush the whole of the extremely brilliant, and no less lucrative, role in Berlin; and this in his old age when in nobler natures concern over the reputation a man leaves behind outweighs every other. At anything like this, one might in the ordinary way feel depressed; indeed one might almost imagine that the professors of philosophy themselves ought to raise a blush, yet that would be expecting too much. Now anyone who, after considering such a consummation, has not had his eyes opened to the chair-philosophy and its heroes, is past help.

Fairness, however, demands that we should judge university philosophy not merely as here, from the standpoint of its alleged purpose, but also from that of its true and proper aim. In fact, it comes to this that the junior barristers, solicitors, doctors, probationers, and pedagogues of the future should maintain, even in their innermost conviction, the same line of thought in keeping with the aims and intentions that the State and its government have in common with them. I have no objection to this and so in this respect have nothing to say. For I do not consider myself competent to judge of the necessity or needlessness of such a State expedient, but rather leave it to those who have the difficult task of governing *men*, that is to say, of maintaining law and order, peace and quiet among many

¹⁰ ['Does not concern Dionysus' (i.e. the dramatic performance got up in his honour; a frequent exclamation at the festival of Dionysus).]

millions of a boundlessly egoistical, unjust, unfair, dishonest, envious, malicious, perverse, and narrow-minded race, to judge from the great majority, and of protecting the few who have acquired property from the immense number of those who have nothing but their physical strength. The task is so difficult that I certainly do not presume to argue with them over the means to be employed in this case; for my motto has always been: 'Thank God, each morning, therefore, that you have not the Roman realm to care for!' ¹¹ But it was these constitutional aims of university philosophy which procured for *Hegelry* such unprecedented ministerial favour. For to it the *State* was 'the absolute perfect ethical organism', and it represented as originating in the *State* the whole aim of human existence. Could there be for future junior barristers and thus for state officials a better preparation than this, in consequence whereof their whole substance and being, their body and soul, were entirely forfeited to the *State*, like bees in a beehive, and they had nothing else to work for, either in this world or the next, except to become efficient wheels, co-operating for the purpose of keeping in motion the great State machine, that *ultimus finis bonorum*? ¹² The junior barrister and man were accordingly one and the same. It was a real apotheosis of philistinism.

But the relation of such a university philosophy to the State is one thing and its relation to philosophy proper is another. In this connection, it might as *pure* philosophy be distinguished from the former as *applied*. Thus pure philosophy knows no other aim than truth; and then it might follow that every other aim, aspired to by means thereof, would tend to prove fatal to this. Its lofty goal is the satisfaction of that noble need, called by me the *metaphysical*, which at all times among men makes itself deeply and ardently felt, but which asserts itself most strongly when, as at the present time, the prestige and authority of dogma have been ever more on the decline. Thus dogma is intended for, and suited to, the great mass of the human race; and as such it can contain merely *allegorical* truth that it nevertheless has to pass off as truth *sensu proprio*. Now with the ever-greater extension of every kind of historical, physical, and even philosophical knowledge, the number of those whom

¹¹ [Goethe's *Faust*, Bayard Taylor's translation.]

¹² ['The ultimate goal of good things'.]

dogma can no longer satisfy becomes ever greater and they will press more and more for truth *sensu proprio*. But then in view of this demand, what can such a *nervis alienis mobile*¹³ chair-puppet do? And yet how far shall we get with the subsidized petticoat-philosophy, with hollow word-structures, with fine flourishes that mean nothing and render unintelligible by a torrent of words the commonest and most obvious truths, or even with Hegel's absolute nonsense? On the other hand, if from the wilderness the righteous and honest John were actually to come who, clothed in skins and living on locusts and untouched by all the terrible mischief, were meanwhile to apply himself with a pure heart and in all seriousness to the investigation of truth and to offer the fruits thereof, what kind of a reception would he have to expect from those businessmen of the chair, who are hired for State purposes and with wife and family have to live on philosophy, and whose watchword is, therefore, *primum vivere, deinde philosophari*?¹⁴ These men have accordingly taken possession of the market and have already seen to it that here nothing is of value except what they allow; consequently merit exists only in so far as they and their mediocrity are pleased to acknowledge it. They thus have on a leading rein the attention of that small public, such as it is, that is concerned with philosophy. For on matters that do not promise, like the productions of poetry, amusement and entertainment but only instruction, and financially unprofitable instruction at that, that public will certainly not waste its time, effort, and energy, without first being thoroughly assured that such efforts will be richly rewarded. Now by virtue of its inherited belief that whoever lives by a business knows all about it, this public expects an assurance from the professional men who from professor's chairs and in compendiums, journals, and literary periodicals, confidently behave as if they were the real masters of the subject. Accordingly, the public allows them to sample and select for it whatever is worth noting and what can be ignored. My poor John from the wilderness, how will you fare if, as is to be expected, what you bring is not drafted in accordance with the tacit convention of the gentlemen of the

¹³ ['A wooden doll that is moved by extraneous forces' (Horace, *Satires*, II. 7 82).]

¹⁴ ['First live and then philosophize.']

lucrative philosophy? They will regard you as one who has not entered into the spirit of the game and thus threatens to spoil the fun for all of them; consequently, they will regard you as their common enemy and antagonist. Now even if what you bring were the greatest masterpiece of the human mind, it could never find favour in their eyes. For it would not be drawn up *ad normam conventionis*;¹⁵ and so it would not be such as to enable them to make it the subject of their lectures from the chair in order to make a living *from it*. [It never occurs to a professor of philosophy to examine a new system that appears to see whether it is true; but he at once tests it merely to see whether it can be brought into harmony with the doctrines of the established religion, with government plans, and with the prevailing views of the times. After all this he decides its fate.] But if it were yet to carry its point and proved to be instructive and to contain information; even if it attracted the attention of the public and were worth studying, then to this extent it would inevitably deprive the chair-philosophy of that same attention, in fact of its credit and, worse still, of its sale. *Di meliora*?¹⁶ Therefore such a thing must not be allowed to happen and all must resist it to a man. The method and tactics for this are furnished by a happy instinct, such as is readily given to every being for its self-preservation. Thus to challenge and refute a philosophy that runs counter to the *norma conventionis*, especially where one detects merits and certain qualities that are not conferred by a professor's diploma, is often a risky business on which, in the last resort, one should certainly not venture. For in this way, works whose suppression is indicated would acquire notoriety and be sought after by the inquisitive; but then extremely unwelcome comparisons might be drawn and the result might be critical and precarious. On the contrary, as brothers of the same turn of mind and also of like ability, they unanimously regard such an inconvenient piece of work as *non avenu*.¹⁷ In order to suppress and smother it, they regard with the greatest unconcern the most important as quite unimportant and what has been thoroughly thought out and has existed for centuries as not worth talking about. They maliciously compress their lips and remain silent, yes silent

¹⁵ ['According to the current pattern'.]

¹⁶ ['God forbid!']

¹⁷ ['Not having occurred'.]

with that *silentium quod livor indixerit*¹⁸ that is denounced even by old Seneca (*Epistulae*, 79). At times, they crow the more loudly over the abortive intellectual offspring and monsters of the fraternity, comforted by the thought that what no one knows is as good as non-existent, and that things in the world pass for what they seem to be and for what they are called, not for what they are. This is the safest and least dangerous method against merit and accordingly I might recommend it as the best for all shallow minds who seek their livelihood from things that call for higher talent and ability, yet without my vouching for the ultimate consequences of this.

However, the gods should certainly not be invoked here over an *inauditum nefas*.¹⁹ All this is only a scene from the play which we have before us at all times and in all arts and sciences, that is to say, the old conflict between those who live *for* the cause and those who live *by* it, or between those who *are* it and those who *represent* it. To some it is the end in view to which their life is the mere means; to others it is the means, indeed the irksome condition, for life, well-being, enjoyment, and domestic happiness in which alone their true earnestness lies, since it is here that nature has drawn the boundary to their sphere of activity. Whoever wishes to see examples of this and become more closely acquainted therewith, should study the history of literature and read the biographies of great masters of every kind and in every art. He will then see that it has been so at all times and will understand that it will always remain so. Everyone recognizes it in the past, hardly anyone in the present. The illustrious pages of the history of literature are at the same time almost invariably the tragic. In all branches of knowledge they show us how, as a rule, merit has had to wait till the fools had stopped fooling, the merry-making had come to an end, and all had gone to bed. It then arose, like a ghost in the dead of night, to occupy the place of honour that was withheld from it, yet ultimately still as a shadow.

Here, however, we are concerned solely with philosophy and its advocates. In the first place, we now find that very few philosophers have ever been professors of philosophy, and even relatively fewer professors of philosophy have been philosophers. Therefore it might be said that, just as idioelectrical bodies are

¹⁸ ['The silence imposed by envy'.]

¹⁹ ['Unheard-of transgression'.]

non-conductors of electricity, so philosophers are not professors of philosophy. In fact this appointment, almost more than any other, obstructs the independent thinker. For the philosophical chair is to a certain extent a public confessional, where a man makes his confession of faith *coram populo*.²⁰ Again, hardly anything is so obstructive to the actual attainment of a thorough or very deep insight and thus of true wisdom, as the constant obligation to appear wise, the showing off of so-called knowledge in the presence of pupils eager to learn and the readiness to answer every conceivable question. Worst of all, however, is that a man in such a position is seized with anxiety when any idea occurs to him, whether such will fit in with the aims and intentions of his superiors. This paralyses his thinking to such an extent that such ideas themselves no longer dare occur. The atmosphere of freedom is indispensable to truth. I have already mentioned what is necessary concerning the *exceptio quae firmat regulam*²¹ that Kant was a professor. Here I merely add that even his philosophy would have been more remarkable, firmer, purer, and finer had he not been invested with that professorship. Nevertheless, as far as possible, he very wisely drew a distinction between the philosopher and the professor, since from the chair he did not lecture on his own doctrine (See Rosenkranz, *Geschichte der Kantischen Philosophie*, p. 148).

Now if I look back at the so-called philosophers who have appeared in the half-century that has elapsed since Kant's activities, I am afraid I see no one of whom I could say to his credit that he was really and seriously concerned with the investigation of truth. On the contrary, I find them all, although not always clearly conscious of this, zealously bent on the mere semblance of the business, on producing an effect, on imposing and even mystifying in order to obtain the approbation of their superiors and subsequently of their students. In this connection, the ultimate aim is always to spend the proceeds of the business on living comfortably with wife and family. But it is also really in keeping with human nature which, like the animal, knows as its immediate aims only eating, drinking, and the care of offspring, that it has obtained in addition, as its special apanage, a mania for shining and showing off. On the other hand, the first condition of real and genuine achievements in philosophy,

²⁰ ['In public'.]

²¹ ['The exception that confirms the rule'.]

as in poetry and the fine arts, is a wholly abnormal disposition which, contrary to the rule of human nature, puts in the place of the subjective striving for the well-being of one's own person, a wholly *objective* striving, directed to an *achievement* that is foreign to one's own person and precisely on this account is very appropriately called *eccentric* and sometimes even ridiculed as quixotic. But even Aristotle said: οὐ χρὴ δέ, κατὰ τοὺς παραινοῦντας, ἀνθρώπινα φρονεῖν ἄνθρωπον ὄντα, οὐδὲ θνητὰ τὸν θνητόν, ἀλλ' ἐφ' ὅσον ἐνδέχεται, ἀθανατίξειν, καὶ πάντα ποιεῖν πρὸς τὸ ζῆν κατὰ τὸ κράτιστον τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ (*Neque vero nos oportet humana sapere ac sentire, ut quidam monent, quum simus homines; neque mortalia, quum mortales; sed nos ipsos, quoad ejus fieri potest, a mortalitate vindicare, atque omnia facere, ut ei nostri parti, quae in nobis est optima, convenienter vivamus.*²² *Nicomachean Ethics*, x. 7). Such an intellectual tendency is certainly an extremely rare anomaly; but precisely on that account its fruits in the course of time benefit the whole of mankind, since fortunately they are such as can be preserved. On further consideration, we can divide thinkers into those who think *for themselves* and those who think *for others*; the latter are the rule, the former the exception. Accordingly, the former are original and independent thinkers in a double sense and egoists in the noblest sense of the word; it is they alone from whom the world obtains instruction. For it is only the light that a man kindles for himself which afterwards radiates for others so that the converse of what Seneca asserts in a moral regard, namely *alteri vivas oportet, si vis tibi vivere*²³ (*Epistulae*, 48) is true from an intellectual point of view: *tibi cogites oportet, si omnibus cogitasse volueris.*²⁴ But this is precisely that rare anomaly which is not to be enforced by any resolution and good will, yet without which no real progress in philosophy is possible. For others or generally for indirect aims, a man never undergoes the greatest mental exertion which is required for this purpose and which demands just the forgetting of self and of all aims; on the contrary, he stops at the mere semblance and pretence of things. Possibly a few concepts are found and com-

²² ['But we should not, as the poets remind us, ponder as human beings over human things and as mortals over mortal things; but we should, as far as possible, aspire to the immortal and should do everything in order to live in accordance with what is noblest in us.']

²³ ['You must live for others if you wish to live for yourself.']

²⁴ ['You must think for yourself if you wish to have thought for all.']

bined in several different ways so that out of them is fashioned a house of cards, as it were; but in this way nothing new and genuine comes into the world. Moreover, there is the fact that those whose real aim is their own wellbeing, thinking being merely the means thereto, must always keep in view the passing needs and inclinations of contemporaries, the aims and intentions of those in authority, and so on. Here one cannot aim at the truth which, even when honestly looked for, is infinitely difficult to come across.

But speaking generally, how is anyone who seeks an honest living for himself and his family to devote himself simultaneously to *truth*, which has at all times been a dangerous companion and everywhere an unwelcome guest? Presumably it appears naked because it brings nothing and has nothing to bestow, but is sought merely for its own sake. We cannot at the same time serve two such different masters as the world and truth which have nothing in common but the same initial letter;²⁵ such an undertaking leads to hypocrisy, toadyism, and opportunism. For it can happen that a priest of truth becomes a champion of fraud and deception who earnestly teaches what he himself does not believe, and thus wastes the time and ruins the minds of trusting and gullible youth. Renouncing all literary conscience, he devotes himself to the praising and crying up of influential blunderers and sanctimonious block-heads, or makes a point of deifying the State, of making it the pinnacle of all human efforts and all things because he is paid by the State for State purposes. In this way, he not only turns the philosophical lecture-room into a school of the shallowest philistinism, but in the end, like Hegel for instance, he arrives at the revolting doctrine that man's destiny is identified with the *State*, somewhat like that of bees in a beehive; whereby the highest goal of our existence is entirely withdrawn from view.

In his descriptions of the Sophists whom he contrasts with Socrates, Plato has shown that philosophy is not suitable for breadwinning; but at the beginning of the *Protagoras* he has described, delightfully and with matchless humour, the activities and successes of these men. With the ancients money-making with philosophy was always the sign that distinguished the sophist from the philosopher. The relation between the two

²⁵ [The two words in German are *Welt* and *Wahrheit*.]

was, therefore, entirely analogous to that between girls inspired by true love and paid prostitutes. I have already shown in my chief work, vol. ii, chap. 17, that on this account Socrates put Aristippus among the sophists and even Aristotle reckoned him to be one. Stobaeus reports that the Stoics also held similar views (*Eclogae ethicae*, lib. II, c. 7): τῶν μὲν αὐτὸ τοῦτο λεγόντων σοφιστεύειν, τὸ ἐπὶ μισθῷ μεταδιδόναι τῶν τῆς φιλοσοφίας δογμάτων· τῶν δ' ὑποτοπησάντων ἐν τῷ σοφιστεύειν περιέχεσθαι τι φαῦλον, οἷονεὶ λόγους καπηλεύειν, οὐ φαμένων δεῖν ἀπὸ παιδείας παρὰ τῶν ἐπιτυχόντων χρηματίζεσθαι, καταδεέστερον γὰρ εἶναι τὸν πρόπον τοῦτον τοῦ χρηματισμοῦ τοῦ τῆς φιλοσοφίας ἀξιώματος.²⁶ (See Stobaeus, *Eclogae physicae et ethicae*, ed. Heeren, 2nd Pt., vol. i, p. 226.) The passage in Xenophon, quoted by Stobaeus in the *Florilegium*, vol. i, p. 57, also runs according to the original (*Memorabilia*, I. 6. 17): τοὺς μὲν τὴν σοφίαν ἀργυρίου τῷ βουλομένῳ πωλοῦντας, σοφιστὰς ἀποκαλοῦσιν.²⁷ Ulpian also puts the question: *An et philosophi PROFESSORUM numero sint? Et non putem, non quia non religiosa res est, sed quia hoc primum PROFITERI eos oportet, MERCENARIAM OPERAM SPERNERE.*²⁸ (*Lex*, I, §4, *Digesta de extraordinaria cognitione*, 50. 13.) Opinion on this point was so unshakeable that we find it in full force even under the later emperors; for even in Philostratus (lib. I, c. 13), Apollonius of Tyana reproaches his opponent Euphrates mainly with τὴν σοφίαν καπηλεύειν (*sapientiam cauponari*),²⁹ and also in his fifty-first epistle he writes to this very man: ἐπιτιμῶσί σοί τινες, ὡς εἰληφότι χρήματα παρὰ τοῦ βασιλέως· ὅπερ οὐκ ἄτοπον, εἰ μὴ φαίνοιο φιλοσοφίας εἰληφέναι μισθόν, καὶ τοσαυτάκις, καὶ ἐπὶ τοσοῦτον, καὶ παρὰ τοῦ πεπιστευκότος, εἶναί σε φιλόσοφον. (*Reprehendunt te quidam, quod pecuniam ab imperatore acceperis: quod absonum non esset, nisi videreris philosophiae mercedem accepisse,*

²⁶ ['A difference is to be drawn between those who confess that they just teach as sophists, namely impart for money the doctrines of philosophy, and those who think that to teach as a sophist merits a rebuke, since it is a peddling and bartering of ideas, and who declare that it is not permitted to take money for the education of those in search of knowledge, as this kind of money-making is not conducive to the dignity of philosophy.']

²⁷ ['Those who sell wisdom for money to anyone wanting it are called sophists.']

²⁸ ['Are philosophers also to be included among the *professors*? I think not; not because it is not here a question of something carried out with conscientious care, but because it behoves them above all publicly to confess that they *disdain to work for reward*.']

²⁹ ['To barter with wisdom'.]

et toties, et tam magnam, et ab illo, qui te philosophum esse putabat.)³⁰ In keeping with this, he says of himself in the forty-second epistle that he would accept alms in case of necessity, but never a reward for philosophy, not even in case of destitution: 'Εάν τις Ἀπολλωνίῳ χρήματα διδῶ, καὶ ὁ διδοὺς ἄξιος νομίζεται, λήψεται δεόμενος· φιλοσοφίας δὲ μισθὸν οὐ λήψεται, κἄν δέηται (*Si quis Apollonio pecunias dederit et qui dat dignus judicatus fuerit ab eo; si opus habuerit, accipiet. Philosophiae vero mercedem, ne si indigeat quidem, accipiet*).³¹ This time-honoured view is well founded and is based on the fact that philosophy has very many points of contact with human life, both public and private. And so if profit is being derived from it, intention at once gains an ascendancy over insight and from self-styled philosophers we get mere parasites of philosophy. But such men will by hostile obstruction oppose the activities of genuine philosophers; in fact they will plot against them merely to assert what their cause is promoting. For as soon as it is a case of profit, it may easily happen that, where interest and advantage demand it, every kind of mean and low device, every form of connivance and coalition and so on, are employed in order to procure for material ends a favourable reception and acceptance for the false and the inferior. It therefore becomes necessary to suppress the true, the genuine, and the valuable that are opposed to them. But no man is less a match for such stratagems than the genuine philosopher who with his cause might have come under the activities of these tradesmen. Little harm is done to the fine arts, even to poetry, by their serving for gain; for each of their works has by itself a separate existence, and the bad can no more supplant the good than it can eclipse it. But philosophy is a whole and thus a unity; it is directed to truth, not to beauty. There are many kinds of beauty but only one truth; many Muses but only one Minerva. For this reason, the poet may cheerfully disdain to censure what is bad, but the philosopher may find himself in the predicament of having to

³⁰ ['Some reproach you with having taken money from the king. This would not be inadmissible, if you did not give the impression of having taken it for philosophy, indeed so often and in such large sums, and moreover from one who was bound to think that you were a philosopher.']

³¹ ['If anyone offers money to Apollonius and is deemed worthy to give it, then Apollonius will accept it if he needs it; but he will take no reward for philosophy, not even if he were in need of the money.']

do so. For now the bad that has found favour opposes the good with downright hostility and the luxuriant weed chokes the useful plant. By its very nature, philosophy is exclusive; in fact it is the basis of the manner of thought of the age; and so the prevailing system, like the sons of sultans, will not tolerate beside it any other. Add to this the fact that judgement is extremely difficult, indeed the procuring of data for it is arduous and laborious. Now if by tricks and stratagems the false is brought into circulation and is everywhere noised abroad by paid stentorian voices as the true and genuine, then the spirit of the times is poisoned, all branches of literature are ruined, all higher flights of the mind are at a standstill, and a bulwark is set up against all that is really good and genuine, and it lasts for a long time. These are the fruits of the *φιλοσοφία μισθοφόρος*.³² Let us see, by way of illustration, the mischief that has been done to philosophy since Kant's time and what has come of it. But it is only the true story of Hegelian charlatanry and of the ways in which it has been spread about which will one day afford a fitting illustration of what has been said.

In consequence of all this, the man who is concerned not with State and comic philosophy, but with knowledge and hence with the investigation of truth that is meant seriously and without regard for others, will have to look for it anywhere but at the universities, where its sister, the philosophy *ad normam conventionis*,³³ is in command and writes the bill of fare. Indeed I am more and more inclined to the view that for philosophy it would be more wholesome if it ceased to be a money-making business and no longer appeared in ordinary life and represented by professors. It is a plant which, like the rhododendron and flowers that grow on precipices, thrives only in free mountain air, but which with artificial cultivation degenerates. Those who represent philosophy in ordinary life do so in much the same way as an actor represents the king. Were the sophists, whom Socrates challenged so indefatigably and Plato made the theme of his derision, in any way different from the professors of philosophy and rhetoric? Is it not really that very old feud which I am still carrying on at the present time, since it is has never entirely ceased to exist? The highest efforts of the human

³² ['Philosophy serving for remuneration'.]

³³ ['According to the current pattern'.]

mind are at once incompatible with profit; their noble nature cannot be amalgamated therewith. Perhaps philosophy at the universities might still pass muster if its appointed teachers, after the manner of other professors, thought of satisfying their vocation by passing on to the rising generation the knowledge of their particular subject as it exists and passes for truth at the moment, and thus by truly and accurately explaining to their hearers the system of the most recent genuine philosopher and going over in detail all the points. This, of course, would be the case if only they were to apply to their task enough judgement, or at any rate discernment, not to regard as philosophers mere sophists, such as a Fichte or a Schelling, not to speak of a Hegel. But they not only lack the aforesaid qualities; they also labour under the fatal and erroneous idea that it appertains to their office themselves to play the part of philosopher and to present the world with the fruits of their profound thought. From this erroneous idea there now result those productions, as deplorable as they are numerous, wherein commonplace minds, and indeed such as are not even commonplace, deal with *those* problems on whose solution the greatest efforts of the rarest minds, equipped with extraordinary abilities, have been directed for thousands of years. Forgetting about their own persons through their love for truth, such minds have occasionally been thrown into prison and even driven to the scaffold by their passionate striving for the light. Such minds are so exceedingly rare that the history of philosophy which for two thousand five hundred years has run concurrently with that of nations as its ground-bass can hardly show one-hundredth as many famous philosophers as political history can show famous monarchs. For there are no minds other than those that are wholly isolated wherein nature had come to a clearer consciousness of herself. But these very minds are so remote from the crowd that well-merited recognition comes to most of them only after their death or at best late in life. For instance, Aristotle's really great fame, which later became more widespread than any other, first began, according to all accounts, two hundred years after his death. Epicurus, whose name is known to the vast majority even at the present time, lived in Athens entirely unknown up to his death (*Seneca, Epistulae, 79*). Bruno and Spinoza were accepted and

honoured only in the second century after their death. Even so clear and popular a writer as David Hume was fifty years old before people began to pay any attention to him, although he had produced his works many years previously. Kant became famous only after the age of sixty. With our present-day chair-philosophers matters certainly move more quickly, for they have no time to lose. Thus one professor proclaims as the finally attained pinnacle of human wisdom the doctrine of a prosperous colleague at a neighbouring university, and the latter is at once a great philosopher who promptly occupies his place in the history of philosophy, that is to say, in the one that is being prepared by a third colleague for the next fair. Quite unconcerned, he now tacks on to the immortal names of the martyrs of truth from all the centuries the worthy names of his well-appointed colleagues who at the moment are flourishing, as just so many philosophers who can also enter the ranks, for they have filled very many sheets of paper and have met with universal consideration from colleagues. For example, we see written 'Aristotle and Herbart', or 'Spinoza and Hegel', 'Plato and Schleiermacher', and an astonished world cannot fail to see that philosophers, whom parsimonious nature formerly managed to produce only singly in the course of centuries, have during recent decades everywhere shot up like mushrooms among the Germans who, as we know, are so highly gifted. Naturally, this glory of the age is pushed forward in every way; and so whether in literary journals or even in his own works, one professor of philosophy will not fail to take into careful consideration the absurd and preposterous notions of another, and will do this with weighty countenance and official gravity so that it quite looks as though we were actually dealing here with real advances in human knowledge. In return for this, his own abortive efforts soon receive the same honour and indeed we know that *nihil officiosius quam cum mutuum muli scabunt*.³⁴ But seriously speaking, a thoroughly deplorable spectacle is presented by so many ordinary minds who, for the sake of office and profession, think themselves obliged to represent what nature had least of all intended them to do, and to assume burdens that require the shoulders of intellectual giants. It is painful for the hoarse to listen to singing and for the lame

³⁴ ['Nothing is more dignified than when two mules scratch each other.']

to watch dancing, but it is intolerable to watch a limited intellect philosophize. Now, to conceal a want of real ideas, many make for themselves an imposing apparatus of long compound words, intricate flourishes and phrases, immense periods, new and unheard-of expressions, all of which together furnish an extremely difficult jargon that sounds very learned. Yet with all this they say—just nothing; we obtain no new ideas and do not feel our insight increased, but are bound to sigh: ‘We hear quite well the clattering of the mill, but do not see the flour.’ Indeed we see only too clearly what paltry, common, shallow, and crude views are hidden behind this high-sounding bombast. If only we could give such comic philosophers a notion of the real and terrible seriousness with which the problem of existence grips the thinker and stirs his innermost being! Then they could no longer be comic philosophers; no longer concoct with composure frivolous rubbish about the absolute thought or the contradiction that is said to be found in all fundamental concepts, or enjoy with enviable satisfaction such hollow nuts as ‘the world is the existence of the infinite in the finite’, and ‘the mind is the reflection of the infinite in the finite’, and so on. It would be hard on them, for now they want to be philosophers and at the same time quite original thinkers. Now it would be just as likely for a common mind to have uncommon ideas as for an oak to bear apricots. On the other hand, everyone already has *ordinary* ideas and does not need them for lecturing; consequently nothing can ever be achieved here by ordinary minds, since in philosophy it is merely a question of ideas, not of experiences and facts. Conscious of the drawback, some have laid in a store of strange ideas that are most imperfectly and always superficially understood; and in their heads, of course, such ideas are always in danger of evaporating into mere phrases and words. They shift these about and perhaps try to fit them to one another like dominoes; thus they compare what one has said with what another has said, and again a third with a fourth, and from all this they try to appear clever and smart. In such men we should look in vain for a firm and fundamental view of things and the world, one based on intuitive perception and therefore thoroughly consistent and coherent. For this reason, they have no decided opinion or fixed and definite judgement about

anything, but with the ideas, views, and exceptions learnt by them, they grope about as in a fog. Properly speaking, they have directed their efforts to knowledge and learning for the purpose of imparting further instruction. That might be so; but then they should not play the part of philosophers, but should learn how to distinguish the oats from the chaff.

The real thinkers have aimed at *insight*, and indeed for its own sake, since they ardently desired in some way to render comprehensible the world in which they happened to be; but this they did not do in order to teach and talk. And so, in consequence of constant meditation, there gradually grows in them a fixed, coherent, and fundamental view which always has as its basis the apprehension of the world through *intuitive perception*. From this paths radiate to all special truths which again reflect light on to the fundamental view. It follows also from this that they have at any rate a definite, well understood, and coherent opinion concerning every problem of life and the world; and so they do not need to square anyone with empty phrases, as do thinkers of the other kind. We always find the latter occupied with a comparison and consideration of the opinions of others instead of with things themselves. Accordingly, it might be imagined that it was a question of far countries about which we had to make a critical comparison of the accounts written by the few travellers who had been there, and not one of the real world that is spread out and clearly lies before their eyes. But with them it is a case of:

*Pour nous, Messieurs, nous avons l'habitude
De rédiger au long de point en point,
Ce qu'on pensa, mais nous ne pensons point.*³⁵
Voltaire

But the worst feature of the whole business, which otherwise might be allowed to continue for the curious dilettante, is that it is in their interest that the shallow and insipid pass for something. But this it cannot do, if the genuine, the great, and the profound make their appearance and at once come into their own. Thus to stifle the good and to let the bad take its course unhindered, they get together, as do all the feeble and

³⁵ ['With regard to ourselves, gentlemen, we are accustomed to criticize at length and in detail what others have thought, but we do not think for ourselves at all.']

impotent, and form themselves into cliques and parties. They take possession of the literary journals in which, as also in their own books, they discuss their respective masterly achievements with profound reverence and an air of gravity, and in this way a short-sighted public is led by the nose. Their relation to real philosophers is somewhat like that of former master-singers to poets. By way of illustration of what has been said, one has only to see the scribblings of the chair-philosophers which regularly appear along with the literary journals that play their tune. Whoever is conversant therewith should consider the cunning with which the latter, should the occasion arise, are at pains to gloss over and hush up the significant as something insignificant, and should note the tricks employed by them for diverting the public's attention from it, mindful of the aphorism of Publilius Syrus: *Jacet omnis virtus, fama nisi late patet.*³⁶ (See *P. Syri et aliorum sententiae*, recension of J. Gruter. Meissen, 1790, l. 266.) Now with such considerations in mind, let us go back on this path to the beginning of the nineteenth century and see how, previously the Schellingites, and then far worse the Hegelians, recklessly sinned in this direction. Let us overcome our reluctance and turn over the pages of the nauseating rubbish, for no man can be expected to read it! Then let us consider and calculate how much time, paper, and money the public must have wasted on these bungling works in the course of half a century. The patience of the public is certainly incomprehensible, for year in year out it reads the endless twaddle of dull and insipid philosophasters, regardless of the tormenting tedium that broods like a thick fog over it, just because one reads and reads without ever gaining possession of an idea. For the writer who has nothing clear and definite in his mind heaps words on words and phrases on phrases; and yet he says nothing because he has nothing to say, knows nothing, and thinks of nothing. Yet he wants to talk and so chooses his words not in accordance with how they express his ideas and judgments more strikingly, but with how they more skilfully conceal the lack of them. Yet such stuff is printed, bought, and read, and half a century has elapsed without readers being aware that they *papan viento*, as the Spanish say, that is, gulp down mere air. However, in fairness I must mention that, to keep going

³⁶ ['There on the ground lies virtue, deprived of fame.']

this clattering mill, a very peculiar device is often employed whose invention is traceable to Messrs. Fichte and Schelling. I refer to the artful trick of writing abstrusely, that is to say, unintelligibly; here the real subtlety is so to arrange the gibberish that the reader must think he is in the wrong if he does not understand it, whereas the writer knows perfectly well that it is he who is at fault, since he simply has nothing to communicate that is really intelligible, that is to say, has been clearly thought out. Without this device Fichte and Schelling could not have established their pseudo-fame; but we know that no one has practised this same trick so boldly and to such an extent as has Hegel. At the very outset, he should have explained in clear and intelligible words the absurd fundamental idea of his pretended philosophy, namely that of turning the true and natural course of things upside down and accordingly of making *universal concepts* the primary, the original, the truly real thing (the thing-in-itself in Kant's language), concepts which are abstracted from empirical intuitive perception and therefore arise through our thinking away the modifications, and which are in consequence the more void the more universal they are; for only as a result of the truly real or thing-in-itself does the empirically real world first have its existence. He should have clearly explained this monstrous *ὑστερον πρότερον*,³⁷ indeed this really crazy notion, adding that such concepts without our assistance think and move by themselves. If he had done this, all would have laughed in his face, or would have shrugged their shoulders and regarded the tomfoolery as not worth their notice. But then even venality and baseness would have sounded the trumpet in vain in order to proclaim to the world as the highest wisdom the absurdest thing ever seen and for ever to compromise with its power of judgement the German learned world. On the contrary, under the veil of incomprehensible grandiloquent nonsense, it passed off and the crazy folly was a success:

*Omnia enim stolidi magis admirantur amantiq̄ue,
Inversis quae sub verbis latitantia cernunt.*³⁸

Lucretius, 1.642.

³⁷ [Making the consequent an antecedent; inverting the logical order by explaining a thing in terms of something which presupposes it.]

³⁸ ['Fools admire and love to excess everything that is said to them figuratively and in queer or puzzling words.']

Encouraged by such examples, almost every wretched scribbler has since taken a delight in writing with affected and fastidious abstruseness so that it might look as though no words could express his lofty or profound thoughts. Instead of endeavouring in every way to make himself clear to his reader, he seems to call out tauntingly to him: 'I am sure you cannot guess what is in my mind!' Now if, instead of replying: 'Then I'll go to blazes' and throwing the book away, the reader wearies himself to no purpose, then in the end he thinks it must be something extremely clever, exceeding even his power of comprehension, and with raised eyebrows he now calls his author a profound thinker. One of the consequences of this pretty proceeding is that, when anyone in England wishes to describe something as very obscure or even quite unintelligible, he says *it is like German metaphysics*,³⁹ in much the same way as the French say: *c'est clair comme la bouteille à l'encre*.⁴⁰

It is perhaps superfluous to mention here, yet it cannot too often be said, that as a contrast good authors always make strenuous efforts to urge the reader to think exactly what they themselves have thought; for the man who has something worth imparting will see to it that it is not lost. And so good style depends mainly on whether a writer really has something to say; it is simply this small matter that most of our present-day authors lack and is responsible for their bad style. But in particular, the generic characteristic of the *philosophical* works of the nineteenth century is that of writing without really having something to say; it is common to them all and can therefore be just as well studied in Salat as in Hegel, in Herbart as in Schleiermacher. Then according to the homoeopathic method, the weak minimum of an idea is diluted with a fifty-page torrent of words and now with boundless confidence in the truly German patience of the reader the author calmly continues the twaddle on page after page. The mind that is condemned to such reading hopes in vain for real, solid, and substantial ideas; it pants and thirsts for any ideas as does a traveller for water in the Arabian desert—and must remain parched. On the other hand, let us take any *genuine* philosopher, no matter from what period or country, be he Plato or

³⁹ [Schopenhauer's own words.]

⁴⁰ ['There's no making head or tail of it.']

Aristotle, Descartes or Hume, Malebranche or Locke, Spinoza or Kant. We always come across a fine intellect pregnant with ideas which has and produces knowledge, but which in particular always honestly tries to communicate it to others. And so the receptive reader of such a thinker is immediately rewarded for the trouble of reading every line of him. At bottom, what makes the writings of our philosophasters so exceedingly poor in ideas and thus tormentingly tedious, is really the poverty of their intellect, but primarily the fact that their mode of expression generally moves in highly abstract, universal, and extremely wide concepts and thus usually parades only in vague, indefinite, and ambiguous expressions. But they are forced to this aerobatic course because they must guard against touching the earth where, by encountering the real, the definite, the individual, and the clear, they would run on to those dangerous rocks whereon their verbal schooners might be shipwrecked. For instead of firmly and steadily directing the senses and understanding to the world that lies before them in intuitive perception and thus to what is really and truly given, to what is pure, genuine, and in itself not exposed to error, and hence to that by which we have to fathom the essence of things—they know nothing except the highest abstractions, such as being, essence, becoming, absolute, infinite, and so on. They start from these and build systems whose contents ultimately amount to mere words. Thus such words are really only soap-bubbles which can be played with for a while, but cannot touch the ground of reality without bursting.

If, with all this, the harm done to the branches of learning by incompetent interlopers were merely that they achieve nothing therein, as is at present the case with regard to the fine arts, we could console ourselves with the fact and disregard it. But in philosophy they do positive harm, first by all being in a natural league against the good in order to keep up the reputation of the bad, and by exerting every effort to prevent the good from finding favour. For do not let us deceive ourselves; at all times and in all circumstances, all over the globe, there exists a conspiracy, framed by nature herself, of all the mediocre, inferior, and dull minds against intellect and understanding. Against these they all constitute a large body of loyal con-

federates. Or are we so artless as to believe that they just wait for superiority in order to acknowledge, admire, and proclaim it and thus see themselves rightly set at naught? Not likely! But *tantum quisque laudat, quantum se posse sperat imitari*.⁴¹ 'In the world there shall be bunglers and none but bunglers so that we may be something!' This is their real motto, and preventing capable men from finding favour is an instinct as natural to them as catching mice is to a cat. The fine passage of Chamfort, quoted at the end of the previous essay, may also be recalled here. Let the open secret be once expressed and the moon-calf be brought to light, strange as it may appear therein; narrow-mindedness and stupidity always and everywhere, in all situations and circumstances, detest nothing in the world so heartily and thoroughly as understanding, intellect, and talent. Here mediocrity remains true to itself, as is shown in all the spheres and affairs that relate to life, for it endeavours everywhere to suppress, indeed to eradicate and exterminate, superior qualities in order to exist *alone*. No kindness, no benevolence can reconcile it with intellectual superiority. Thus it is unalterable and will ever remain so; and what a formidable majority it has on its side! This is one of the main obstacles to mankind's progress in every sphere. Now in such circumstances how can there be progress in *that* sphere where not even plenty of brains, diligence, and tenacity of purpose are enough, as in other branches of knowledge, but quite special gifts are required even at the expense of personal happiness? For assuredly the most disinterested sincerity of purpose, the irresistible urge to solve the riddle of existence, the earnestness of deep thinking that strives to fathom the innermost essence of things, and a genuine enthusiasm for truth—these are the first and indispensable conditions for the hazardous enterprise of stepping up once more to the ancient sphinx with another attempt at solving its eternal riddle, at the risk of falling headlong into the dark abyss of oblivion whither so many have already gone.

Further harm that is done in all branches of knowledge by the activities of unauthorized interlopers is that a temple of error is erected, and superior minds and upright characters have to toil and moil at its subsequent demolition, sometimes

⁴¹ "Everyone praises only as much as he himself hopes to achieve.]"

throughout their lives; and so it is in philosophy, in knowledge that is most general, most important, and most difficult! If we want special proofs of this, let us look at the hideous example of Hegelry, that shameless pretended wisdom, which for one's own careful and honest thought and investigation substituted as a philosophical method the dialectical self-movement of concepts and hence an objective *thought-automaton* that gambols on its own account freely in the air or in empyrean and whose traces and footprints are the scriptures of Hegel and the Hegelians. Such, however, are merely hatched out of very thick and shallow skulls; and far from being something absolutely objective, they are exceedingly subjective and the invention of very mediocre subjects at that. And so let us contemplate the height and duration of this Babel-structure and reflect on the incalculable harm such a philosophy of absolute nonsense, forced on studious youths by strange and extraneous means, was bound to do to the generation that grew up on it, and thus to the whole age. Are not innumerable minds of the present generation of scholars thoroughly distorted and deranged by it? Are they not crammed with corrupt views, and do they not accept hollow phrases, meaningless twaddle, and nauseating Hegel-jargon where thoughts and ideas are expected? Is not their entire view of life crazy and has not the most insipid, philistine, and even vulgar way of thinking supplanted noble and lofty thoughts which were still the inspiration of their immediate predecessors? In short, are not the youths who have grown to maturity in the incubator of Hegelry like men intellectually castrated, incapable of thinking, and full of the most ludicrous presumption? Indeed, they are constituted in mind as were certain heirs to the throne in body who were formerly rendered unfit to govern or even to propagate by attempts to debauch or drug them. They are mentally enervated, robbed of the regular use of their reason, an object of pity, a lasting theme for paternal tears. Now let us hear from the other side what scandalous opinions are spread abroad concerning philosophy itself and generally what groundless reproaches there are against it. On closer examination, it is found that these detractors understand by philosophy nothing but the senseless and purposeless twaddle of that wretched charlatan and its echo in the hollow heads of his silly and

absurd admirers; this is what they mean by philosophy! They simply do not know any other. In fact, almost the whole of the younger set has been infected with Hegelry as it has been with venereal disease; and just as this evil poisons all the humours of the body, so has that other ruined all their mental powers. Thus the younger scholars of today are, as a rule, no longer capable of sound thought or even of any natural expression. In their heads there exists not only no single correct notion, but not even one clear and definite idea about anything; the confused and empty verbiage has dissolved and dispersed their powers of thought. Moreover, the evil of Hegelry is just as difficult to eradicate as is the disease just compared to it, when once it has penetrated *in succum et sanguinem*. On the other hand, it was fairly easy to establish it and spread it in the world, for insight and intelligence are soon enough driven from the field when designs and intentions are marshalled against them, in other words, when *material* ways and means are used for the spreading of opinions and the stipulation of judgements. Guileless and unsophisticated young men go to the university full of childlike trust and gaze with awe at the self-styled possessors of all knowledge and now even at the presumptuous investigator of our existence, at the man whose fame they hear enthusiastically proclaimed by a thousand tongues and whose lectures they see attended by elderly statesmen. And so they go there ready to learn, believe, and revere. Now if these innocent youths without judgement are presented, under the name of philosophy, with a complete chaos of thought that is turned upside down, a doctrine of the identity of being and nothing, an assortment of words that cause all thought to vanish from a sound mind, a twaddle recalling bedlam, all this trimmed with touches of crass ignorance and colossal stupidity, as irrefutably and incontestably shown by me from Hegel's compendium for students—this I did in the preface to my *Ethics* in order to cast in the teeth of the Danish Academy, that happily inoculated encomiast of bunglers and patron of philosophical charlatans, its *summus philosophus*—then these youths will revere even such stuff. They will merely think that philosophy must indeed consist in such abracadabra and will go forth with minds paralysed in which henceforth mere words pass for thoughts; thus they will for ever be incapable of producing real ideas and

so will be mentally castrated. As a result, there grows up a generation of impotent, perverse, yet excessively pretentious minds, swelling with plans and purposes and intellectually anaemic, such as we have before us at the present time. This is the mental history of thousands whose youth and finest faculties have been infected by that pretended wisdom, whereas they too should have partaken of the benefit which nature prepared for many generations when she succeeded in producing a mind like Kant's. Such abuses could never have been practised with real philosophy that is pursued by free men simply for its own sake and has no other support except that of its own arguments, but only with university philosophy that is primarily a State expediency. [We see, therefore, that the State has at all times interfered in the philosophical disputations of the universities and has taken sides, no matter whether it was a question of Realists and Nominalists, or Aristotelians and Ramists, or Cartesians and Aristotelians, of Christian Wolff, Kant, Fichte, Hegel, or anything else.]

In addition to the harm done by university philosophy to that which is genuinely and seriously meant, we have in particular the supersession, already mentioned, of the Kantian philosophy by the vapourings of the three trumpeted sophists. First Fichte and then Schelling, both of whom were not without talent, but finally Hegel, that clumsy and nauseating charlatan, that pernicious person, who completely disorganized and ruined the minds of a whole generation, were proclaimed as the men who had carried forward Kant's philosophy, had gone beyond it, and so, by really climbing on to his shoulders, had attained an incomparably higher degree of knowledge and insight. From this height they then looked down almost with pity on the labours of Kant which paved the way to their splendour so that they were the first to be the really great philosophers. It was not to be wondered at that young men, without any judgement of their own and that often very wholesome distrust of teachers which only the exceptional mind brings to the university, that is to say, one endowed with power of judgement and so also with a feeling for this—that these young men just believed what they heard and consequently imagined that they need not waste much time on the heavy preparatory work to the new lofty wisdom and thus on the old and formal Kant. On the

contrary, they hastened to the new temple of wisdom where those three windbags accordingly sat in succession on the altar to the song of praise of stultified adepts. But now, unfortunately, there is nothing to be learnt from those three idols of university philosophy; their writings waste time and also ruin minds, Hegel's indeed most of all. The result of this state of affairs has been that those with a real knowledge of the Kantian philosophy have gradually died; and so, to the disgrace of the times, this most important of all the philosophical doctrines ever put forward could not continue its existence as something vivid and sustained in men's minds. It exists only in the lifeless letters of its author's works, to await a wiser, or rather less infatuated and mystified, generation. Accordingly, we shall hardly find a thorough understanding of the Kantian philosophy except among a few of the older scholars. On the other hand, the philosophical authors of our day have shown the most scandalous ignorance of it. This is seen to be most shocking in their descriptions of this doctrine, and it clearly stands out whenever they come to speak on the Kantian philosophy and affect to know something about it. We then become indignant when we see that men who live by philosophy do not really and truly know the most important teaching which has been advanced during the last two thousand years and is almost contemporary with them. In fact, they even go so far as to misquote the titles of Kant's works and occasionally represent him as saying the very opposite of what he did say. They mutilate his *termini technici* to the point of absurdity and use them without having the slightest idea of what he signified by them. Naturally it is not possible, indeed it is a ludicrous presumption, to suppose that we can become acquainted with the teaching of that profound mind by hastily scanning Kant's works, as befits such book scribblers and philosophical tradesmen who, moreover, imagine that they 'got through' all this long ago. Kant's first apostle Reinhold said that he fathomed the real meaning of the *Critique of Pure Reason* only after he had strenuously studied it five times. From the descriptions furnished by such men, an accommodating public led by the nose imagines once more that it can assimilate Kant's philosophy in the shortest time and without any effort! But this is absolutely impossible. Without our own strenuous and frequently repeated

study of Kant's chief works, we shall never obtain even a mere notion of these most important of all the philosophical phenomena that have ever existed. For Kant has perhaps the most original mind ever produced by nature. To think with him and in his way is something that cannot possibly be compared with anything else; for he possessed a degree of clear and quite peculiar balance of mind such as has never fallen to the lot of any other mortal. We partake of this enjoyment when, initiated through careful and serious study and by reading the really profound chapters of the *Critique of Pure Reason* and giving our whole attention to the subject, we now succeed in actually thinking with Kant's mind and thus in being elevated far above ourselves. This is the case, for example, when we once again go through the 'Principles of the Pure Understanding'; when we consider especially the 'Analogies of Experience' and now fathom the profound idea of the *Synthetic Unity of Apperception*. We then feel ourselves removed and estranged in a marvellous way from the wholly dream-like existence in which we are submerged. For we take up each of its primary elements by itself and now see how time, space, and causality, connected by the synthetic unity of apperception of all phenomena, render possible this empirical complex of the whole and its course wherein our world, so greatly conditioned by the intellect, consists, being precisely on this account mere phenomenon. The synthetic unity of apperception is thus that connection of the world as a whole which rests on the laws of our intellect and is therefore inviolable. In its description Kant demonstrates the primary and fundamental laws of the world where they converge into one with the laws of intellect and before us he holds them up strung out on one thread. This method of consideration which is exclusively Kant's own, may be described as the most detached view that has ever been cast on the world and has the highest degree of objectivity. To follow this method affords an intellectual pleasure perhaps unequalled by any other. For it is of a higher order than that provided by poets who are, of course, accessible to everyone, whereas the pleasure here described must have been preceded by effort and exertion. But what do our present-day professors of philosophy know about it? Really nothing. Recently I read a psychological diatribe by one of them in which much turned on Kant's

'synthetic apperception' (*sic*); for they love to use Kant's technical expressions although, as here, these have only been half picked up and rendered meaningless. Now he imagined that, by this, concentrated attention was to be understood! These and similar small matters thus constitute the favourite themes of their kindergarten philosophy. In fact, those gentlemen do not have either the time, the inclination, or the urge to study Kant; they are as little concerned with him as they are with me; for their refined taste quite different men are needed. Thus what the acute and discriminating Herbart, the great Schleiermacher, or even 'Hegel himself' has said is the stuff for their meditation and its suits them. Moreover, they are heartily glad to see the 'all-crushing Kant' relegated to oblivion, and hasten to make him a dead historical phenomenon, a corpse, a mummy, whom they can then face without fear. For in all seriousness, he has in philosophy put an end to Jewish theism; but they like to hush this up, to conceal and ignore it because without this theism they cannot *live*—I mean eat and drink.

After such a set-back from the greatest advance ever made in philosophy, we need not wonder why the so-called philosophizing of these days has fallen into a wholly uncritical method, an incredible coarseness concealed behind high-sounding phrases and a naturalistic fumbling far worse than it had ever been before Kant. For instance, with an impudence born of ignorance, men everywhere summarily speak of *moral freedom*, as though it were a settled affair, indeed as something absolutely certain, and likewise of the existence and essence of God as things that are self-evident, and of the 'soul' as a person known to all. Even the expression 'inborn ideas', which since Locke's time had had to slink into a corner, again ventures forth. Here may also be mentioned the gross impudence with which Hegelians in all their works talk at great length without ceremony or introduction about the so-called 'spirit'. They rely on our being far too dumbfounded by their grandiloquent nonsense to tackle the professor, as would be right and proper, with the question: 'Spirit? who is the fellow? Whence do you obtain your knowledge of him? Is he not rather an arbitrary and convenient hypostasis which you do not even define, let alone deduce or demonstrate? Do you think you have

before you a public of old women?' This would be the language appropriate to such a philosophaster.

In connection with 'synthetic apperception', I have shown an amusing characteristic of the philosophizing of these tradesmen that, although they do not use Kant's philosophy as being very inconvenient and also much too serious for them and because they can no longer really understand it, they like to make lavish use of the expressions thereof, to give their twaddle a scientific touch, in much the same way as children like to play with papa's hat, stick, and sword. For instance, the Hegelians do this with the word 'categories' with which they express all kinds of wide and universal concepts, blissfully innocent of and unconcerned about Aristotle and Kant. Further, the important question in the Kantian philosophy concerns the *immanent and transcendent* uses, together with the validity, of our knowledge or cognitions. To embark on such dangerous distinctions would not, of course, be advisable for our comic philosophers; but yet they would have liked the expressions very much because they sound so learned. In fact, since their philosophy always has as its main subject only the good Lord, who now appears as a good old acquaintance needing no introduction, they employ these expressions, and now argue as to whether he is within the world or remains outside, that is to say, resides in a space where there is no world. In the former case, they call him *immanent*, and in the latter *transcendent*; and naturally they do all this very seriously and learnedly and talk Hegel jargon as well. It is a delightful jest that reminds the older ones among us of the copper engraving in Falk's satirical almanac that shows Kant ascending to heaven in a balloon, casting to earth all the articles of his wardrobe including his hat and wig, and monkeys picking them up and putting them on.

There is no doubt that the supplanting of Kant's serious, profound, and honest philosophy by the vapourings of mere sophists who are guided by personal aims, has had a most pernicious influence on the culture of the age. The eulogy of so utterly worthless, indeed so mischievous, a mind as Hegel's, as the first philosopher of this or any age, has certainly been the cause of the complete degradation of philosophy and, in consequence thereof, of the decline generally during the last thirty years of superior literature. Woe to the time when in philosophy

impudence and nonsense supplant insight and understanding, for the fruits assume the taste of the soil in which they have grown. What is loudly, publicly, and universally praised, is read and is thus the mental pabulum of the generation that is arriving at maturity; but this has the most decided influence on its lifeblood and subsequently on its creations. Thus the prevailing philosophy of an age determines its spirit, and so if there now prevails a philosophy of absolute nonsense; if absurdities invented and advanced under bedlamite twaddle pass for great thoughts, then the result of such sowing is the pretty race of men such as we now have before us. They are without intellect, love of truth, honesty, taste, and are devoid of any noble impulse or of an urge for anything lying beyond material, including political, interests. From this we can explain how the age when Kant philosophized, Goethe wrote, and Mozart composed, could be followed by the present one of political poets and even more political philosophers, of hungry men of letters who earn a living in literature by falsehood and imposture, and of ink-slingers of all kinds who wantonly ruin the language. It calls itself with one of its home-made words, as characteristic as it is euphonious, the 'present time';⁴² present time indeed, in other words, because one thinks only of the Now and does not venture to glance at the time that will come and condemn. I wish I could show this 'present time' in a magic mirror what it will look like in the eyes of posterity. Yet this present time calls that past age, just eulogized, the 'age of pigtails'; but attached to those tails were *heads*;⁴³ it now seems as though the fruit has also vanished with the stalk.

Hegel's followers are accordingly quite right when they assert that their master's influence on his contemporaries was immense. To have completely paralysed mentally a whole generation of scholars, to have rendered them incapable of all thought, indeed to have brought them to such a pass that they no longer know what thinking is, but regard as philosophical thinking the most wanton, as well as the most absurd, playing with words and concepts, or the most thoughtless rubbish on the stereotyped themes of philosophy with fabricated assertions,

⁴² [The German word is *Jetztzeit*, one of many which Schopenhauer in an essay on the mutilation of the German language condemned as cacophonous.]

⁴³ [Schopenhauer plays on the words *Zopf* (tail) and *Kopf* (head).]

or with propositions wholly devoid of sense and even consisting of contradictions—all this has been the boasted influence of Hegel. Let us for once compare the textbooks of the Hegelians, which they have the audacity to publish even today, with those of an age that is disparaged but especially regarded with infinite contempt by them and all post-Kantian philosophers, the so-called eclectic period shortly before Kant. We shall then find that the latter are always related to the former not as gold to copper, but as gold to dung. For in those works by Feder, Platner, and others, we invariably find a rich store of real, partially true, and even valuable ideas and striking remarks, an honest ventilation of philosophical problems, a stimulation to individual reflection, a guide to philosophizing, but above all an honest method of treatment throughout. On the other hand, in a similar product of the Hegelian school, we search in vain for any real idea—it does not contain a single one: for any trace of serious and sincere thinking—this is foreign to its business. We find nothing but audacious word combinations which seem to have a meaning, indeed a profound one, but which, when examined, are unmasked as absolutely hollow shells and flourishes of words that are entirely devoid of sense and ideas. With them the writer certainly does not try to instruct his reader, but merely to mislead him, and the latter believes he is dealing with a thinker, whereas the former is a person who does not know what thinking is, a transgressor without any insight and moreover without knowledge. This is the consequence of the fact that, whereas other sophists, charlatans, and obscurantists adulterated and corrupted only *knowledge*, Hegel ruined even the *organ* thereof, the understanding itself. Through his forcing misguided men to cram into their heads, as rational knowledge, a farrago of the grossest nonsense, a tissue of *contradictiones in adjecto*,⁴⁴ a babbling from a madhouse, the brains of the poor young men who read such stuff with faithful devotion, and tried to assimilate it as the highest wisdom, were so deranged that they for ever remained incapable of real thought. Accordingly, we see them going round, even at the present time, talking in the nauseating Hegel jargon, praising the master, and quite

⁴⁴ [Logical inconsistencies between nouns and their modifying adjectives, e.g. 'round square', 'hot snow', 'cold fire'.]

seriously imagining that sentences like 'Nature is the idea in its other being' mean something. Thus to disorganize fresh young minds is really a sin meriting neither forgiveness nor forbearance. This, then, has been Hegel's boasted influence on his contemporaries, and unfortunately it has really spread far and wide; for here too the consequence was commensurate with the cause. Just as the worst that can befall a State is for the most depraved class, the dregs of society, to come into office, so nothing worse can befall philosophy and everything dependent thereon, and thus mankind's whole knowledge and intellectual life, than for a commonplace mind that is distinguished, on the one hand, merely by its obsequiousness and, on the other, by its effrontery to write nonsense, consequently for a Hegel to be proclaimed, with the strongest and most unprecedented emphasis, as the greatest genius and the man in whom philosophy has attained, finally and for all time, its long-pursued goal. For the consequence of such high treason against the noblest of mankind is eventually a state of affairs such as that of philosophy and thus of literature generally at the present time in Germany. Ignorance at the top fraternizing with impudence, cliquishness in place of merit, utter chaos of all fundamental concepts, totally wrong orientation and disorganization of philosophy, flat-heads as reformers of religion, the impudent appearance of materialism and bestiality, ignorance of the ancient languages, mutilation of our own by senseless word clippings and the infamous counting of letters at the discretion of duffers and blockheads, and so on, and so on—look round for yourselves! Even as the external symptom of the coarseness that is gaining the upper hand, you see its constant concomitant, the long beard, that sign of sex in the middle of the face which states that a man prefers the masculinity he has in common with the animals to *humanity*, since he wants first to be a *male* (*mas*), and only subsequently a *human being*. Shaving off beards in all highly civilized ages and countries is the result of a correct feeling to the contrary by virtue whereof one would like to be first of all a *human being*, to some extent a human being *in abstracto*, setting aside the animal sexual difference. On the other hand, length of beard has always kept pace with barbarism, which its name seems to imply. Thus beards flourished in the *Middle Ages*, that millennium of coarseness and ignorance

whose style and fashion our noble present-timers [*Jetztzeitler*] strive to imitate.* Also we cannot omit to mention the further and secondary consequence of the treachery to philosophy which we are here discussing, namely contempt for the nation on the part of neighbours and for the age on the part of posterity. For as we make our bed so must we lie on it, and we shall not be spared.

I have already spoken of the powerful influence of intellectual nourishment on the age. Now this is based on the fact that such nourishment determines the form as well as the material of thought; and so very much depends on what is praised and therefore read. For thinking with a genuinely great mind strengthens our own, gives it regular exercise, and puts it in the right frame. It works in much the same way as does the writing-master's hand when guiding the child's. On the other hand, to think with men who have really aimed at mere pretence and hence at deceiving the reader, men like Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, ruins the mind to an equal extent; this is no less true of thinking with cranks or with those who, like Herbart for instance, have turned their intellect inside out. Speaking generally, however, it is a deplorable waste of time and energy to read the writings of only ordinary minds in those branches of knowledge where it is not a question of facts or their discovery, but an author's own ideas constitute the subject-matter. For what such men think can also be thought by anyone else. The fact that they have expressly adjusted and applied themselves to thinking does not improve matters at all; for it

* It is said that the beard is natural to man; certainly, and so it is quite suitable to him in a state of nature, just as, on the contrary, shaving is suitable to him in the civilized state, since it indicates that the rough brutal power, whose distinctive mark is that excrescence characteristic of the male sex and palpable to everyone, has had to yield to law, order, and civilization.

The beard exaggerates and renders conspicuous the animal part of the face and thus gives it a strikingly brutal appearance. We have only to contemplate the profile of such a bearded man while he is eating!

They would like to pretend that the beard is an *ornament*. For two hundred years we have been accustomed to see this only on Jews, Cossacks, Capuchins, prisoners, and highwaymen.

The atrocious ferocity, given to the countenance by the beard, is due to the fact that a relatively *inanimate* mass occupies half the face, and moreover the morally expressive half. Besides, all hairiness is brutal. Shaving is the symbol (standard token) of higher civilization. In addition, the police are authorized to forbid beards since they are half-masks that make it difficult for them to recognize their man again, and thus encourage all kinds of mischief.

does not enhance their powers and, when a man expressly turns to thinking, he often does the minimum. Moreover, their intellect remains true to its natural destiny of working in the service of the will, for this is just the normal thing. And so an *intention or purpose* always underlies their thoughts and actions; at all times they have an *aim or end in view* and recognize only what relates and thus corresponds thereto. Activity of the intellect that is freed from the will is the condition of pure objectivity and thus of all great achievements, but it remains eternally foreign to ordinary men and is in their hearts a fiction. Only aims and ends are of interest to them and have for them any reality; for in them willing remains predominant. It is, therefore, doubly foolish to waste time on their productions. But the *aristocracy of nature* is what the public never recognizes and understands because it has good reasons for not wanting to. It therefore soon lays aside the rare and the few to whom nature, in the course of centuries, had entrusted the noble mission of reflecting on her or even of presenting the spirit of her works, in order to make itself acquainted with the productions of the latest bungler. If a hero has ever existed, the public soon puts some miserable wretch beside him, as being similar to him. When in her most propitious mood nature has once allowed to proceed from her hands the rarest of her creations, a mind really gifted above the average; when fate in a generous vein has allowed it to be developed; indeed when its works have finally 'triumphed over the opposition of a stupid world',⁴⁵ and are acknowledged and recommended as the standard, then it is not long before men come along with a clod who is dragged from their own coterie in order to put him on the altar beside the gifted intellect simply because they do not understand, or even suspect, how *aristocratic nature is*. She is so to such an extent that not one truly great mind is to be found in three hundred millions of her manufactured articles. We should, therefore, become thoroughly acquainted with that mind and regard its works as a kind of revelation; we should read them assiduously and wear them out *diurna nocturnaque manu*.⁴⁶ On the other hand, we should have nothing to do with all the commonplace minds and should regard them as what they are, as something just as common and ordinary as flies on a wall.

⁴⁵ [From Goethe's *Epilog zu Schiller's Glocke*.]

⁴⁶ ['Day and night'.]

In philosophy the state of affairs just described has arisen in a most deplorable way. Fichte is invariably mentioned with Kant and is described as just like him; 'Kant and Fichte' has become a standing phrase. 'See how we apples swim!'⁴⁷ said the— Schelling meets with a similar honour and, *proh pudor!*⁴⁸ even Hegel, that scribbler of nonsense and destroyer of minds! The summit of this Parnassus was ever more widely trodden. To such a public we should like to exclaim what Hamlet said to his infamous mother: 'Have you eyes? have you eyes?' Alas! they have none. They are always the same. Everywhere and at all times, they have allowed genuine merit to perish in order to pay homage to mimics and mannerists of all kinds. Thus they imagine they are studying philosophy when they read the extensive creations of minds in whose dull consciousness even the mere problems of philosophy make as little sound as does a bell in a receptacle that is exhausted of air. Strictly speaking, such minds were made and equipped by nature for nothing but quietly earning an honest living like the rest, or for cultivating the field and providing for an increase in the human race; yet they imagine they must be 'jingling fools'⁴⁹ on account of their official duty. Their constant butting in and desire to have their say make them like deaf people who join in a conversation. Thus the effect on those who at all times appear only sporadically and naturally have the calling and therefore the real urge to work at the investigation of the loftiest truths, is only like that of a disturbing and bewildering noise, even when it does not, as is very often the case, purposely stifle their voice. For what such isolated minds assert does not serve the purpose of those men for whom there can be nothing serious except intentions and material aims and who, by virtue of their considerable numbers, soon raise such a clamour that a man can no longer hear himself speak. Today they have set themselves the task, in spite of truth and the Kantian philosophy, of teaching speculative theology, rational psychology, freedom of the will, a total and absolute difference between man and the animals by ignoring the gradual shades

⁴⁷ [A translation of the Latin proverb *ut nos poma natamus.*]

⁴⁸ ['What a scandal!']

⁴⁹ [From Goethe's *Faust*, Pt. 1. *Sei er kein schellenlauter Thor.* (Beware, a jingling fool to be!)]

of intellect in the animal series. In this way, they act only as a *remora*⁵⁰ to the honest investigation of truth. If a man like me speaks, they pretend that they have heard nothing. The trick is good although it is not new. However, I want to see whether or not a badger can be dragged out of his hole.

Now it is obvious that the universities are the centre of all those games that are played with philosophy by purpose and intention. Only by this means could Kant's world-wide epoch-making achievements in philosophy be supplanted by the vapourings of a Fichte which were again supplanted shortly afterwards by fellows like him. This could never have happened with a really philosophical public, that is to say, with one that looks for philosophy merely for its own sake and without any other object, and hence with that public which is, of course, at all times an extremely small number of genuine and earnest thinkers who are deeply impressed by the mysterious nature of our existence. The entire philosophical scandal of the last fifty years has been possible only through the universities with a public that consists of students who religiously take in all that the professor is pleased to tell them. Here the fundamental error is to be found in the fact that the universities, even in matters of philosophy, arrogate to themselves the last word and decisive voice which possibly belong to the three principal faculties each in its own sphere. But the fact is overlooked that in philosophy, as a science that is first to be discovered, matters are different. One also disregards the fact that, with the appointment to chairs of philosophy, not only are the abilities of the candidates taken into consideration, as with other branches of knowledge, but even more so are their views and opinions. Accordingly, the student now thinks that, as the professor of theology is thoroughly conversant with his dogmas, the professor of law with his pandects, and the professor of medicine with his pathology, so too the professor of metaphysics who is appointed to the highest place must be a master of his subject. The student, therefore, attends the course of lectures with childlike trust, and as he finds there a man who, with an air of conscious superiority, looks down on and criticizes all the philosophers who have ever existed, he has no doubt that he has come to the right place and is as faithfully

⁵⁰ ['Hindrance'.]

impressed by all the bubbling wisdom there as if he were sitting before the tripod of Pythia. Naturally from now on, there is for him no other philosophy but that of his professor. The real philosophers, the instructors of hundreds and even thousands of years, are left unread as being obsolete and refuted, but their works solemnly wait in silence on the shelves of bookcases for those who desire them; like his professor, the student has 'done with' them. On the other hand, he buys the regularly appearing mental offspring of his professor whose frequently repeated editions can be explained only from such a state of affairs. For after his years at the university, every graduate as a rule continues to be faithfully devoted to his professor whose turn of mind he early assumed and whose manner he has adopted. In this way, such philosophical monstrosities obtain an otherwise impossible circulation and their authors a lucrative reputation. How otherwise could such a complex of absurdities, like Herbart's *Einleitung in die Philosophie* for instance, have run through five editions? Thus the fatuous presumption again appears (e.g. on pages 234-5 of the fourth edition) with which this decidedly perverse mind condescendingly looks down on Kant and indulgently puts him right.

Considerations of this kind, and especially a retrospective glance at the whole business of philosophy at the universities since Kant's death, establish ever more firmly in me the opinion that, if there is to be a philosophy at all, that is to say, if it is to be granted to the human mind to devote its loftiest and noblest powers to incomparably the weightiest of all problems, then this can successfully happen only when philosophy is withdrawn from all State influence. Accordingly, the State will do it a great service and sufficiently show its humanity and magnanimity, if it does not pursue philosophy but gives it free play and allows it to exist as a free art, which after all must be its own reward. In return for this, the State can consider itself exempt from spending money on professorships of philosophy, since the men who want to live *on* philosophy will be just those extremely rare ones who really live *for* it, but occasionally there may be even those who furtively plot *against* it.

Official chairs of learning belong by rights only to those branches of knowledge which are already formed and actually exist and which one, therefore, need only have learnt in order

to be able to teach. Thus, speaking generally, such branches of knowledge are merely to be passed on, as is implied by the *tradere* in use on the blackboard; yet here it is still open to more capable minds to enrich, correct, and perfect them. But a branch of knowledge which in fact does not yet exist and has not yet attained its goal and which does not even know for certain its path, in fact whose very possibility is still in dispute—to allow such a branch to be taught by professors is really absurd. The natural consequence of this is that each of them thinks his vocation to be the creation of the still missing branch of knowledge, without taking into consideration that such a calling can be entrusted only by nature not by the Ministry of Education. He therefore makes the attempt as best he can, speedily places his abortion in the world, and gives it out as the long-desired wisdom; and there will certainly not be wanting an obliging colleague who at the christening will act as its godfather. These gentlemen, accordingly, become bold enough to call themselves *philosophers* because they live on philosophy; and so they imagine that the last word and decision in philosophical matters rest with them. In the end, they even announce *meetings of philosophers* (*a contradictio in adjecto*,⁵¹ for rarely are there two philosophers simultaneously in the world and hardly ever more than two), and then they flock together to compare notes on the advantage of philosophy!*

Nevertheless, such university philosophers will first of all endeavour to give philosophy that tendency which is in keeping with the aims they have at heart or rather have taken to heart. For this purpose they will, if necessary recast and misrepresent and even falsify the teachings of earlier genuine philosophers, simply in order that the result will be what they need. Now as the public is so childish as to rush after the latest authors whose writings, however, bear the title of philosophy, the result is that,

* 'No philosophy having the sole disposal of the means of grace!' exclaims the *meeting of philosophasters at Gotha*, which means in plain language: 'No attempt at objective truth! Long live mediocrity! No intellectual aristocracy, no autocracy of nature's favourites, but mob rule instead! Let each of us speak without the least reserve and let one have as much influence as another!' The rascals then have great fun! Thus even in the history of philosophy they would like to displace the constitutional monarchy hitherto existing and introduce a proletarian republic. But nature lodges a protest; she is severely aristocratic!

⁵¹ [A logical inconsistency between a noun and its modifying adjective, e.g. 'round square', 'hot snow', 'cold fire'.]

through the absurdity, perversity, senselessness, or at any rate the tormenting tedium thereof, sound minds with a propensity for philosophy are again deterred therefrom whereby it gradually falls into discredit, as is already the case.

But not only are the professors' own productions in a bad way; the period since Kant also shows that it is not even capable of keeping and preserving the achievements of great minds which are acknowledged as such and are accordingly committed to their charge. Have they not allowed the Kantian philosophy to be trifled with at the hands of Fichte and Schelling? Do they not in a most scandalous and defamatory way always mention the windbag Fichte with Kant as being roughly his equal? After the above-mentioned two philosophers had supplanted and declared obsolete Kant's teaching, did not the most unbridled and fantastic notions take the place of the strict control that was imposed by Kant on all metaphysics? Have they not partly contributed to this and to some extent refrained from firmly setting themselves against this with the *Critique of Reason* in their hands? Was this not because they found it more advisable to make use of the lax observance that had set in either to offer for sale their concocted trivialities, such as Herbart's fudge and Fries's grandmotherly gossip, and generally the whims and fancies of everyone, or even to be able to smuggle in as philosophical conclusions the doctrines of the established religion? Has not all this paved the way to the most scandalous philosophical charlatanry at which the world has ever had to blush, to the activities of Hegel and his miserable fellows? Did not even those who opposed the mischief at the same time always speak with much bowing and scraping about the great genius and powerful intellect of that charlatan and scribbler of nonsense, thereby showing themselves to be simpletons? Are not Krug and Fries alone to be excluded from these (in the interest of truth, be it said) who, resolutely denouncing the mind-destroyer, have merely shown him that forbearance that is now irrevocably shown by every professor of philosophy towards another? Have not the noise and clamour that are raised by the philosophers at German universities in admiration of those three sophists at last attracted general attention even in England and France which on further investigation degenerated into laughter? But they prove to be

the perfidious warders and keepers of truths which in the course of centuries were acquired with great difficulty and were finally entrusted to their charge, especially when these do not suit their purpose, that is to say, do not harmonize with the results of a shallow, rationalistic, optimistic theology that is really only Jewish. It is such theology that is the secretly predetermined goal of their whole philosophizing and its lofty phrases. And so they will attempt to obliterate, disguise, suppress, misrepresent, and drag down to the level of what fits in with their plan for educating students and with the aforesaid petticoat philosophy, all those doctrines which serious philosophy, not without great efforts, has managed to bring to light. A shocking instance of this is afforded by the doctrine of the *freedom of the will*. After the strict necessity of all human acts of will had been irrefutably demonstrated by the united and successive efforts of great minds like Hobbes, Spinoza, Priestley, and Hume, even Kant had accepted the matter as already fully established,⁵² they suddenly act as if nothing had happened, rely on the ignorance of their public, and in God's name even at the present time assume in almost all their manuals that the freedom of the will is an established and even immediately certain fact. What sort of name does such a method merit? If such a teaching, as firmly established as any by all the philosophers just mentioned, is nevertheless concealed or denied by the professors for the purpose of imposing on students the positive absurdity of free will because it is a necessary ingredient of their petticoat philosophy, are not these gentlemen really the enemies of philosophy? And since (for *conditio optima est ultimi*,⁵³ Seneca, *Epistulae*, 79) the strict necessity of all acts of will is nowhere demonstrated so thoroughly, clearly, consistently, and completely as in my essay that was fairly awarded a prize by the Norwegian Society for Scientific Studies, we find that, in accordance with their old policy of everywhere meeting me with passive resistance, this essay is not mentioned anywhere either in their books or in their learned journals and literary periodicals. It is most rigorously concealed and is regarded

⁵² With him his postulate of freedom, based on the categorical imperative, is of merely practical, *not theoretical* validity. See my *Fundamental Problems of Ethics*, 'Freedom of the Will', chap. 4; 'Basis of Ethics', §6.

⁵³ ['The last man is in the most favourable position.']

comme non avenu,⁵⁴ just as is everything that does not serve their contemptible purpose like my ethics generally, indeed like all my works. My philosophy just does not interest those gentlemen; but this is because the investigation of truth does not interest them. On the contrary, what does interest them are their salaries, the guineas they charge, and their titles as privy councillors. It is true that philosophy also interests them in so far as they earn from it their daily bread. They are what Giordano Bruno has already characterized as *sordidi e mercenarii ingegni, che, poco o niente solleciti circa la verità, si contentano saper, secondo che comunmente è stimato il sapere, amici poco di vera sapienza, bramosi di fama e reputazion di quella, vaghi d'apparire, poco curiosi d'essere*.⁵⁵ (See *Opere di Giordano Bruno* published by A. Wagner, Leipzig, 1830, vol. ii, p. 83.) And so what would my essay 'On the Freedom of the Will' be to them, even if it had been awarded a prize by ten academies? On the other hand, the drivel that has since been written on the subject by the dullards of their company is puffed up and recommended. Do I need to qualify such conduct? Are these the men who represent philosophy, the rights of reason and freedom of thought? Another instance of the kind is afforded by *speculative theology*. The fact that Kant removed all arguments that constituted its props and completely overthrew it, does not in the least prevent my friends of the lucrative philosophy, even sixty years later, from giving out speculative theology as the real and wholly essential subject of philosophy. However, since they do not attempt to take up once more those exploded arguments, they now talk incessantly without more ado about the *absolute*, a word that is nothing but an enthymeme, a conclusion from premisses not expressed. This they do for the purpose of masking and establishing in a cowardly and cunning manner the cosmological proof which, since Kant's time, can no longer appear in its own form and must, therefore, be smuggled in in this disguise. It is as though Kant had had a presentiment of this last trick, for he expressly says: 'Men have at all times talked of the

⁵⁴ ['As not having occurred'.]

⁵⁵ ['Sordid and mercenary fellows who pay little or no heed to truth; they are content with knowledge that is ordinarily regarded as such and have little love for genuine wisdom. They crave for the reputation and prestige that are furnished by wisdom; they desire to appear something and are little concerned at being something.']

absolutely necessary being and have taken the trouble not so much to understand whether and how a thing of this nature could even be conceived, as rather to prove its existence—For to reject by means of the word *unconditioned* all the conditions that are always required by the understanding, in order to regard something as necessary, does not by any means enable me to understand whether through a concept of something unconditionally necessary, I am then thinking of something, or possibly of nothing at all.’ (*Critique of Pure Reason*, 1st edn., p. 592; 5th edn., p. 620.) Here I recall once more my doctrine that to be necessary implies absolutely and everywhere nothing but to follow from an existing and given reason or ground, such ground thus being the very *condition* of all necessity. Accordingly, the unconditionally necessary is a *contradictio in adjecto*, and is therefore no thought at all, but a hollow expression, a material that is, of course, frequently used in the structure of professorial philosophy. Further, it may here be mentioned that, in spite of Locke’s great epoch-making and fundamental doctrine of the *non-existence of innate ideas* and of all progress since made in philosophy on this basis particularly by Kant, the gentlemen of the φιλοσοφία μισθοφόρος⁵⁶ quite coolly impose on their students a ‘divine consciousness’, in general an immediate knowledge or understanding of metaphysical subjects through the faculty of reason. It is of no avail that Kant demonstrated with a display of the rarest acumen and depth of thought that theoretical reason can never arrive at objects that lie beyond the possibility of all experience. The gentlemen pay no regard to anything of the sort, but for fifty years have summarily taught that the faculty of reason has positively direct and absolute knowledge, that it is really a faculty originally based on metaphysics, one that immediately knows and positively grasps, beyond all possibility of experience, the so-called supersensuous, the absolute, the good Lord, and whatever else there is said to be. But it is obviously a fairy-tale, or more bluntly a palpable lie, that our *reason* is a faculty of such a nature that it knows the required objects of metaphysics not *by means of conclusions or inferences*, but *immediately*. For we need only an honest yet

⁵⁶ [‘Philosophy serving for remuneration’.]

otherwise not difficult self-examination to convince ourselves of the groundlessness of such an allegation; moreover, the case was bound to be quite different with metaphysics. Yet one of the worst results of philosophy at the universities is that such a lie, which is thoroughly pernicious for philosophy and lacks all motive except confusion and the cunning intentions of its propagator, has for half a century become the regular dogma of the chair, and has been repeated thousands of times and imposed on young students, in spite of the evidence of the greatest thinkers.

However, in keeping with such training, the real and essential theme of metaphysics is for the chair-philosophers the discussion of the relation between God and the world; its most detailed arguments fill their textbooks. Above all, they deem themselves appointed and paid to settle this matter and it is then amusing to see how precociously and learnedly they talk about the Absolute or God, putting on quite serious airs as if they really knew something about it; we are reminded of the seriousness with which children pursue their games. For at every fair a new system of metaphysics appears which consists of a most detailed account of the good Lord and explains how matters really stand with regard to him and moreover how he came to make the world, or give birth to it, or otherwise produce it, so that it seems as if every six months we receive the latest news about him. Yet in this connection, many now come up against a certain difficulty whose effect is extremely comic. Thus they have to teach about a regular personal God as he appears in the Old Testament; this they know. On the other hand, Spinoza's pantheism according to which the word God is synonymous with world has for about forty years been the absolutely predominant and universal mode of thought among scholars and even those of ordinary education. But they would not like to give this up entirely and yet they dare not reach out for this forbidden dish. They now try to extricate themselves, as usual by means of obscure, vague, and confused phrases and hollow verbiage, from a position in which they shuffle and wriggle pitiably. We then see some of them assert in the same breath that God is totally, infinitely, and utterly, really utterly, different from the world, but is at the same time wholly and in every way united and identical with it, in fact is

in it up to the ears. This always reminds me of Bottom, the weaver, in *Midsummer Night's Dream*, who promises to roar like a terrible lion, but can at the same time sing as softly as any nightingale. In this performance they encounter the strangest difficulty; for they assert that there is no place for him outside the world and yet they cannot make use of him within the world, and now bandy him about until they fall with him between two stools.*

On the other hand the *Critique of Pure Reason* with its proofs *a priori* of the impossibility of all knowledge of God is to them twaddle by which they do not allow themselves to be confused; for they know the purpose of their existence. To reply to them that nothing more unphilosophical can be imagined than to be for ever talking of something about whose existence we have no knowledge based on any evidence, and of whose real nature we have absolutely no conception, is impertinent interference on our part; for they know the purpose of their existence. They know me as one who is far beneath their notice and attention and through the complete disregard for my works they imagine that they have revealed what kind of man I am (although in precisely this way they have revealed what manner of men *they* are). And so it will be like talking to the winds, as it is with everything I have produced in the last thirty-five years, if I tell them that Kant was not joking when he said that philosophy is really and quite seriously not theology and never can be, but on the contrary is something quite different. In fact we know that, just as every other branch of knowledge is spoilt by an admixture of theology, so too is philosophy, and indeed most of all as is testified by its history. That this is also true even of morality has been very clearly demonstrated by me in my essay 'On the Basis of Ethics'. Therefore the professional gentlemen, true to their tactics of passive resistance, have also been as quiet as mice over this work. Thus theology covers with its veil all the problems of philosophy and so renders impossible not only their solution, but even their comprehension. Hence,

* From an analogous embarrassment comes the praise some of them now give me to save the honour of their good taste, since my light is now no longer hidden under a bushel. But they hasten to add the assurance that in the principal point I am wrong, for they will take care not to agree with a philosophy which is something quite different from Jewish mythology, disguised as this is in high-sounding verbiage and strangely trimmed—a thing that with them is *de rigueur*.

as I have said, the *Critique of Pure Reason* was quite seriously the letter of the retiring *ancilla theologiae*⁵⁷ in which once for all she gave notice to her gracious mistress. Theology has since been content with a hireling who occasionally dons the discarded livery of the former servant merely for the sake of appearance; just as in Italy similar substitutes are frequently to be seen especially on Sundays and are, therefore, known by the name of *Domenichini*.

But of course Kant's *Critiques* and arguments were bound to be wrecked on the rocks of university philosophy. For there it says: *sic volo, sic jubeo, sit pro ratione voluntas*.⁵⁸ Philosophy shall be theology even if twenty Kants were to prove the impossibility of the thing; we know the purpose of our existence; we exist *in majorem Dei gloriam*.⁵⁹ Every professor of philosophy is a *defensor fidei*,⁶⁰ just as was Henry VIII, and herein he recognizes his primary and principal vocation. Therefore after Kant had so thoroughly dissected the nerve and sinew of every possible argument of speculative theology that no one has since been able to have a hand in them, philosophical effort has consisted, for almost fifty years, in attempts of all kinds to slip in theology quietly and surreptitiously, and philosophical writings are frequently nothing but fruitless attempts to resuscitate a lifeless corpse. For instance, the gentlemen of the lucrative philosophy discovered in man a *divine consciousness* that had so far escaped the whole world and, emboldened by their mutual agreement and by the innocence of their immediate public, they rashly and impudently cast it about and thus in the end led astray even the honest Dutch of Leiden University. Sincerely regarding the tricks and dodges of the professors of philosophy as advances in science, the Dutch quite ingenuously set the following prize-question on 15 February 1844; *Quid statuendum de Sensu Dei, qui dicitur, menti humanae indito*, and so on.⁶¹ By virtue of such a 'divine consciousness', that which all philosophers up to Kant toiled so hard to demonstrate would be something *immediately known*. But what simpletons must all those previous philosophers

⁵⁷ ['The handmaid of theology'.]

⁵⁸ ['I wish that it shall be so; the wish exempts me from giving reasons.' (Juvenal, *Satires*, vi. 223.)]

⁵⁹ ['To the greater glory of God'.]

⁶⁰ ['Defender of the faith'.]

⁶¹ ['What is the opinion regarding the divine consciousness that is innate in our minds?']

have been who all their lives had exhausted themselves in furnishing proofs of a thing whereof we are directly *conscious*, implying as it does that we know it even more immediately than that twice two are four, which certainly needs reflection. To want to demonstrate such a thing must be like wanting to prove that eyes see, ears hear, and noses smell. And what irrational brutes the Buddhists must be, that is to say, the followers of the principal religion on earth, to judge by the number who profess it. Their religious fervour is so great that in Tibet almost one man in six is in holy orders and submits to the celibacy thereby entailed. Their doctrine supports and sustains an extremely pure, sublime, loving, and strictly ascetic morality (which has not, like Christianity, forgotten the animals). This doctrine is not only decidedly atheistic, but even expressly rejects theism. Thus personality is a phenomenon, known to us only from our animal nature and so, when separated therefrom, is no longer clearly conceivable. Now to make such a phenomenon the origin and principle of the world is always a thesis that will not occur at once to any mind, much less have its roots and residence therein. On the other hand, an impersonal God is a mere subterfuge of professors of philosophy, a *contradictio in adjecto*, an empty expression for silencing those without ideas, or for appeasing the vigilant.

Thus the writings of our university philosophers manifest the liveliest enthusiasm for theology, but very little desire for truth. Without any respect for truth, sophisms, surreptitious methods, misrepresentations, and false assertions are with unheard-of effrontery used and even accumulated. As previously stated, immediate, supersensuous knowledge and hence innate ideas are ascribed, or more correctly falsely imputed, to the faculty of reason, all this simply to bring out theology; only theology, theology at any price! With due deference, I should like to leave the gentlemen to consider that theology may after all be of very great value, but I know of something that in any case is of even greater value, namely honesty; honesty in business as also in thinking and teaching. I would not part with it for all the theology in the world.

But as matters now stand, whoever has taken seriously the *Critique of Pure Reason* and has been quite honest about it, and accordingly has no theology to offer, is of course bound to come

off second best *vis-à-vis* those gentlemen. Were he to bring even the most excellent and admirable thing the world has ever seen and serve up all the wisdom of heaven and earth, these men would still avert their eyes and ears if there were no theology. In fact the more merit his case has, the more will it excite not their admiration but their resentment; the more determined will be their passive resistance to it and hence the more malicious will be the silence with which they will attempt to stifle it; at the same time, the more blatantly will they sing encomiums over the delectable intellectual offspring of the fellowship that is so fertile in ideas. This they do merely in order that the voice of insight and sincerity, so hateful to them, may not make itself heard above the others. And so in this age of sceptical theologians and orthodox philosophers, this is demanded by the policy of the gentlemen who with wife and family support themselves on *that* branch of knowledge to which my whole being throughout a long life has sacrificed all its strength. For them the only question is one of theology in accordance with the hints and suggestions of their superiors; everything else is of secondary importance. At the outset each defines, in his own language, turns of phrase and veiled expressions, philosophy as speculative theology, and states quite naïvely that chasing after theology is the essential purpose of philosophy. They know nothing of the fact that we should approach the problem of existence freely and impartially and consider the world, together with the consciousness wherein it exhibits itself, as that which alone is given, as the problem, as the riddle of the old sphinx before whom we have boldly appeared. They cleverly ignore the fact that, if theology wants to be admitted into philosophy, it must first produce its passport, as must all other doctrines, and this is then examined at the office of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, as that which still enjoys the highest prestige among all thinkers, a reputation that has certainly not in the least been impaired by the comic grimaces that the chair-philosophers of the day have tried to make at it. And so without a credential of its own, theology obtains no admission; nor should it either by threats, cunning, or even by an appeal to the fact that the chair may not have anything else for sale. Let them shut up shop! For philosophy is not a church or a religion. It is that tiny spot in the world, accessible to

extremely few, where truth, always and everywhere hated and persecuted, shall for once be free from all pressure and coercion; where its saturnalia, permitting as it were free speech even to slaves, shall honour, exalt, and even have the prerogative and final word; where truth shall reign absolutely alone and admit nothing else along with it. Thus the whole world and everything therein is full of *intention*, and often low, mean, and evil intention. Only one tiny spot shall, as a matter of course, remain free therefrom and be open simply to *insight*, indeed to that insight into relations that are of the utmost importance to all. This is philosophy; or are we to understand the matter differently? If so, then everything is a joke and a comedy—‘As haply now and then the case may be.’⁶² Of course to judge from the compendiums of the chair-philosophers, one would rather imagine that philosophy is a guide to godliness or an institution for training church-goers. For speculative theology is often quite openly assumed to be the essential aim and object of the whole business and to that end is piloted with rudder and full sail. But it is certain that each and every article of faith contributes to the positive ruin of philosophy. Such articles may now be introduced openly and avowedly into philosophy, as was done in Scholasticism, or they are smuggled in by *petitiones principii*,⁶³ false axioms, fictitious inner sources of knowledge, divine consciousnesses, sham arguments, high-sounding phrases, and grandiloquent nonsense, as is customary at the present time. Everything of this kind ruins philosophy because it renders impossible the clear, impartial, purely objective conception of the world and our existence, this first condition of all investigation of truth.

To lecture on the fundamental dogmas of the established religion under the name of philosophy and in strange guise, dogmas that are then given the title of ‘absolute religion’ according to one of Hegel’s worthy expressions, may be a very profitable business. For it makes students better fitted for the purposes of State and likewise strengthens the reading public in the faith; but to give this out as *philosophy* is really equivalent to

⁶² [Goethe’s *Faust*, Pt. 1, Bayard Taylor’s translation.]

⁶³ [‘Begging of the question’. Fallacies that involve the assumption as premisses of one or more propositions which are identical with (or in a simple fashion equivalent to) the conclusion to be proved, or which would require the conclusion for their proof.]

selling something for what it is not. If this and all the above-mentioned things continue their course undisturbed, then philosophy at the universities is bound to become more and more a *remora*⁶⁴ of the truth. For it is all over with philosophy when something other than pure truth alone is taken as the standard of its criticism or even as the guiding rule of its propositions, the truth that is so hard to arrive at even with a thoroughly honest investigation and the concentration of the highest mental powers. It degenerates into a mere fable that is agreed upon as true, or into a *fable convenue*⁶⁵ as Fontenelle called history. If we philosophize in accordance with a pre-arranged goal, we shall never advance even one step in the solution to the problems with which we are confronted on all sides by our infinitely mysterious existence. But, of course, no one will deny that such philosophizing is the generic characteristic of the various species of present-day university philosophy; for it is only too obvious that they all collimate their systems and propositions on to the one target-point. Moreover, this is not even New Testament Christianity proper or the spirit thereof which is too lofty, too ethereal, too eccentric, too little of this world, and thus too pessimistic for them and therefore totally unsuited to the apotheosis of the 'State'. On the contrary, it is merely Judaism, the doctrine that the world has its existence from a supremely eminent personal being and hence is also a most delightful thing and *πάντα καλὰ λίαν*.⁶⁶ For them this is the kernel of all wisdom to which philosophy should lead, or be led if she shows any resistance. Hence too the war that, since the collapse of Hegelry, is waged by all professors against so-called pantheism in the unanimous condemnation of which they try to outdo one another. Can this zeal have arisen from the discovery of cogent and convincing reasons against it? Or rather do we not see with what embarrassment and alarm they look for reasons against that adversary that calmly stands in its original strength and smiles at them? And so can anyone still doubt that mere incompatibility of that doctrine with 'absolute religion' is the reason why it is not to be true, shall not be, even if the whole of nature proclaimed it from thousands of throats?

⁶⁴ ['Hindrance'.]

⁶⁵ ['A fable that is agreed upon as true.']

⁶⁶ ['(And God saw) every thing (that he had made, and, behold, it) was very good.' (Genesis 1:31.)]

Nature is to keep quiet so that Judaism may have its say. Now if there is still anything besides 'absolute religion' which is taken into consideration by them, it will, of course, be the other wishes of an important ministry that has the power to grant and withdraw professorships. This indeed is the Muse that inspires them and directs their lucubrations; and it is, therefore, regularly invoked at the beginning in the form of a dedication. To me these are the men to pull truth out of the well, to tear down the veil of deception, and to challenge all obscurity.

In no branch of learning, by the nature of the case, are men of supreme ability, imbued with a love of knowledge and eagerness for truth, so positively necessary as in the passing on, by word of mouth, to the flower of a new generation the results of the highest exertions of the human mind on the most important of all affairs, or indeed where there should be awakened in this generation the spirit of research. On the other hand, ministries consider that no branch of learning has so much influence on the most intimate views of future scholars and hence of the class that really rules the State and society, as precisely this branch. It must, therefore, be only in the hands of the most devoted men who trim their teaching wholly in accordance with the will and prevailing views of the ministry. Naturally it is the first of these two requirements that must take second place. Now to anyone unacquainted with this state of affairs, it may seem at times as though the most decided dunderheads had strangely devoted themselves to the study of Plato and Aristotle.

Here I cannot refrain from remarking incidentally that situations as private tutors are a very pernicious preparation for a professorship of philosophy; and nearly all who have ever held such situations after their studies at the university have for some years overlooked this fact. For such situations are a suitable training ground for submissiveness and docility. In such a post a man is especially in the habit of entirely subjecting his teachings to the will of his employer and of knowing no other aims than those of his master. This early acquired habit strikes root and becomes second nature so that afterwards, as professor of philosophy, a man finds nothing more natural than to trim and fashion even philosophy exactly in accordance with the wishes of the ministry in charge of professorships. In the end,

the results are philosophical views or even systems which seem as though they were made to order. Truth then has a fine game! Here, of course, it is clear that, in order to pay absolute homage to truth and really to philosophize, so many conditions have to be fulfilled, but there is also one that is almost indispensable, namely that we stand on our own feet and recognize no master; accordingly the *δός μοι ποῦ στῶ*⁶⁷ is in a certain sense also applicable here. At any rate, most of those who ever achieved anything great in philosophy were in the same situation. Spinoza was so clearly aware of this that he declined the professorship that was offered to him.

*Ἡμισυ γὰρ τ' ἀρετῆς ἀποαίνονται εὐρύοπα Ζεὺς
'Ανέρος, εὐτ' ἄν μιν κατὰ δούλιον ἤμαρ ἔλησιν.*⁶⁸

Real philosophizing demands independence:

*Πᾶς γὰρ ἀνὴρ πενίῃ δεδμημένος οὔτε τι εἰπεῖν,
Οὔθ' ἔρξαι δύναται, γλῶσσα δέ οἱ δέδεται.*⁶⁹

Theognis.

There is also a passage in Sadi's *Gulistan* (translated by Graf, Leipzig, 1846, p. 185) in which it says that whoever is burdened by the cares of earning a living cannot achieve anything. With reference to this, the genuine philosopher is by nature one who is easily satisfied and does not need much in order to live independently; for his motto will always be Shenstone's remark that 'liberty is a more invigorating cordial than Tokay.'

If, therefore, it were now only a question here of encouraging philosophy and of progressing on the path of truth, the best recommendation I should make would be to stop the prevarication and humbug that are carried on in its name at the universities. For these are really not the place for philosophy that is seriously and honestly meant; only too often is its place there occupied by a puppet dressed up in its clothes which, as a *nervis alienis mobile lignum*,⁷⁰ must gesticulate and make a show. Now if such a chair-philosophy still tries to replace genuine

⁶⁷ ['Give me a foothold' (and I move the earth.)]

⁶⁸ ['For thundering Zeus takes away half the excellence of a man as soon as the day of bondage overwhelms him.' (Homer, *Odyssey*, xvii. 322f.)]

⁶⁹ ['Everyone oppressed by poverty is unable to say or do what he likes; his tongue is no longer free.' (II. 177-8.)]

⁷⁰ ['A wooden doll that is moved by extraneous forces' (Horace, *Satires*, II. 7. 82).]

ideas by incomprehensible, mind-stupefying phrases, new-fangled words, and unheard-of notions, the absurdities of which are called speculative and transcendental, then it becomes a parody of philosophy, and brings it into discredit; such has been the case in our day. With all this business how can there exist even the mere possibility of that profound seriousness which, together with truth, disregards everything and is the first condition of philosophy? The way to truth is steep and long; and no one will cover the distance with a block tied to his foot; on the contrary, wings would be necessary. Accordingly, I should be in favour of philosophy's ceasing to be a means of livelihood; with this the sublimity of its aspiration is incompatible; indeed this was recognized even by the ancients. It is quite unnecessary for a few shallow talkers to be kept at every university for the purpose of putting young men against philosophy for the rest of their lives. Voltaire is quite right when he says: *les gens de lettres qui ont rendu le plus de services au petit nombre d'êtres pensans répandus dans le monde, sont les lettrés isolés, les vrais savans, renfermés dans leur cabinet, qui n'ont ni argumenté sur les bancs de l'université, ni dit les choses à moitié dans les académies: et ceux-là ont presque toujours été persécutés.*⁷¹ All help that is offered to philosophy from without is, by its nature, suspect. The interest of philosophy is of too lofty a nature for it to be capable of entering into a sincere alliance with the activities of this evilly disposed world. On the contrary, it has its own guiding star that never sets; we should, therefore, give it full play without assistance but also without hindrance. We should not let the serious pilgrim who by nature is endowed and ordained for the elevated temple of truth associate with a fellow who is really concerned only with a meal and a good night's lodging; for it is to be feared that such a man will push an obstacle in the path of the pilgrim in order to be after these amenities himself.

As a result of all this, leaving aside the purposes of State and considering only the interests of philosophy, I regard it as desirable that all instruction therein at the universities be strictly limited to lectures on logic as a complete and accurately

⁷¹ ['Those authors who have rendered the greatest service to the small number of world-famous thinkers are the isolated writers, the genuine scholars shut up in their studies, who have neither expounded their arguments from a university chair nor in academies put forward half-truths; and it is they who have almost always been persecuted.']

demonstrable science and to a history of philosophy. The latter should be given quite succinctly in a series of lectures, and should cover in one term of six months the period from Thales to Kant, so that in consequence of its brevity and lucidity of style as little scope as possible is given to the professor's own views and it appears merely as a guide to the student's own future course of study. For only in their own works and certainly not from second-hand accounts can we become really acquainted with philosophers; and I have given the reasons for this in the preface to the second edition of my chief work. Moreover, reading the original works of genuine philosophers in any case has a beneficial and encouraging influence on the mind, since it puts it into immediate touch with a superior and independent thinker. On the other hand, with those histories of philosophy, the mind always receives only the movement that can be imparted to it by the stiff and wooden train of thought of a commonplace intellect, one that has arranged matters in its own way. I should, therefore, like to limit those professorial lectures to a general orientation in the field of philosophical achievements to date and to eliminate from its presentation all arguments and pragmatism that would go further than demonstrate the unmistakable points of contact of successively appearing systems with those previously existing. And so this is in complete contrast with the presumption of Hegelian writers of the history of philosophy who show each system as necessarily taking place, and accordingly construct *a priori* the history of philosophy and demonstrate that every philosopher must have thought exactly what he did think and nothing else. In this connection, the professor very conveniently and haughtily ignores them all, even if he does not smile at them. The sinner! as though all this had not been the work of individual and isolated minds who had to be pushed about for a while in the evil company of this world so that such work would be rescued and saved from coarse and stupid gangs; minds who are as individual as they are rare and hence to each of whom Ariosto's *natura il fece, e poi ruppe la stampa*⁷² applies in the fullest sense. And as though another would have written the *Critique of Pure Reason* had Kant died of smallpox, for instance, one of those manufactured articles of nature with her trade-mark on his forehead,

⁷² ['Nature stamped it and then smashed the mould.']

someone with the normal ration of three pounds of coarse brain of pretty tough texture, well preserved in a skull an inch thick, with a facial angle of 70 degrees, feeble pulse, dull inquisitive eyes, strongly developed mouth organs, a stammer, and a heavy slouching gait in keeping with the toad-like agility of his ideas. Yes indeed, you just wait! they will make *Critiques of Pure Reason* and even systems for you whenever the moment that is calculated by the professor arrives and it is their turn, that is to say, when oaks bear apricots. Of course, the gentlemen have good reasons for ascribing as much as possible to upbringing and education, even for flatly denying innate talents as some actually do, and for entrenching themselves in every way against the truth that everything depends on the way in which a man proceeded from the hands of nature, what father begot him and what mother conceived him, and indeed even at what hour. Therefore no man will write *Iliads* whose mother was a goose and whose father was a dullard, even if he has studied at six universities. But still it is no different; nature is aristocratic, more so than any feudal or caste system. Accordingly, her pyramid rises up from a very broad base to a very sharp apex. Even if the mob and rabble who will tolerate nothing over them succeeded in overthrowing all aristocracies, they would still have to allow this one to exist; and for this they shall get no reward; for it is quite properly 'by the grace of God'.

