

In the smoky haze and silence, I belatedly recognized the trap; the trap of opinion and disparagement passing without a word being said. My arrogance was weighted heavily by the sheer conviction of my rightness over another's ideas, decisions, and actions. There was not a speck of humility in my character at this time. Had I summoned *him* here to witness this? Or, had his presence here directed my current musings? There was more lurking at the back of my head and I was want from trying to retain the thought long enough to contemplate it. As it is, I noticed Durchlauscht staring at me through the smoke; his face a reflection of my close examination. He was seemingly oblivious to the lack of attention to my host responsibilities - more smokes, cognac, and conversation.

Place this in contrast to the deference shown him at the onset of our encounter tonight. What did he make of it? Did he find the conferring of royalty and titles the usual? Did he also find his demotion to familiarity and disregard the usual? Was he amused by the critical assessment I made of the fickleness of my peers and therefore of myself? Was this why he is here – in Europe – as opposed to being in America?

I believe I knew the answers to my questions. Satan hasn't been in America because we – Americans – have been on a collective, self-directed course, of which he approves and which leaves him free to spend his time in Europe. I have in the span of a few, silent moments reinforced his earlier statement about his lack of time in America: *I am not needed there.*