

On Calculation

By Friedrich Nietzsche

5 Noble and common. – For common natures all noble, magnanimous
feelings appear to be inexpedient and therefore initially incredible: they give
a wink when they hear of such things and seem to want to say, 'Surely there
must be some advantage involved; one cannot see through every wall' –
they are suspicious of the noble person, as if he were furtively seeking his
10 advantage. If they become all too clearly convinced of the absence of selfish
intentions and gains, they view the noble person as a kind of fool: they
despise him in his pleasure and laugh at the sparkle in his eye. 'How could
one enjoy being at a disadvantage? How could one want with open eyes to
be disadvantaged? Some disease of reason must be linked to the noble
15 affection' – thus they think and look disparagingly, the way they disparage
the pleasure that a madman derives from his fixed idea. What distinguishes
the common nature is that it unflinchingly keeps sight of its advantage, and
that this thought of purpose and advantage is even stronger than its
strongest drives; not to allow these drives to lead it astray to perform
20 inexpeditious acts – that is its wisdom and self-esteem. In comparison, the
higher nature is more unreasonable – for the noble, magnanimous, and self-
sacrificing person does in fact succumb to his drives; and in his best
moments, his reason pauses.