

# Preface

1

*You would like to warm yourself  
against me? I advise you not to come  
too close: you might burn your hands.  
For look, I burn too much. I only  
just barely prevent my flame from  
bursting from my body.*

1881–1886<sup>1</sup>

What compels me to write—I think—is the fear of going mad.

I suffer from a burning, painful longing that endures in me like an unsatisfied desire.

In one sense, my tension resembles a mad urge to laugh, hardly different from the passions from which Sade's heroes burned and yet close to those of martyrs or saints . . .

I have no doubt: this delirium draws out human qualities in me. But, it must be said, it leads to disequilibrium and deprives me, painfully, of rest. I burn and am disoriented and remain empty in the end. I can propose to myself grand and necessary actions, but none of them answers to my fever. I am speaking of moral concerns, of the search for an object whose value sweeps all others away!

Compared to the moral ends that are normally proposed, this object is incommensurable, in my eyes: these ends seem dull and deceptive. But it is precisely these moral ends that can be translated into actions (are they not determined as a demand for definite acts?).

3

It's true: concern for a limited end sometimes leads to the summit toward which I strive. But by a detour. The moral end is then distinct from the excess it occasions. Glorious states, sacred moments—which reveal the incommensurable—exceed intended results. Common morality places these results on the same level as the goals of sacrifice. A sacrifice explores the depth of worlds, and the destruction that ensures it thereby reveals the laceration. But sacrifice is celebrated for a banal reason. A morality always has some good for individual beings in sight.

(Things apparently changed the day that God was represented as a veritable, unique end. I don't doubt that some will say that the incommensurable of which I speak is, in short, only God's transcendence. However, God's transcendence is, for me, flight from my object. Nothing really changes if we think of human satisfaction in place of that of the celestial Being! God's person displaces and does not suppress the problem. It only introduces confusion: at will, when necessary, the being, as a kind of God, gives itself an incommensurable essence. No matter: *servicing God, acting on his behalf*: God is reducible to the ordinary ends of action. *If God were situated beyond, we couldn't do anything for him.*)

## 2

The extreme, unconditional longing of humanity was expressed for the first time by Nietzsche *independently from a moral goal and from serving a God*.

Nietzsche could not define it precisely but it animated him; he took it on thoroughly. To burn without answering to some moral obligation, expressed in a dramatic tone, is undoubtedly a paradox. It is impossible, from there, to preach or to act. A disconcerting result arises from this. If we stop making one burning state the condition of another subsequent state, given as a graspable good, the proposed state seems a pure play of fulguration, an empty consummation. Lacking a relationship to some enrichment, like power or the growth of the state (or of a God, a Church, a party), this consummation is not even intelligible. *The positive value of loss can apparently only be given in terms of profit.*

Nietzsche was not clearly aware of this difficulty. He had to make note of his failure: in the end he knew that his was a voice in the wilderness. To suppress obligation, the *good*, to denounce the emptiness and the lie of morality, he destroyed the effective value of language. Fame came late, and when it came, he changed the stakes. No one responded to his expectations.

Today it seems that I must say: those who read or admire Nietzsche ridicule him (he knew it, he said it\*). *Except for me?* (I am simplifying.) But to attempt, as he asked, to follow him is to submit to the same tests, to the same wandering as he did.

This total liberation of human possibility that he defined, this total liberation of all possibilities, is undoubtedly the only possibility that has not been tried (I repeat: simplifying, except by me (?)). At the current point in history, I think every conceivable doctrine that has been preached, that the teachings have had, to some extent, an effect. Nietzsche, in turn, conceived and preached a new doctrine, he gathered disciples, dreamed of founding an order: he hated what he received . . . vulgar praise!

Today I think it is good to affirm my distress: I attempted to draw out of myself the consequences of a lucid doctrine, which attracted me like a light: I've reaped anguish and most often the impression of succumbing.

## 3

Succumbing, I would not in any way abandon the longing about which I have spoken. Or rather, this longing would not let go of me: I would die, but would not silence myself for all that (at least I don't think so): I would want those I love to endure or to succumb in their turn.<sup>2</sup>

There is a violent movement in the essence of a human being, wanting autonomy, for the being to be free. *Freedom* undoubtedly can be understood in several ways, but who will be surprised today that people are dying for it? The difficulties that Nietzsche encountered—letting go of God and the good, yet nevertheless burning with the ardor of those who died for God or the good—I have encountered them in my turn. The discouraging solitude that he described exhausts me. But breaking with moral entities gives the air I breathe a truth so great that I'd rather live as a cripple or die than fall back into servitude.

## 4

In the moment in which I am writing, I admit that a moral search locating its object beyond the good first leads one astray. Nothing assures me any more that I will pass the test. This admission, founded on a painful

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\*See below page 21.

experience, authorizes me to laugh at those who, in attacks or exploitations, confuse Nietzsche's position with that of Hitler.

*"At what height is my dwelling? Climbing, I have never counted the steps leading up to me; where all the steps cease, I have my roof and my dwelling."* (1882–1884)<sup>3</sup>

Thus a demand is expressed that does not intend any graspable *good* and yet consumes the one who lives it.

I'd like to put an end to this crude equivocation. It is frightful to see reduced to the level of propaganda a thought that remains comically unemployable, open only to those inspired by the void. According to some, Nietzsche would have had the greatest influence on his times. It's doubtful: no one expected him to mock moral laws. Above all he had no political position: he refused, when asked, to choose one party or another; irritated to be identified with either the right or the left. He was horrified by the idea of subordinating his thought to a cause.

His decided feelings on politics date from his falling out with Wagner, from the disillusion that he experienced the day that Wagner spread out before him the German coarseness: Wagner the socialist, Francophobe, anti-Semite . . . The spirit of the Second Reich, above all in its pre-Hitlerite tendencies, the emblem of which is anti-Semitism, is what he despised most. Pan-German propaganda nauseated him.

"I like to make a clean sweep of things. It is part of my ambition to be considered a despiser of the Germans par excellence. My mistrust of the German character I expressed even when I was twenty-six (in the third *Untimely* section 6)—The Germans seem impossible to me. When I imagine a type of man that antagonizes all my instincts, it always turns into a German." (*Ecce Homo*)<sup>4</sup> If you want to see clearly, on the political level, Nietzsche was the prophet, foretelling the coarse, German fate. He was the first to denounce it. He abhorred the closed, heinous, self-satisfied madness that seized the German mind after 1870, that is exhausting itself today in Hitlerite fury.<sup>5</sup> No deadlier error has ever led a whole people astray, destined it more cruelly for the abyss. But he detached himself from this mass, dedicated in advance, refusing to participate in the orgy of "self-contentment." His strictness had consequences. Germany chose to ignore a genius that did not flatter her. Only his foreign notoriety attracted the belated attention of his people . . . I know of no better example of a standoff between a man and his country: an entire nation, for fifteen years, remaining deaf to that voice, isn't that serious? Today, watching the ruin, we must admire the fact that at the moment when Germany took the path leading to the worst, the wisest and most passionate of the Germans turned away from her: he was

horrified and unable to overcome his feelings. On both sides, in any case, in the attempts at evasion no less than in the aberrations, after the fact, the absence of escape must be recognized—isn't that disarming?

Nietzsche and Germany, in their opposition to one another, have met the same kind of end: equally aroused by senseless hopes, but in vain. Outside of this tragic, vain agitation, everything between them was laceration and hatred. The similarities are insignificant. If not for the habit of ridiculing Nietzsche, of doing to him what depressed him most: quick reading, convenient use—*without even letting go of positions he opposed*—his doctrine would be taken for what it is: the most violent of solvents. To take him for a supporter of causes he discredits is not only an insult, it is to trample him underfoot, to prove the one does not know his work when one claims to love it. Whoever would try, as I have, to go to the end of the possible that Nietzsche's work calls out, would become, in turn, a field of infinite contradictions. To the extent that one might follow this paradoxical teaching, he would see that embracing one of the previously mentioned causes is no longer possible, that his solitude is complete.

## 5

In this book, written in a rush, I have not developed this point of view theoretically. I even think that an effort of this type would be sullied by ponderousness. Nietzsche wrote "with his blood:"<sup>6</sup> whoever criticizes him or, better, *experiences* him can only do so by bleeding in his turn.

I wrote hoping my book would appear, if possible, on the occasion of the centenary of Nietzsche's birth (15 October 1844). I wrote from February to August, hoping that the German retreat would make publication possible. I began with a theoretical statement of the problem (this is Part Two), but this short presentation is fundamentally only a narrative of a lived experience: of an experience lived for twenty years, charged throughout with fear. On this subject, I think it useful to dispel an equivocation: Nietzsche was the philosopher of the "will to power"; he presented himself as such; he was received as such. I think that he was rather the philosopher of *evil*. It is the attraction, the *value* of evil that, it seems to me, gave meaning to what he wanted to say when speaking of power. If it was not like this, how can this passage be explained?

"*Spoiling the Taste*—A: You keep spoiling the taste; that is what everybody says. B: Certainly. I spoil the taste of his party for everyone—and no party forgives that." (*The Gay Science* § 172)<sup>7</sup>

This reflection, among many others, is entirely irreconcilable with practical, political behaviors, derived from the principle of the “will to power.” Nietzsche had an aversion, during his lifetime, to those who ordered their lives according to this will. If he had a taste for—even succumbed to the necessity—of trampling on received morality, I have no doubt he yielded to a disgust inspired by methods of oppression (the police). He justified his hatred of the good as a condition of freedom itself. Personally, without illusions about the bearing of my attitude, I feel opposed, I oppose myself to all forms of constraint: nevertheless, I make nothing less than *evil* the object of an extreme moral search. Because evil is the opposite of constraint, which on principle exerts itself toward a good. Evil is not what a hypocritical series of misunderstandings makes it out to be: Isn't it essentially a concrete *freedom*, the uneasy breaking of a taboo?

Anarchy bothers me, particularly the vulgar doctrines apologizing for common criminals. *Gestapo* practices now brought to light show the profound affinity uniting the underworld and the police: no one is more inclined to torture, to cruelly carry out the apparatus of constraint than groups without faith or law. I even despise those confused, weak minds that demand every right for the individual: the limit of the individual is not only found in the rights of another, it is more harshly in those of the *people*. Each man is in solidarity with the people, shares its sufferings or victories, the threads of his being are part of a living mass (for all that, he is no less alone in weighty moments).

These major difficulties of the opposition of the individual to the collective or of good to evil and, in general, these mad contradictions from which we only escape by denial, it seems to me, can only be conquered freely by a single stroke of luck—found in the audacity of taking risks. The stagnation into which succumbs life advanced to the limits of the possible could not exclude a chance of surpassing. A limitless recklessness, no longer pulling back, not looking back, would risk going to the end, which logical thought cannot comprehend. For this reason, I could only write *with my life* this book projected to be on Nietzsche, in which I wanted to propose, if I could, to resolve the intimate problem of morality.

Only my life, only its ludicrous resources could pursue the quest for the Grail of chance in me. This proved able to respond to Nietzsche's intentions more precisely than power. Only “risk” had the virtue of exploring very far in advance of the possible, without prejudicing the results, granting the *future* alone, to its free expiration, the power that one normally grants to taking sides, which is only a form of the *past*. My book is in part, from day to day, a narrative of dice thrown—thrown, I must say, with

impoverished means. I apologize for this truly comical year of personal interests that the pages of my journal put in play: they are not a source of pain; I laugh at myself voluntarily and know no better way to lose myself in immanence.

## 6

My taste for making fun of myself and being laughable should not however go so far that it leads my readers astray. The essential problem agitating this disordered book (disordered because it has to be) is that which Nietzsche lived, which his work attempted to resolve: that of the whole man.

“Most men represent pieces and fragments of man: one has to add them up for a complete man to appear. Whole ages, whole peoples are in this sense somewhat fragmentary; it is perhaps part of the economy of human evolution that man should evolve piece by piece. But that should not make one forget for a moment that the real issue is the production of the synthetic man; that lower men, the tremendous majority, are merely preludes and rehearsals out of whose medley the whole man appears here and there, the milestone man who indicates how far humanity has advanced so far.” (1887–1888)<sup>8</sup>

But what does this fragmentation mean, or, better, what causes it, if not the need to *act* that specializes and limits us to the horizon of a given activity? Even if it is of general interest, which is not normally the case, the activity subordinating each of our moments to some precise result effaces the complete character of a being. Whoever acts, for this reason substitutes some particular end for the being that he is as a totality, in the least specialized cases, the grandeur of a State, the victory of a party. Every action specializes in that it is limited as an action. An ordinary plant does not act, is not specialized: it is specialized gobbling up flies!

I cannot exist *totally* without surpassing the stage of action in some way. Otherwise I would be a soldier, a professional revolutionary, a scholar, not a “whole man.”<sup>9</sup> The fragmentary state of man is, fundamentally, the same thing as the choice of an object. Once a man limits his desires, for example, to the possession of power in the State, he acts, he knows what he must do. Failure hardly matters: from the beginning he inserts his being advantageously into time. Each of his moments becomes *useful*. Each instant gives him the possibility of advancing toward the chosen goal: his time becomes a march toward this goal (this is what is normally called living). It’s the same if his object is his salvation. Every action makes a man a

fragmentary being. I can only maintain the whole character in myself by refusing to act, at least denying the elevation of time reserved for action.

Life remains whole only by not being subordinated to some specific object that surpasses it. In this sense, totality has freedom as its essence. Nevertheless I cannot want to become a whole man by the simple fact of fighting for freedom. Even if fighting in this way is the activity among all others appropriate to me, I could not confuse, within myself, the state of integrity and my fighting. It is the positive exercise of freedom, not the negative struggle against a particular oppression, that elevates me above mutilated existence. Each of us learns bitterly that fighting for his freedom is first of all alienating.

I've said the exercise of freedom is situated on the side of evil, while the struggle for freedom is the conquest of a *good*. If life is whole in me, to the extent that it is, I cannot put it in service to some good, whether that of someone else or of God or myself, without dividing it up. I cannot acquire but only give, and give freely, without the gift ever having as its object someone else's *interest*. (In this regard, I hold the good of another as deceptive since if I will the good of another, it is to find my own, unless I identify it as my own. Totality is this exuberance within me: it is only an empty longing, an unhappy desire to be consumed for no other reason than the desire itself—*that it is completely*—to burn. In this totality is the desire to laugh that I mentioned, this desire for pleasure, for sanctity, for death . . . It has no other task to fulfill.)

## 7

So strange a problem is inconceivable unless lived. It is easy to challenge its meaning, saying: infinite tasks impose themselves on us. Precisely in the present times. No one would dream of denying the evidence. It is no less true that the totality of man—the inevitable term—appears just now for two reasons. The first negative: specialization, on all sides, has accelerated to an alarming degree.<sup>10</sup> Second: overpowering tasks nevertheless appear, in our day, *in their exact limits*.

The horizon was once obscure. The object of seriousness was initially the good of the city, but the city was confused with the gods. The object thereafter was the salvation of the soul. In these two cases, action intended, on the one hand, some limited, comprehensible, end; on the other, a totality defined as inaccessible in this world (transcendent). In modern conditions, action has precise ends, completely adequate to the possible: human totality no longer has a mythic aspect. Obviously accessible, human totality is



dedicated to the completion of tasks given and defined materially. It is distant: its tasks subordinating the minds that they fragment. Totality is nonetheless discernable in them.

The totality that the necessary labor aborts in us is nonetheless found in that labor. Not as a goal—the goal is to change the world, to make it equal to humanity—but as an inevitable result. Following this change, man-attached-to-the-task-of-changing-the-world, which is only a fragmentary aspect of man, will be changed into whole-man. This result seems distant for humanity, but the *defined* task describes it: it does not transcend us like the gods (the sacred city) or like the afterlife of the soul; it is in the immanence of attached-man . . . We can put off thinking about it until later, it's nevertheless contiguous with us; if men cannot in their shared existence have a clear conscience from now on, what separates them from this notion is neither the fact of being men (and not gods) nor that of not being dead: it is a momentary obligation.

Similarly, a man in combat must only (provisionally) think of reducing the enemy. Undoubtedly, there is hardly violent combat that does not, in moments of calm, give way to peacetime preoccupations. But in the field, these preoccupations seem minor. The toughest minds take part in these moments of relaxation and take care to let go of their seriousness. In a sense they are fooling themselves: Isn't seriousness, fundamentally, the *reason* blood flows? But this is nothing: seriousness *must* be the same as blood; free life, without combat, disengaged from the necessities of action, not fragmented, *must* appear in light of frivolity: in a world released from the gods, from concern for salvation, even "tragedy" is only an amusement—only a relaxation subordinated to ends shaped by a single activity.

This mode of entry—*by the back door*—of human purpose possesses more than one advantage. The whole man, in this way, is revealed firstly in immanence, at the level of a frivolous life. We must laugh at it, even if it is profoundly tragic. This is a liberating perspective: it acquires nudity, the worst simplicity. I'm grateful—no kidding—for those whose serious attitude and life lived in proximity to death define me as an empty being, a dreamer (at times I agree with them). Fundamentally, the whole man is only a being in whom transcendence is abolished, from whom nothing is separated any longer: part fool, part God, part madman . . . this is transparency.<sup>11</sup>

## 8

If I want to realize my totality within my consciousness, I must relate myself to the immense, comical, painful convulsion of all of humanity.

This movement moves toward *every* meaning. Undoubtedly, tangible action (moving toward *one* given meaning) passes through this incoherence, but this is precisely what gives humanity in my times (as in those of the past) its fragmentary aspect. If I forget this given meaning for a moment, I see the Shakespearean tragicomical sum of whims, lies, suffering, and laughter; the consciousness of an immanent totality comes to light in me, but as a laceration: existence as a whole situates itself beyond any one meaning, it is the conscious presence of man in the world insofar as a human being is *nonsense*, with nothing to do but be what it is, no longer able to surpass itself, to offer itself some meaning by acting.

This consciousness of totality is related to two opposed ways of using an expression. *Nonsense* is normally a simple negation, said of an object that must be removed. The intention that refuses that which has no meaning is in fact the refusal of being whole; it is because of this refusal that we are unaware of the totality of being within us. But if I say *nonsense* with the contrary intention of seeking an object free of meaning, I deny nothing; I speak an affirmation in which *all life* is clarified in consciousness.

Whatever moves toward this consciousness of a totality, toward this complete friendship of humanity for itself, is quite rightly taken to be lacking a fundamental *seriousness*. Following this path, I become ridiculous, I acquire the inconsistency of all men (taken together, overlooking what leads to important changes). I don't want to account for Nietzsche's illness in this way (insofar as we know, it had a somatic origin): it must nevertheless be said that a first movement toward the whole man is the equivalent of madness. I let go of the good and I let go of reason (meaning), I open an abyss beneath my feet, which activity and the judgments bound to activity once separated from me. At the very least, consciousness of totality is in me initially despair and crisis. If I abandon the perspective of action, my perfect nudity is revealed to me. I am in the world without recourse, without support, I break down. There is no other outcome but an endless incoherence in which only my luck will guide me.

## 9

Obviously, so disarming an experience cannot be done until all others have been attempted, accomplished, and every other possibility exhausted. Consequently, it can only become the fact of humanity as a whole in the last place. Only a very isolated individual can do it in our day thanks to mental disorder<sup>12</sup> and at the same time an undeniable vigor. If he's

lucky, he can establish an unexpected equilibrium in the incoherence: this divine state of equilibrium translates into a bold simplicity and ceaselessly displays deep imbalance dancing on a tightrope, I don't think the "will to power" can attain it in any other way. If I have been understood, the "will to power," considered as an end, would be a step back. Following it, I would return to servile fragmentation. Once again I would give myself a responsibility, and the good that is the desired power would control me. Divine exuberance, the lightness expressed by Zarathustra's laughter and dance, would be reabsorbed; in place of happiness suspended over the abyss, I'd be tied to weightiness, to the servility of *Kraft durch Freude*.<sup>13</sup> If we set aside the equivocation of the "will to power," the destiny that Nietzsche gives humanity is situated beyond laceration: there is no return, and from there flows the profound nonviability of the doctrine. In the notes for *The Will to Power*, the sketch of action, the temptation to elaborate a goal and a politics lead only into a maze. The last completed writing, *Ecce Homo*, affirms the absence of a goal, the insubordination of the author to every plan.\*\* Viewed from the perspective of action, Nietzsche's work is an abortion—one of the most indefensible—his life is only a failure, the same as the life of anyone who attempts to put his writings into practice.<sup>14</sup>

## 10

*Don't doubt this for a moment longer*.<sup>15</sup> not a word of Nietzsche's work can be understood before having *lived* this dazzling dissolution into totality; outside of that this philosophy is only a maze of contradictions, worse yet: the pretext for lies of omission (if, like the fascists, one isolates passages for ends that the rest of the work denies). Now I ask that I be followed with closer attention. It might have been clear that the preceding criticism is the masked form of approval. It justifies this definition of the whole man: *the man whose life is an "unmotivated" festival*, and a festival in *every* sense of the word: laughter, dance, an orgy that never subordinates itself, a sacrifice mocking material and moral ends.

The preceding introduces the necessity of a dissociation. Individual and collective extreme states were once motivated by ends. Some of these ends no longer have meaning (expiation, salvation). The good of collectivities is now no longer sought by means with doubtful efficacy but through action

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\*\*See below page 72.

directly. In these conditions, extreme states fell into the realm of the arts, which is not without problems. Literature (fiction) was substituted for what was previously the spiritual life, poetry (the disorder of *words*) for *real* trance states. Art constitutes a small free space outside of action, paying for its freedom with its renunciation of the real world. This price is heavy, and few are the writers who do not dream of recovering the lost reality: but for that they must pay in another way, renouncing freedom to serve propaganda. The artist who limits himself to fiction knows that he is not a whole man, but it is the same with a writer of propaganda. The realm of the arts in a sense really encompasses the totality, which nevertheless escapes it in any case.

Nietzsche is far from having *resolved* the difficulty, Zarathustra is also a poet, and even a literary fiction! Only he never accepted it. Praise exasperated him. He thrashed about, seeking a way out in every direction. He never lost Ariadne's thread, *which was to have no goal* and serve no cause: causes, he knew, *clipped wings*. But the absence of a cause, on the other hand, threw him into solitude: this is the sickness of the desert, a cry lost in great silence . . .

The comprehension I invite definitely engages in the same absence of a way out: it assumes the same enthusiastic torture. In a sense I think it's necessary to invert the idea of the eternal return. It is not the promise of infinite repetition that lacerates but this: that the moments caught in the immanence of the return suddenly appear as ends. That one not forget that the moments are *in every system* envisioned and assigned as means: every morality claims: "that each moment of your life should be *motivated*." The return *unmotivates* the moment, frees life of ends and thereby initially destroys it. The return is the dramatic mode and mask of the whole man: it is the desert of a man in which each moment henceforth finds itself unmotivated.

It's useless to try to avoid it: a choice must in the end be made, desert on one side, mutilation on the other. Misfortune can't be dropped off like a package. Suspended in the void, extreme moments are followed by depressions that no hope can alleviate. If however I come to a clear understanding of what is lived in this way, I give up looking for a way out where there isn't one (for that, I hold to my critique). How can the absence of goal inherent in Nietzsche's desire not have consequences? Inexorably, chance—and the search for chance—represents a unique recourse (of which this book describes the vicissitudes). But to advance in this way, with rigor, implies a necessary dissociation in the movement itself.

If it is true that, in the sense in which we normally understand the man of action, man cannot be a whole man, the whole man retains a

possibility of action: on the condition however of reducing the action to principles and ends that are appropriate to that man (in a word, to reason). The whole man cannot be transcended (dominated) by action: he would lose his totality. On the other hand he cannot transcend action (subordinate it to his ends): he would define himself thereby as a motive, would enter into, be annihilated by the gears of motivations. A distinction must be made between, on the one side, the world of motives, wherein each thing is sensible (rational), and the world of nonsense (free of all sense). Each of us belongs in part to one, in part to the other. We can consciously and clearly distinguish what is connected only in ignorance. For me, reason can only be limited by itself. If we act, we stray outside of the motivation of equity and the rational order of actions. Between the two realms, only one relationship is acceptable: action must be limited *rationally* by a principle of freedom.\*\*\*

The rest is silence.<sup>16</sup>

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\*\*\*The share of fire, of madness—the *accursed share*—of the whole man being granted (conceded from outside) by reason according to liberal and reasonable norms. This is the condemnation of capitalism as a mode of irrational activity. From the moment when the whole man (his irrationality) recognizes himself as external to action, where he sees in every possibility of transcendence a trap and the loss of his totality, we will give up irrational dominations (feudal, capitalist) in the realm of activity. Nietzsche undoubtedly foresaw the necessity of this abandonment without perceiving its cause. The whole man can only be whole if he gives up offering himself as the *end* for others: he enslaves himself if he passes beyond, limits himself to feudal or bourgeois limits this side of freedom. Nietzsche, it's true, still believed in social transcendence, in hierarchy. Saying there is nothing sacred in immanence signifies that what *was* sacred can no longer *serve*. The time of freedom to come is the time of laughter: "To see tragic natures sink and to be able to laugh . . ." (1882–1884 [*La Volonté de Puissance*, II, bk. 2, § 585; XII, part 2, § 422]). (Would we dare apply this proposition to current events? In place of engaging in a new moral transcendence . . .) In freedom, abandon, the immanence of laughter, Nietzsche liquidated in advance that which still linked him (his juvenile immoralism) to vulgar forms of transcendence—which are freedoms in servitude. The choice of evil is that of freedom, "freedom, liberation from all constraint."