Friedrich Nietzsche

Twilight of the Idols

Translated by
Richard Polt

Introduction by
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FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

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Contents

Introduction

Hammers, Idleness and Music

> Music now brings me sensations such as I have never had before. It takes me away from myself, it sobers me up from myself, as if I oversaw myself from a distance, it gluts my senses (*überfühlte*) . . . Life without music would be an error, a hardship, an exile.
>
> Letter to Köselitz, 1/15/88

> In the end, what is there for it? There is no other means to bring philosophy again into honor: one must first hang all moralists.
>
> *Nachlass*, WKG VIII$_3$ p. 412[1]

Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche was born on October 15, 1844, in the town of Röcken, near Leipzig. He was the son and grandson of Lutheran ministers. When he was four his father passed away and half a year later a younger brother suddenly died. He was brought up with his sister by his mother and two aunts. A brilliant and precocious student, he was educated in Schulpforta, one of the top private schools in Germany. He went from there first to Bonn and then to Leipzig to study classical philology. His reputation and recommendations were such that, while still finishing his studies, he was called to the chair of classical philology at the University of Basel.

In 1870, he volunteered as a medical orderly in the Franco-Prussian war. After his return to the university, he became part of Basel intellectual circles, in constant contact notably with the historian Jakob Burckhardt and the ethnographer J. J. Bachofen. He became a close, even intimate, friend of Richard and Cosima Wagner, who then were living near Lucerne in central Switzerland, and was a frequent visitor at their home.

His first work, *The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music,* appeared in January of 1872. The book attacked the received wisdom of the time—that the Greeks were people of "sweetness and light," the "children of the race," as it were—and it appeared to see in the music drama of Richard Wagner the possibility of a rebirth of Greek tragedy in contemporary Germany. Unsurprisingly, it became the focus of an intense intellectual conflict in German university circles, all the more so for having been written without footnotes and in an occasionally exalted prose style.

Nietzsche was deemed at the time to have lost the intellectual battle. Between 1873 and 1878, he abandoned several works in progress and published only the four "Untimely Meditations," essays on cultural subjects written in the style of Emerson, a writer Nietzsche much admired. In 1878, the first volume of *Human-All-Too-Human* appeared; the same year occasioned his public rupture with Wagner. His health, precarious in the best of times, was poor enough that he asked to be relieved of his teaching duties at Basel. Granted a small pension, he began a nomadic life, spending summers in Sils-Maria in southeastern Switzerland and the rest of the year in towns in southern France and northern Italy. His writing pace accelerated: he produced *Dawn of Day* (1881), *The Gay Science* (1882), *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883–85), *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886), *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887), and the books of 1888 mentioned below. Sales were minimal, as was public recognition until 1887, when the Danish critic Georg Brandes gave a series of public lectures in Copenhagen on Nietzsche's work.[2] On January 4, 1889, Nietzsche collapsed on a street in Turin. His friend Franz Overbeck brought him back to Germany, where he was hospitalized in an asylum, and then released to the care of his mother and sister. His reputation, however, had begun to spread widely across Europe and the United States. He died on August 15, 1900, having never recovered his sanity, but already recognized as an important intellectual figure.

The present volume, *Twilight of the Idols,* was written during the first weeks of the summer of 1888, the last year of Nietzsche's life in sanity, the year which saw an intense *accelerando* in Nietzsche's already substantial productivity. An enormous, almost compulsive, output of books and letters cascaded from his pen. In the epigraph to *Ecce Homo*, in life-exultant language reminiscent of the opening paragraph of Emerson's "Divinity School Address," he refers to these books as the "gift of the year"[3] and calls particular attention to *The Antichrist*, the *Dionysus-Dithyrambs,* and *Twilight of the Idols.* To those one must add almost three hundred letters as well as two works on Wagner: *The Case of Wagner* and a collection of his writings on Wagner from throughout his life, *Nietzsche Contra Wagner.* It was, he wrote to Franz Overbeck, the autumn of his life, his "great harvest time."[4]

In this context, Nietzsche's intention for *Twilight* is quite clear. In a letter to the composer Heinrich Köselitz (nom de plume: Peter Gast) on September 12, 1888, he writes that he has just sent off to his publisher a manuscript with the title "A Psychologist's Idleness."

> Under this harmless title there is hidden a very sharp, precise, and quick digest (*hingeworfene Zusammenfassung*) of my essential philosophical heterodoxies: this is so that the book can serve to introduce and whet the appetite for my *Revaluation of All Values* (the first book is practically completely worked out). There is a lot in it of judgments on the present, on thinkers, writers and such.[5]

In a letter of September 14 to Paul Deussen, he speaks of this book and its immediate predecessor, *The Case of Wagner*, as "just recuperations (*wirkliche Erholungen*)" in the course of his greater task, which, when accomplished, "will split humanity in halves." *Twilight* is a book that looks in two directions.[6] It summarizes what Nietzsche thought he had achieved before 1888: a harvest of what he had done during the preceding two decades. Furthermore, he thinks of this work—that which he has accomplished since the *Birth of Tragedy*—as preparatory to his life's creative work, the projected *Revaluation of All Values.* Nietzsche had difficulty, however, in accepting any of his work as the actual first step of this new project. At one point, he seems to have thought of *The Antichrist* (the volume referred to in the paragraph above) as the first volume of the new work. However, he crossed this subtitle out in manuscript and substituted the one that it presently bears, "Curse upon Christianity." It is not therefore apparent that Nietzsche understood anything that he wrote to be other than preparatory for his major philosophy. In any case, it is clear that Nietzsche intended *Twilight* to be *both* an introduction to work that was to come and a summary of the critical work that he had engaged in over the preceding eight years. *Twilight,* as Nietzsche says in his autobiography, is the work of a nunciatory angel.[7]

As he had written to Köselitz, the title of the present book was originally to be "A Psychologist's Idleness." An earlier version of the first aphorism: "Idleness is the start of all philosophy. Is philosophy then a sin?"[8] explains some of what he had in mind. It also recalls Aristotle's understanding that the beginnings of philosophy were in wonder and raises the issue of the status of philosophy. Upon prompting from Köselitz—who found it inadequately thunderous—Nietzsche tried out a number of variations and came up with "Twilight of the Idols." A few things should be noted about the new title. First, in the course of finalizing the new title, Nietzsche twice tried out as a subtitle "How a Psychologist Asks Questions." In all but the final version, the book is to be called *Götzen-Hammer*, the *Hammer of the Idols.*[9] The hammer functions, Nietzsche says in the preface, as a "tuning fork" to the idols, that is, as a way both of ques-

tioning whether or not they sound true when struck while at the same time sounding a true note. Note that when a tuning fork is used to strike a hollow object there is a resonance from both the object and the fork. The two notes are necessary to the operation.

The title resonates in several ways. One is to Francis Bacon and his attack on "idols of the mind."[10] Nietzsche speaks favorably of Bacon's "realism," the trait he draws special attention to as admirable in Thucydides at the end of *Twilight*. Whatever realism actually is, it is at least not mistaking the world for that which one wants it to be—as he accuses almost all of Western philosophy in one way or another of doing. *Twilight* is thus about the accounts of the world that humans want to give to themselves in order to keep themselves from seeing the world (and themselves) as it is. It is thus necessarily also about the reasons that they give themselves such accounts.

Additionally, even more closely in German than in English, *Götzendämmerung* calls to mind *Götterdämmerung*, the title of the last opera in Wagner's *Ring des Nibelungen*. *Götterdämmerung* is an opera about the end of the reign of the gods. In *Götterdämmerung*, the reign of the gods comes to an end because the gods are unable to live both within their own law and justly. The German *Dämmerung*, like its English translation "twilight," refers to that time between the dark and the light of day, with no immediate indication of which comes after which. Therefore, "Twilight of the Idols" does not indicate whether it marks a transition from day to night or the other way around. All it claims to do is to sound the clear note that comes between being out of tune and being in tune: like twilight, it marks the time between what came before and the beginning of that which comes after. It is intended to make it impossible to live with idols.

If we may therefore find in *Twilight* what will *become* Nietzsche's revaluation of values, we cannot look there for the actual revaluation. The final dateline to the revised preface—"September 30, 1888, on the day when the first book of the *Revaluation of All Values* was finished"—indicates only that Nietzsche thought that what he had accomplished in this book made possible such a revaluation. It does mark, however, the end of the course on which Nietzsche's life had been set as he came to deal with the lack of understanding with which his first book, *The Birth of Tragedy*, had been greeted. His hope in the early 1870s for a two-pronged cultural rebirth, led by Wagner's music and his own sense of the possibilities for pedagogy, had been dashed by the reception afforded his first work.[11] He had embarked instead on a long critical journey through the social and

epistemological structures of the Western world, and by 1888 he finally felt that he was at the end of that traverse.

With this in mind, how should one read *Twilight of the Idols*? Michael Gillespie has argued that the organization of the book takes its cue from the reference to music.[12] He finds the book as a whole to be composed in classical sonata A–B–A style, in which a theme is initially sounded in a tonic key, is developed through a series of modulations and variations in other keys, and finally returns to the original tonic. The initial analysis of the Greeks forms the tonic key to which Nietzsche eventually, after necessary developmental modulations, can finally return. The Germans and, in a modulated way, other idols, form the dominant chord, which, after development and a set of variations ("Raids of an Untimely Man"), calls for a return to the tonic, in this case the Romans and Greeks ("What I Owe to the Ancients"). In this way, *Twilight* becomes for Gillespie Nietzsche's attempt at a resolution of the age-old conflict of philosophy and poetry. For Gillespie, the solution is prefigured in the materials of the introduction and in Nietzsche's presentation of himself in "Epigrams and Arrows."[13]

Gillespie's analysis is detailed and often revelatory, and its major conclusion—that Nietzsche places himself in opposition to Socrates—clearly has important truth in it. But his essay is written from, one might say, the composer's point of view. To continue the analogy with music, Gillespie is concerned with how the book is composed and not so much with how it is heard. He does not deal with the experience of reading, or hearing, the book. My approach thus complements rather than supplants Gillespie's: I propose to write about *Twilight* from the point of view of the listener. What does it mean to read with one's ear, musically? My question becomes, "What happens to one when one reads *Twilight of the Idols*?"

If *Twilight* is intended to be Nietzsche's thought "*in nuce*," as he wrote to Brandes,[14] what is that nutshell? As is always the case with Nietzsche, there are a number of ways to provide what looks like an answer. Reading Nietzsche is (meant to be) an education in itself.

On one level there is, I might say, the Cook's tour. It might go as follows:

- In the first section, "Epigrams and Arrows," Nietzsche expresses a hostility toward and distrust of all systematization: the desire that everything should fit together and make sense is in the end a desire for death. In the next section, he explores that desire in its paradigmatic embodiment, in Socrates. Nietzsche considers any moral judgment

about the value of life to be a life-endangering category mistake. In the third section, on "'reason' in philosophy," he analyzes the philosophical errors that have led to the prejudice that morality has a grounding independent of human life—that is, to the moralization of morality (as with Socrates in the previous section). The fourth section proposes a philosophical fable on "how the true world became a fable" and might describe the recovery of the possibility of beginning to do philosophy.

- Accordingly, in the following section ("Morality as Anti-Nature"), Nietzsche revisits the topic of morality in order to establish what beginning to think (to do philosophy) would mean in the present age. The "Four Great Errors" section shows the epistemological errors at the root of the moralizing of the world and then moves to a condemnation of those who claim to act on moral principle in order to make humanity better.

- Nietzsche now turns to the world around him, to how these errors have become flesh in the modern world.[15] The section on the Germans attributes the decline of what is called German "culture" to the lack of a system of true higher education, a theme already present in Nietzsche's earliest work at Basel. Then, in the longest section of the book, he engages in a dialogue with a set of more or less contemporary authors who evince some of the qualities he has just condemned. Five entries on French thinkers are followed by five on psychology, art, and artists, opposing reality to the idealization of these French thinkers. The same themes are replayed in an examination of Anglo-American thinkers; this is followed by an exploration of the direction in which they send us—toward the aesthetic valuation of the human being. Lastly, Greece and Germany are brought back into contact with each other in order to explore the importance of sexuality to both art and philosophy.

- The rest of "Raids" moves back to themes in the culture—morality, freedom, and genius—and from there to political and social questions. It closes by returning to Rousseau, whose "return to nature" Nietzsche contrasts with his own. Nietzsche then raises the question of Goethe, who, he intimates, called for a course of European events different from that which has been taken. The penultimate section—"What I Owe to the Ancients"—indicates that paths which might have existed (e.g., Goethe's) are no longer viable. This absence requires an encounter with the Roman and Greek openness to the real—not the Greeks of sweetness and light (as even Goethe would have had it), but the Greeks

of the Dionysian orgy, of the sexual excess which obliterates received boundaries. Nietzsche notes that he has returned to the ground from which his first book, *The Birth of Tragedy*, grew.

The preceding four paragraphs provide a quick tour of the territory that Nietzsche covers in *Twilight*. They are, however, experientially thin paragraphs, even if they do point us in the direction of Nietzsche's concern with starting to think again, a quality he finds lacking in his world.[16] One may well complain: "But this is not Nietzsche! You are turning him into a dry analytic philosopher! Soon you will be telling me whether or not his arguments are *correct*, asking how we *know* what he tells us to be true!"[17] There is something important in this response. Reading Nietzsche is not like reading academic philosophy. This does not mean that it is not philosophy (or that it is bad philosophy, although many will argue that it is), but that one needs to take into account the fact that something is missing in what he says (more accurately, in one's experience of what he says) if one approaches it as I did above. Here a door is opened to a second kind of reading; it most often comes as a rehearsal of memorable sentences, of maxims. Here are a few from throughout the book. I extract these citations from longer entries, avoiding those that exist only as numbered aphorisms.

- The value of life cannot be assessed.
- [The Greeks] were in danger, they had to make this choice: either to be destroyed or to be absurdly rational.
- Whatever is, does not *become*; whatever becomes, *is* not . . .
- Along with the true world, we have also done away with the apparent!
- All healthy morality is ruled by an instinct of life.
- The concept "God" was up to now the greatest objection against existence.
- There are no moral facts at all.
- How much beer there is in the German intellect!
- This new law table, O my brothers, I set over you: Become hard!

Note first that these sentences say roughly what I said in the summary paragraphs above, but their effect is different. They are like fortune

cookie notes which are sufficiently gnomic to be taken seriously. These are Nietzsche's words: these passages are from his text. What is the status of sentences such as these, which occur not only here, but also throughout Nietzsche's work? How is the reader to respond to them?

First, there is a great temptation to succumb to Nietzsche's quotability. Indeed, in *Zarathustra*, Nietzsche notes, partially as a warning, that "Whoever writes in blood and aphorisms wants not to be read but to be learned by heart."[18] To understand an aphorism one must take it inside oneself so that it becomes oneself (think of this as incarnation) and ruminate on it, something for which, Nietzsche says, "one has almost to be a cow, and certainly not a modern man."[19] Aphorisms do not dominate or control their readers. One reads an aphorism: if it seems to be a truism, or patently false, or nonsensical, it is abandoned and forgotten, jogging perhaps only thoughts about the foolishness of those who would consider such a claim meaningful. If one is touched by it and responds, however, something is stirred. It is only at this point that exegesis begins, not as an attempt to determine what the aphorism *means,* but to describe the world to which one has responded through the aphorism. The aphorism presents itself as an answer to which we do not know the question—it is the *Parsifal* of discourse.[20] Writing in aphorisms is thus an attempt to recover questions—to recover philosophy—and thus *Twilight* is a book about how to ask questions.

Here one must proceed very carefully, for such writing is also a temptation. As such, it is meant to be a temptation and to be experienced as such. Nothing in Nietzsche can be read properly without hearing the resonance that any section of a sentence sets up, both with the rest of the sentence and with the rest of the entry of which it is a part, as well as with those entries that are around it. Werner Dannhauser properly points to the importance of the aphorism in Nietzsche's thought. He writes: "It is not easy to determine when he is being quoted out of context because it is not easy to see whether there is context or what it is." Dannhauser continues by (correctly, I think) indicating that the aphorism is a counter to the treatise as a form of philosophizing. Then he says that aphorisms "broach problems rather than solve them" and indicates that aphorisms are "generalizations [which] are to be taken as stimulating insights rather than as final truths." He gives as example: "One aphorism declares, 'What doesn't kill me makes me stronger.'"[21]

The citation is from *Twilight* ("Epigrams and Arrows" #8). What Dannhauser gives is indeed a generalization, for which, he properly notes, one could find all sorts of counterexamples. To the degree that the sentence he

cites is an aphorism, it is indeed a kind of stimulus, not a "final truth." However, Nietzsche does not write the sentence Dannhauser gives. He writes instead: "*From life's military school.*—What doesn't kill me makes me stronger." The two parts of the aphorism resonate with each other and forbid coming simply to a conclusion about what Nietzsche "means." What does it mean to speak from "life's military school"?—especially if the aphorism now becomes part of a military *training*, perhaps a training that is necessary to write a book like the present one, which is a "declaration of war"? But war is here, Nietzsche says, a way of wounding *oneself* so that one can heal from being "too inward, too deep."[22]

I leave these questions unanswered and call attention to the fact that they make the whole matter much more complex, precluding the idea that Nietzsche is a propagandist for *Conan the Barbarian* (where the last half of this aphorism serves as epigraph to the film). However, a few things should be noted. First, whatever an aphorism is, it is all of its words. The sentence that Dannhauser gives as Nietzsche's is something very different from the sentences that Nietzsche gives. A sentence does not an aphorism make; *resonance between parts of a sentence does.* Second, Nietzsche's sentences *lend themselves to being wanted to be remembered* as Dannhauser gives them—without the shaping tone that gives thickness to an otherwise bald assertion. *Therefore part of recovering the whole is remembering that one did not want to remember it.* Wanting to get it wrong is part of getting it right. As Babette Babich has written:

> The reader who falls short of the aphorism's resonant or entire meaning, i.e. the reader who misses its musical significance, not only fails to "get it," as we say, but this failure is ineluctable because it is a failure unawares, hence, and effectively, incorrigible. Any aphorism, every Nietzschean text, has at least two points, if not indeed many more, which excess permits most readers to come away with at least a partial notion of the text.... Taking up the musical sense of the aphorism, one keeps both its subject matter and its development as part of a whole. Thus positions, statements at variance with one another are not simple contra*dictions* but contra*puntal* . . .[23]

Thus, the book must, in a third manner, be read musically, concinnously—that is, as a musical unification of dissonant themes.[24] This has two elements. The first is the resonance that occurs within and between sections, even within sentences themselves. The second is the fact that this text draws upon the classical style, while subverting its elements in

terms of the apparent relations of consonance and dissonance that it creates. Let us take a look at each of these qualities.

As Gillespie notes, *Twilight* is written in an overtly classical style[25]—that is, with a high consciousness of form, here musical form. At the same time, however, it subverts that form, much as romantic music subverts the classical style. Most prominent here is Nietzsche's use of dissonance. A musical element is dissonant when it leads the listener to desire a consonance, a resolution. A simple example can be found in the movement induced by the chordal sequence V_7–I . The V_7 will be heard as a dissonance calling for the return to I. (In, for example, "This Land is Your Land," the V_7 chord occurs with the word "made" in the line "This land is made/for you and me.") One of the consequences of the chromaticism more and more systematically introduced into music starting near the end of the eighteenth century was that it made apparent the more or less conventional quality of that which counted as dissonance.[26]

The introduction of chromaticism into music not only raised the issue of the arbitrary nature of consonance, but also caused people to examine the *desire* for consonance. By leading the listener to expect a consonance and then refusing to provide it, music can make the listener aware that he or she desires the consonance, causing him or her to ask why. A famous music example is found in the second act of *Tristan and Isolde* where the love and passion of the two lovers comes as a musical stream of seventh and ninth chords with the melody constantly searching for consonance. The love is importantly dependent on the dissonance and indeed, consonance in marriage is not achieved until their eventual death. This effect would not have been produced had we not continually expected the achievement of a conjunction, a consonance which would have put an end to the love.

The relation of these considerations to Nietzsche's texts comes from the fact that he too will continually tempt his listener with an apparent consonance—with something that seems to count as a consonance—only to shift it over into another dissonance. Such a technique relies upon the desire for consonance and at the same time induces a critical stance toward that desire.[27]

For an example of the musical complexities of reading Nietzsche, take section five of "Morality as Anti-Nature" (below, page 28). Nietzsche begins:

> *Given that one has grasped the sacrilege of such a revolt against life, like the revolt that has become nearly sacrosanct in Christian morality, one has, fortunately, grasped something else as well: the uselessness, illusiveness, absurdity, and mendacity of such a revolt.*

The operant subject of the paragraph is not defined: it is "one." This realization is available in principle to anyone, at least anyone in our historical position. The whole entry is premised on a conditional that already requires inverting one's normal understanding of the idea of sacrilege. Here it is *sacrilege* to claim that God can in fact look into one's heart. We know that God can look into one's heart (the traditional musical tonic chord, one might say). To claim this, however, must appear as sacrilege—that is, as a profanation of God. The text appears first to offer a stance toward life, but it does so in terms (sacrilege) which it takes over from that which it claims to criticize. The first move in this paragraph requires, in other words, the use of religious language and categories in an irreligious manner. One might think that this constitutes a condemnation of religion by Nietzsche. However, the initial resolution appears now not to resolve the matter, but to call up something else. Nietzsche continues:

> *A condemnation of life by one who is alive is, in the end, just a symptom of a particular kind of life: this does not at all raise the question of whether the condemnation is justified or unjustified.*

Any condemnation of life as such is a manifestation of something that is profoundly wrong. A condemnation of life requires that one tacitly assume a position outside life, i.e., that one want to be as if not alive. So to attack God is to still remain inside a framework that *lies*. It is to assume the stance of God in the name of denying God—hardly an advance. Again, grasping this is available to anyone; the persistent use of *man*—"one"—in the first part of this entry is insistent. Nietzsche continues:

> *One would have to occupy a position outside life, and on the other hand to know it as well as one, as many, as all who have lived it, in order to be allowed even to touch upon the problem of the value of life.*

To even raise the question of the value of life means that one has placed oneself in the position of being outside life. It means to adopt a stance all at once monarchical, aristocratic, and democratic and to claim exemption from the judgment that it makes of and on the world. To understand in this way, however, would be to change the subject. Nietzsche again:

> *These are reasons enough to grasp that, for us, this problem is an inaccessible problem. When we speak of values, we speak under the inspiration,*

under the optics of life: life itself is forcing us to posit values, life itself is valuing by means of us, if [and/or when: wenn*] we posit values . . .*

Note how the insistent "one" yields here to a "we." A new resolution is proposed: that of "life." Those ("we") who understand that "life" is the answer will realize that there is nothing to do but to succumb to the realization that there is nothing to say, that the problem is "inaccessible." (As we will see below, in the history of Western philosophy Nietzsche associates this position with positivism). By making available the first person plural ("we") Nietzsche tempts the reader to join in an apparent fraternity with others who have insight. The "we" offers the reader participation as a subject which is no longer abstract, but now has specific definition and is implicitly an elite. It *also* reminds the reader that it makes a difference who is asking the questions and leads the reader to accept this by implicitly offering the reader a resting space with the new "we."

It follows from this that even that anti-natural morality that takes God to be the antithesis and condemnation of life is only one of life's value judgments.—A judgment made by which life? Which kind of life?

This is what "morality as it has been understood up to now" is—a condemnation by the condemned, and this includes even the judgment that God is the antithesis of life. When the reader started this section—"Morality as Anti-Nature"—there seemed to be an expectation that morality would be opposed to "nature." Now it appears that, as Nietzsche says in the next paragraph, the problem comes when morality "condemns on its own grounds"—that is, when morality moralizes itself. Notice that an example of morality's self-moralization is the judgment that God is the antithesis of life. The issue is raised therefore of the kind of life that makes such a judgment, that requires such a judgment. Who is the we that claims that there is nothing to be said about "life"? The conclusion itself succumbs again to the temptation to think that consonance has been achieved and thus Nietzsche immediately undermines the apparent finality of this "we" by subtracting himself from it. And as he does it, we are no longer sure of who the "we" is: we realize that we had implicitly been relying on identifying ourselves with Nietzsche, using him as a banister for thought.

—But I already gave the answer: declining, weakened, tired, and condemned life.

The sudden intrusion from the "I" announces that there is no help from Nietzsche here: what he has to say he has already said, even if the reader did not grasp it. The answer is what it has always been and has been here since before we started the paragraph. It is as if we missed the tonic when it went by. In effect, we have to start over: we are back at the beginning, knowing it, however, perhaps for the first time.[28]

Nietzsche's writing here calls up a critical relation between what the reader wants and what the text makes available and, in fact, requires of the reader. The effect is to call into question precisely those wants which promise to give resolution and to bring consonance to the experience. This is what Nietzsche in his preface calls "sounding out idols," idols which function here as "eternal truths"—that is, as truths which claim for themselves a permanent moral standing. *That which makes an idol an idol is the worshipper.*

Twilight is thus a book about why one worships—why we worship—and why that to which we insist on offering worship ("idols") cannot possibly answer our questions, and why we nevertheless continue to worship. One answer that appears from the analysis above is that humans are constantly tempted to moralize morality, to find a moral ground for morality itself. Nietzsche not only thinks that this is what he calls nihilism (it is impossible: a self-contradicting and repeatedly self-annihilating task which one pursues in such a way that one's pursuit makes one's goal impossible), he thinks it, as we shall see, dangerous.

Nietzsche's use of a consonance/dissonance tension appears throughout the book. Repeatedly, his focus is on the need or desire to give grounding to moral judgments. For instance, in the first section on Socrates, we are tempted with the statement of the "wisest sages" that life has no meaning. The phrase, in fact, is a lure, one which continues to have appeal to adolescents of all ages. But the reader is not allowed this resolution: she or he is immediately told that "even Socrates had had enough" of living with this belief. (Note: not "enough *of*" this belief.) Why so? We are then told that Socrates was ugly (but that he knew himself to be); that he was nasty and hallucinatory—a clown—but that people took him seriously; and that he was a great erotic (although elsewhere we find that philosophers are clumsy lovers).[29] Socrates, it appears, understood what was happening to the world around him better than anyone else (here Nietzsche appears to repeat Thucydides' analysis of the Greek world in Book 3, Chapters 82–84 of *The Peloponnesian War*). In order to deal with the dangers of the world, he became "master of himself" and an example to others. The means he chose was rationality. And even here Nietzsche

will not let his reader sit content: Socrates, he claims in the last paragraph, knew all this—and wanted to die.

At this point, the reader does not know where to turn. Ordinarily, we might, in reading Nietzsche, have agreed with the initial proposition that life has no meaning. Having been refused that answer, we might view being master of oneself as an alternative. In Socrates, however, this is a "formula for decadence." Yet Nietzsche's writings are filled with praise for those who wish to "go under," to accept their decadence. Yet . . . .

Perhaps the answer will come if we understand what is problematic about rationality, the means Socrates chooses. Accordingly, Nietzsche turns in the next section to an investigation of reason. A similar analysis could be offered of this and most of the other sections of the book. They leave us wondering what it is we initially heard, now that it has been revealed to sound hollow.

Clearly, a musical reading is central to grasping this book. But what kind of music is involved? If the "tuning-fork" technique relies on the Wagnerian and chromatic qualities of readership, Nietzsche's achievement is, one might say, French and melodic. (Nietzsche suggested of his writings of this time that they should have been written in French rather than German.) The book is also full of conclusions. The experience of *Twilight* is an experience of form, of definiteness, of assertiveness. It is a book written *allegro*, with a kind of surface gaiety and self-confidence.

Nietzsche offers another, parallel, musical reference. On two occasions,[30] he suggests that his new book (*Twilight*) is a "twin" to *The Case of Wagner*, presumably because they were written during the same period, from the same material. In this book, Wagner is counterpoised to Bizet, as are his operas to *Carmen*. Nietzsche had heard *Carmen* first in Genoa in November of 1881. He had found it even then "witty, strong, here and there troublingly moving."[31]

If *Götzendämmerung* contrasts with *Götterdämmerung*, so also, in much the same ways, Bizet's *Carmen* contrasts with Wagner's music. An examination of what Nietzsche says about the French opera can give us some clue as to what he thought he had achieved in *Twilight*:

> This music seems to me perfect. It approaches lightly, supplely, with politeness. It is obliging, it does not *sweat*. . . . This music is evil, refined, fatalistic: it remains all the while popular—it has the refinement of a race, not an individual. It is rich. It is precise. It builds, organizes, comes to an end: it is thus the opposite to the polyp in music, to the "unending melody." Has one ever heard more painful

> tragic accents on stage? And how are these attained! No grimaces! No counterfeiting! No lie of the great style.—Finally: this music takes the audience to be intelligent, even to be a musician—with this, it is the antitype (*Gegenstück*) to Wagner who, whatever else, was at any rate the most impolite genius in the world . . .[32]

If *Carmen* is to be opposed to Wagner's operas, so also must the style of *Twilight* be opposed to the "great style." It must be precise, rich, not counterfeit, and so forth. It is for this reason that at this time Nietzsche sends an exceptionally sharp letter to Malwida von Meysenbug, who had remained simply unwilling and unable to acknowledge the gulf Nietzsche found between himself and Wagner.[33] It is precisely the tension between the *allegro giocoso* of the text and the *serioso* of its subject matter that must be grasped. In fact, the first line of Nietzsche's preface announces that he has here managed only with considerable skill and effort to preserve his cheerfulness, despite the gloom of subject matter.

What does this mean in relation to *Twilight*? I have already indicated that the aphorism was in some important sense Nietzsche's answer to *Parsifal* (in fact, the first work Nietzsche composes in aphorisms is *Human, All Too Human*, which comes precisely at the time of his break with Wagner, occasioned by *Parsifal*). Gift copies of their new works in fact crossed each other in the mail, like "two sabers."[34] The aphorism as Nietzsche employs it, and especially in *Twilight*, always contains at least two elements which coexist by virtue of their composition.

How might one oppose *Parsifal* and *Carmen*? This is the question to which a consideration of Nietzsche's style in *Twilight* leads. In *The Case of Wagner*, Nietzsche asserts that the difference between Wagner and Bizet is that Wagner "misunderstood [love]." Bizet, says Nietzsche in *Beyond Good and Evil*, discovered the "south of music."[35] What *Carmen* makes us find attractive is "another sensuality, another sensibility. . . , another cheerfulness." Too quickly put, what Carmen makes attractive is sexuality and the body, "love as fatality, cynical, innocent and cruel."[36]

This is true despite, or rather because of the fact that Don José kills Carmen just as the chorus sings to Escamillo that love (in the person of Carmen) waits for him. In Parsifal, on the contrary, Kundry's eroticism is denied its achievement by renunciation.[37] *Parsifal* denies the attractiveness of that which it offers because he (Wagner) is unwilling to accept the pain that must go with it. *Parsifal* thus reasserts a contradiction between chastity and sensuality (to take up the terms in which Nietzsche presents this issue in the third essay of the *Genealogy*, section 2), and, unable to

accept the tragic antithesis (in contradistinction to *Carmen*), rejects the latter in favor of the former.[38]

What is the relevance of this to *Twilight?* One first is struck by the degree to which questions of the body control the book.[39] Socrates is early on attacked as ugly. Philosophers are held to hate the body. In the section "How the 'True World' Finally Become a Fiction," in each stage the idea of the true world is *embodied* in a different being.[40] The preferred defense of the Church against desire is castration. In the section "What I Owe to the Ancients," Nietzsche says that the dionysian *orgy* gave to him his understanding of both tragedy and eternal recurrence.[41]

To understand why the body becomes for Nietzsche the touchstone of his new thought—indeed, of his understanding of what it means to do philosophy[42]—one may go back to the section "How the 'True World' Finally Became a Fiction." As the ideal-real dualism of Platonism is abolished, thought comes to focus knowing on the real world. It does so, however, in such a way as to retain the ideal world as an impossible-to-attain absence. This is positivism. In turn, however, it remains to question why it is that the ideal world continues to occupy what Heidegger calls a "vacant niche."[43] Nietzsche writes:

> We have done away with the true world; what world is left over? The apparent one, maybe? . . . But no! *Along with the true world, we have also done away with the apparent!*

What this does, however, is to announce the opening of a new possibility of philosophy. "INCIPIT ZARATHUSTRA," concludes Nietzsche. Much the same dynamic governs the last two sections of *Twilight*. At the beginning of "What I Owe to the Ancients," Nietzsche indicates that he owes his style—that is, how he appears and how that appearance affects his readers—to *Roman* prose. No Greek writes with such style. What he owes to the *Greeks*, he indicates as he moves onward, is the excess of instinct—that is, of energy that threatens constantly to overwhelm style. Referring to himself as a "shaper of language," he had already written to Rohde in 1884: "My line is already superior to [Goethe's] in strength and manliness, without, as with Luther, becoming loutish. My style is a dance; a play of symmetries of all kinds and an overleaping and mocking of these symmetries."[44]

What he owes to the ancients is thus a constant concomitance between style and dissolution, between pleasure and pain, between sensuality and chastity. In his discussion of Wagner's *Parsifal* in the *Genealogy,* he had written that creation required both elements and that one could no more

be spared one than could "a pregnant woman be spared the repellent and bizarre aspects of pregnancy."[45]

What would it mean to be in the world, of the world, in such a manner that one did not seek to get rid of, to control, either the pain or the pleasure? This is the realm which, as the "teacher of eternal recurrence," Nietzsche intends to announce. *Twilight* does not end with this world—the passage from Zarathustra recovers elements which are missing from the possibility of such a world. But from these materials we can begin to imagine it.[46]

Imagine that you have suffered terribly, from unrequited love, or love lost, or as a martyr whose ideal is perishing, or in any other of those ways that Nietzsche details in *Gay Science* 337. The last thing you want is pity: "I know how you are feeling." Such sympathy is of a categorical sort. It is not *my* suffering that is being referred to; indeed, such sympathy abolishes my suffering. "It is of the very essence of the emotion of pity," writes Nietzsche, "that it strips away from the suffering of others whatever is distinctly personal." Thus, when Nietzsche writes a paragraph later that "the path to one's own heaven always leads through the voluptuousness of one's own hell,"[47] the important words are "one's own." Christianity, one might say, has made categorical feeling all too accessible, a kind of banality—we all suffer as sinners, without it being my suffering. However, we cannot get rid of sin without accepting the actuality and necessity of suffering (as Carmen reads and accepts the cards that announce first her and then José's death).

Christianity has turned passion into banality, and Nietzsche argues that Wagner did also. This means that the only way to recover passion, to recover authentic suffering, is to reject the banal, to become, as he writes in the selection from *Zarathustra*, "hard."

There is an order of rank here, but note that Nietzsche's discussion of order of rank has no real importance as a political matter. His interest, furthermore, is not in how many find their way beyond banality, because what counts is showing that meaning, or suffering, is meaning for me. If you suffer it must, as Whitman sang to us, count also as suffering for me. Nietzsche says that love and friendship are examples of such a relation, a relation not explored in *Twilight*.

What is the relation between suffering and understanding? Nietzsche's answer is that we must first recognize the other as other, through and in fear, before we can come upon what is common, such that you can say that you understand my suffering. What is crucial to this understanding, once it is earned, is not its *truth* (in the sense of accuracy), at least not immediately,

but its *truthfulness*, its meaning, the relation it constitutes. However, the fact about beings that have achieved such an understanding is that they cannot be salved by faint praise. The canons of evidence that you are like me, that we have found what Nietzsche calls a star, are not ours to choose, but ours to perform. They are given to us by the possibility of having voice, a possibility that music, as voice, makes available to you and to me.

We—any of us, all those who are—are beyond the self-certainties of the bounded self and of any politics that this self may authorize. Nietzsche gives a picture of philosophy—*of life*—as a journey to that to which we find ourselves called. If we think of life in this manner, we might even find that others, who we might not think are with us, have been so all along. It is an understanding in which we are neither to go back to the world, nor back to ourselves, but in which we are called out to the actuality of our presence in the world. Plato expressed this as the movement to which one was constrained in the story of the Cave. Kant sees it in the experience of the ought that we encounter each time we pause to reflect on what to do. For Rousseau it is the "gentle voice of nature"—but it is not gentle for Nietzsche, so he ends the "Raids" section by differentiating himself from Rousseau—which he urges us to go and hear, not to return to.[48] Nietzsche, from his earliest writings, sees it as an attraction to what he calls the exemplar, as the finding of oneself as something one is not in something which one finds is one's own. Emerson, on whom Nietzsche often draws, calls it a provocation, a calling forth.

What does it then mean to hear such a voice? It is to this possibility, I think, that those who have seen in Nietzsche an importance, an antidote to the thinness of liberal politics, have responded. Perhaps Nietzsche serves, almost unawares, as the exemplar he hopes to be. The voice one hears tells of a philosophical path that shows each that there is passage for each, that leads me to find words for my self that I do not yet have. It is a voice lifted in what will be heard as song, a working given to us in our own opera, a clarity that as there are words which are my words, there are also words which are your words, "a trust of friendship, a shared blindness, without suspicion or question marks," an end to idolatry, the clarity that there is love.[49]

—Tracy Strong

End Notes

1. Nietzsche references refer to *Werke Kritische Gesamtausgabe* (here WKG), ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, (Berlin: Gruyter, 1967). So that any edition may be used, references are to the key for a given text, its internal divisions, divi-

sion number (roman numerals), volume number (arabic subscript), and page number. The following abbreviations are used: EH—*Ecce Homo*; FW—*Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft* (*The Gay Science*); FWg—*Der Fall Wagner* (*The Case of Wagner*); GM—*Zur Genealogie der Moral* (*On the Genealogy of Morals*); JGB—*Jenseits von Gut und Böse* (*Beyond Good and Evil*); Z—*Also Sprach Zarathustra* (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*). Letters are cited by addressee, date, and page number in the appropriate volume of *Friedrich Nietzsche Sämtliche Briefe* (NSB) (Berlin: Gruyter, 1986).

2. Nietzsche expresses his appreciation in EH "Why I Write Such Good Books" 4 WKG VI_3 p. 360. Frequent correspondence took place between the two men in 1888, although Nietzsche spoke highly of Brandes as early as 1883.

3. EH epigraph WKG VI p. 261.

4. Letter to Overbeck 10/18/88 (NSB 8, p. 453).

5. Letter to Köselitz, 9/12/88 (NSB 8, p. 417).

6. Bernd Magnus refers to it as a "synopticon" of Nietzsche's understandings. See his "The Deification of the Commonplace," in *Reading Nietzsche*, ed. Robert C. Solomon and Kathleen M. Higgins (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 157.

7. EH "Why I Write Such Good Books" 2, WKG VI_3 p. 352 ("I am he that brings these glad tidings").

8. WKG $VIII_3$ p. 293; Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 927b12.

9. WKG $VIII_3$ p. 394.

10. In a section of the *Novum Organum*, found in *The Essays* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), appendix 4, pp. 277–285. The relation between Nietzsche and Bacon has been explored in Laurence Lampert, *Nietzsche and Modern Times* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale, 1993). See also Geoff Waite, *Nietzsche's Corps/e* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1996), p. 230.

11. For a more detailed analysis, see my "A Tragic Age for Philosophy," Introduction to Nietzsche, *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks* (Regnery, forthcoming).

12. Michael Gillespie, "Nietzsche's Musical Politics," in M. Gillespie and T. Strong, eds., *Nietzsche's New Seas* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), pp. 117–149. See also "Nietzsche's Conception of Music" by C.P. Janz, in ibid. pp. 97–116. See also Heinrich Schenker, *Five Graphic Analyses* (New York: Dover, 1970). For Schenker, all good music had a grammar which rested on an inescapable step-by-step resolution over the course of the whole piece to a tonic note. See the excellent account and analysis by Charles Rosen, "Art Has Its Reasons," *New York Review of Books* (June 17, 1971), pp. 32ff.

13. Without taking matters too far, one might start with the fact that the aphorisms number forty-four, precisely the age at which Nietzsche found himself in 1888 as the book went to press. See Gillespie, op. cit., p. 126.

14. Letter of 10/20/88 (NSB 8, p. 457).

15. Nietzsche in fact projected a major work to be called "The Eternal Return of the Same," the divisions of which would be examinations of various aspects of embodiment (*Einverleibung*). WKG V_2 p. 392.

16. See the comments in WKG $VIII_2$ pp. 114–115.

17. On knowing as a limited and limiting category in Nietzsche's thought, see my *Friedrich Nietzsche and the Politics of Transfiguration,* second edition (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), chapter 10. For a more general analysis, see Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), pp. 71ff.

18. Z i "On Reading and Writing" WKG VI_1 p. 44.

19. GM Preface 8 WKG VI_2 p. 267.

20. The analogy to *Parsifal* is suggested by one of the world's great Wagnerians, Claude Lévi-Strauss, in his *The Scope of Anthropology* (London: Cape, 1964), pp. 37–38. Lévi-Strauss sees *Parsifal* as a structural inverse to Oedipus. The same conclusion is arrived at in Agnes Heller, *An Ethics of Personality* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), chapter 4, apparently without knowledge of Lévi-Strauss's work.

21. Werner Dannhauser, *Nietzsche's View of Socrates* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1974), pp. 195, 197, 203–204 (translation modified to the one in the present volume).

22. *Twilight*, Foreword, p. 3 below.

23. Babette Babich, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Science: Reflecting Science on the Ground of Art and Life* (Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press, 1994), p. 6.

24. The term and the argument for it can be found in Babette Babich, "On Nietzsche's Concinnity: An Analysis of Style," *Nietzsche Studien* 19 (1990), pp. 59–80. Her footnote 17 gives a good summary of various commentators who have read Nietzsche as musical. Note that such considerations mean that the material in Nietzsche's notebooks, the so-called *Nachlass*, is by and large *not* a "Nietzschean" text. It is the elements that become a composition, but they are not a composition. Babich makes the same point. All of this confirms Bernd Magnus's argument for "splitters" over "lumpers" (of the published work from the *Nachlass*) in Bernd Magnus, Stanley Stewart, Jean-Pierre Mileur, et al., *Nietzsche's Case* (London: Routledge, 1993).

25. Gillespie, p. 120. It is misleading, however, to assert, as Gillespie does, that Nietzsche's compositions vary little from the classical mode. The style of those compositions varies from Palestrina to Liszt, with Mendelssohn and Schumann providing the model for the most successful. We know that Nietzsche played a lot of Schumann during his adolesence and, as a young man, made a study of his work. See also Agnes Heller, *An Ethics of Personality*, p. 29, for similar considerations.

26. See Rosen, op. cit.

27. In his discussion of Nietzsche's style Curt Paul Janz indicates that, in *Twilight*, "The 'music' becomes dissonant." C. P. Janz, *Nietzsche: Biographie* (München: Hanser, 1978), volume 2, p. 220.

28. Cf. the opening lines of "Peoples and Fatherlands" in *Beyond Good and Evil:* "I hear it again for the first time—the overture to *Die Meistersinger . . .*"

29. Robert Pippin, "Morality as Psychology; Psychology as Morality: Nietzsche, Eros and Clumsy Lovers," in Pippin, *Idealism as Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), chapter 14.

30. Letters to Nauman, 9/7/88 (NSB 8, p. 411) and Köselitz 9/12/88 (NSB, p. 417).

31. Letter to Köselitz, 11/12/88 (NSB 6, p. 144). He notes in a letter to Lou Salomé on September 26, 1882, that the Germans are at last realizing that *Carmen* has tragedy in it (commenting on a newspaper clipping about a performance in Berlin with Lilli Lehmann singing the title role, and reminding Lou that he knows Lehmann personally (NSB 6, p. 266).

32. FWg 1 WKG VI_3 p. 8. Nietzsche probably has in mind here the Card Trio in Act 3, in which, as Carmen reads her fate, a tritone leads to a repeated parallel-octave chromatic run in the strings. A diminished-seventh chord announces that the cards are laid out and gives way to a pulsing C in F minor as Carmen describes her fate, all of this in 6/8 time! Yet the effect is precisely what Nietzsche says it is. Georges Bizet, *Carmen in Full Score* (New York: Dover, 1989), pp. 392–394. See a discussion of part of this in Theodor Adorno, "Fantasia supra Carmen," *Quasi una Fantasia* (New York: Verso, 1994) pp. 53–64, at p. 59.

33. Letter of 10/20/88 (NSB 8, pp. 457–459).

34. EH "Why I Write such good Books," "Human-All-Too-Human," 5 WKG VI_3 p. 325.

35. JGB 254 WKG VI_2 p. 206.

36. FWg 2 WKG VI_3 p. 9.

37. FWg 3 WKG VI_3 p. 11: "Old corrupted females prefer to be redeemed by chaste youths."

38. *Carmen*, in fact, ends on a chord built around a tritone (C–F#).

39. See the interesting comments on this in Bernd Magnus, Stanley Stewart, Jean-Pierre Mileur, et al., *Nietzsche's Case*, pp. 234ff.

40. Jacques Derrida (*Eperons/Spurs* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978], pp. 82ff.) has at least begun an attack on Heidegger's well-known reading of this passage (Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, volume 1, section 24 [New York: HarperCollins, 1991], pp. 200–210) along the lines I am suggesting here.

41. An association that Nietzsche makes soon after his discovery-experience of the eternal return in the beginning of August, 1881, in Sils-Maria. Cf. WKG VII_1 p. 350: "I have discovered that which is Greek: they believed in the eternal return."

42. Nietzsche projected a work on the "Physiology of Art." Cf. FWg 7 WKG VI_3 p. 20; See WKG $VIII_1$, p. 292 and WKG $VIII_3$ p. 265: "*Die Musik Wagners kann man physiologisch widerlegen . . .* (One can refute Wagner's music physiologically . . .)."

43. Heidegger, op. cit., p. 207.

44. Letter to Rohde, 2/22/84 (NSB 6, p. 479). Nietzsche continues: "This enters the very vowels." "Shaper of language" is probably drawn from *nomothetes* in Plato's *Cratylus*. Nietzsche gnomically links the *Cratylus* and the eternal return in WKG VII_1 p. 345.

45. GM iii 4 WKG VI_2 p. 361.

46. The remaining paragraphs draw upon my "Nietzsche and the Song in the Self," *New Nietzsche Studies* (Fall, 1996), pp. 1ff.

47. FW 338 WKG V_2 p. 246.

48. See my *Rousseau: The Politics of the Ordinary* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE, 1994) for the discussion of "nature."

49. MAM i Preface 1 WKG IV_2 p. 7. I have been told not to use the word δεινόν here. See the discussions of δεινόν in Martin Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics,* and his *Parmenides.*

Bibliography on Nietzsche

Good translations by Walter Kaufmann of Nietzsche's major works have been published by Random House. At present a complete critical edition paralleling the German edition by Gruyter (mentioned in the footnotes) is being published by Stanford University Press under the general editorship of Bernd Magnus and Ernst Behler.

The last twenty years have seen an explosion of excellent work on Nietzsche. To list even the high points would be impossible in such a short space. I might, however, mention the following, in addition to the works that are cited in the Introduction.—T.S.

Keith Ansell-Pearson, *Nietzsche contra Rousseau*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Babette Babich, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Science*. Albany: SUNY Press, 1994.

Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1983.

Jacques Derrida, *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979.

Karl Jaspers, *Nietzsche and Christianity*. Chicago: Regnery Press, 1977.

Sarah Kofman, *Nietzsche and Metaphor*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993.

Bernd Magnus and Kathleen Higgins, eds. *The Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996 (also contains a good beginning bibliography).

Alexander Nehamas, *Nietzsche: Life as Literature*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985.

Gary Shapiro, *Nietzschean Narratives*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987.

Leslie Thiele, *Friedrich Nietzsche and the Politics of the Soul*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990.

Geoff Waite, *Nietzsche's Corps/e*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1995.

Mark Warren, *Nietzsche and Political Thought*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1988.

There are relatively few works which focus specifically on *Twilight of the Idols*. One might mention, aside from those cited in the Introduction:

Ruediger Grimm, *Nietzsche's Theory of Knowledge*. Berlin: Gruyter, 1977.

G. L. Hagberg, "Apollo's Revenge. Music and Nietzsche's '*Twilight of the Idols*.'" *Historical Reflections—Reflections historiques* 21 (Fall 1993), pp. 437–49.

Douglas Kellner, "Nietzsche and Modernity. Critical Reflections on '*Twilight of the Idols*,'" *International Studies in Philosophy* 23 (1991), pp. 3–17.

Translator's Note

This translation aims to be a trustworthy rendition of Nietzsche's text in contemporary American English.

In order to convey the direct and almost oral style of many of Nietzsche's sentences, I have often used colloquialisms and contractions. But at points his style is complex and elevated, and I have tried to reflect that, too.

I have usually retained Nietzsche's punctuation, except when he uses nineteenth-century conventions that would be too jarring or misleading today. He is fond of italics, exclamation and question marks, dashes, and ellipses. This idiosyncratic punctuation suggests the nimbleness and tact of his thinking. The challenge of deciphering his twists and turns is no doubt meant to test the reader's interpretive dancing skills (see §7 of "What the Germans Are Missing"). In some notes on style from 1882, Nietzsche writes: "A wealth of gestures bespeaks a wealth of life. One must learn to perceive everything, the length and brevity of the sentences, the punctuation marks, the choice of words, the pauses, the sequence of the arguments—as gestures."[1]

Nietzsche does not normally divide the sections of his text into paragraphs. After some deliberation, I have chosen to insert paragraph breaks in many of the longer sections. These are meant to speed first-time readers' understanding of the structure of these sections. Many of my paragraph breaks have been inserted at points where Nietzsche uses a dash or an ellipsis; this punctuation has been retained and can be seen immediately before the paragraph break. Readers should keep in mind that almost all the paragraphs reflect my own, debatable interpretive choices. The exceptions are the paragraph breaks in the Foreword, in the final section of "'Reason' in Philosophy," in "How the 'True World' Finally Became a Fiction," in the first section of "What the Germans Are Missing," and before the final sentence of "Raids of an Untimely Man." These are all Nietzsche's.

I have tried to avoid suggesting sexism at points where none is apparent in the original text—while leaving intact the passages which are unapologetically misogynistic. In particular, this has meant translating

1. WKG VII_1 p. 34. I thank Tracy Strong for pointing out this passage.

Mensch as "human being" or "humanity," rather than "man," whenever this seemed stylistically possible.

The footnotes are all by me or Tracy Strong, rather than Nietzsche. They give basic information about all but the most famous persons mentioned in the text, explain allusions and plays on words, and provide a few references to other writings by Nietzsche and to his earlier drafts of this book.

Versions of parts of this translation originally appeared in *Existentialism: Basic Writings*, edited by Charles Guignon and Derk Pereboom (Hackett, 1995), and *Classics of Western Philosophy*, fourth edition, edited by Steven M. Cahn (Hackett, 1995). Charles Guignon first asked me to translate Nietzsche, and he read my work meticulously. If I have developed an ear for normal usage and a fear of stilted language, it is largely thanks to him. Tracy Strong not only wrote the introduction and a number of notes, but also commented on the entire translation. His suggestions often helped me come back to the original text when I had strayed too far. I am also grateful to Robert Rethy for his helpful comments. Finally, I owe a debt to the previous translators of this text: Anthony M. Ludovici, Walter Kaufmann, and R. J. Hollingdale. Their work made mine less lonely, and both our agreements and our disagreements were stimulating.

Twilight of the Idols

Or, How to Philosophize with the Hammer

Foreword

It's no small trick to preserve your cheerfulness in the midst of a gloomy matter which is loaded with inordinate responsibility. Yet what could be more necessary than cheerfulness? Nothing goes right unless exuberance plays a part in it. Overabundance of strength is the only proof of strength.[1] —A *revaluation of all values*, this question mark so black, so monstrous that it casts a shadow on the one who poses it—such a fateful task forces one to run out into the sun at every moment, to shake off a heavy seriousness that has become all too heavy. Every means is right for this, every "case" is a lucky break.[2] Above all, *war*. War has always been the great cleverness of all spirits who have become too inward, too deep; even wounds can have the power to heal. A saying whose source I withhold from scholarly curiosity has long been my motto:

increscunt animi, virescit volnere virtus.[3]

Another way to recover, which under certain circumstances I like even better, is *sounding out idols* . . . There are more idols than realities in the world: that's *my* "evil eye" on this world, and my "evil *ear*" too . . . To pose questions here with a *hammer* for once, and maybe to hear in reply that well-known hollow tone which tells of bloated innards—how delightful for one who has ears even behind his ears—for me the old psychologist and pied piper, in whose presence precisely what would like to stay quiet *has to speak up* . . .

This book too—the title gives it away—is above all a recovery, a sunny spot, a sidestep into a psychologist's idleness.[4] Maybe a new war as well?

1. Nietzsche often uses the expression "proof of strength," which derives from I Cor. 2:4.

2. *Jeder "Fall" ein Glücksfall*—probably an allusion to Nietzsche's previous book, *The Case of Wagner* (1888).

3. "With a wound, spirits soar and virtue thrives." "Virtue" in the classical sense refers to excellence—a healthy, strong, peak condition. Nietzsche uses the word "virtue" (*Tugend*) in this sense, for example, in the first section of "What the Germans Are Missing" and in §45 of "Raids of an Untimely Man," below. Curious scholars have traced the source of Nietzsche's motto: the poet Furius of Antium, quoted in Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights* XVIII, 11, 4.

4. *A Psychologist's Idleness* was Nietzsche's original title for this book; with the

And are new idols sounded out? . . . This little book is a *great declaration of war*, and as for sounding out idols, this time they are not just idols of the age, but *eternal* idols that are touched here with the hammer as with a tuning fork—there aren't any older idols at all, none more assured, none more inflated . . . And none more hollow . . . That doesn't stop them from being the ones that are *believed* in the most—and, especially in the most prominent case, they aren't called idols at all . . .

Turin, September 30, 1888,
on the day when the first book of the *Revaluation of All Values* was finished.[5]

Friedrich Nietzsche

encouragement of his friend Peter Gast, he changed the title shortly before the book went to press, but this reference survived. The new title, *Götzen-Dämmerung* (*Twilight of the Idols*), is a pun on Wagner's *Götterdämmerung* (*Twilight of the Gods*).

5. *The Antichrist* (published 1895). In an "Edict Against Christianity," which Nietzsche considered using as the last page of *The Antichrist*, he describes the day on which he finished that book as follows: "the day of salvation, the first day of the Year One—in the false calendar, September 30, 1888."

Epigrams and Arrows

1

Idleness is the start of all psychology. What? Would psychology then be—a vice?[6]

2

Even the bravest of us only rarely have the bravery for what we actually *know* . . .

3

To live alone one has to be a beast or a god—says Aristotle.[7] But there's a third case: one has to be both—a *philosopher.*

4

"All truth is simple."—Isn't that doubly a lie?[8]

5

Once and for all, there's a lot that I *don't* want to know.—Wisdom sets limits even to knowledge.

6

It is in our wild nature that we best recover from our un-nature, our spirituality . . .[9]

6. An allusion to the German proverb "Idleness is the start of all vice." As in his foreword, Nietzsche has in mind his original title for this book: *A Psychologist's Idleness*. An earlier draft of this aphorism reads: "Idleness is the start of all philosophy. Is philosophy then—a sin?" Aristotle associates leisure with the origins of theoretical thinking in *Metaphysics* I, 1.

7. *Politics* I, 2.

8. A reference to Schopenhauer's dictum "Simplicity is the seal of truth." On Schopenhauer, see below, "Morality as Anti-Nature," §5, and "Raids of an Untimely Man," §§21–22.

9. *Geistigkeit*: while the English word "spiritual" now refers primarily to religious sensibility, the German *geistig* is a very broad term that can be applied to all

7

What? Is humanity just God's mistake? Or God just a mistake of humanity?—

8

From life's military school.—What doesn't kill me makes me stronger.[10]

9

Help yourself: then everyone will help you. Principle of neighborly love.

10

Not to be cowardly in the face of one's own deeds! Not to leave them in the lurch afterwards!—The pangs of conscience are unseemly.

11

Can a *donkey* be tragic?—To perish beneath a load one can neither carry nor cast off? . . . The case of the philosopher.

12

If you have your *why* for life, you can get by with almost any *how*.—Humanity does *not* strive for happiness; only the English do.

13

Man created woman—but out of what? Out of a rib of his God—of his "ideal" . . .

---

the higher activities and manifestations of human intelligence and consciousness, including science, art, religion and philosophy. But in the absence of better equivalents, *Geist* and *geistig* will generally be translated as "spirit" and "spiritual." Sometimes *Geist* will be translated as "mind" or "intelligence"; in these cases the German will be provided within brackets.

10. For a self-portrait by Nietzsche which expands on this epigram, see *Ecce Homo*, "Why I Am So Wise," §2.

14

What? You're searching? You'd like to multiply yourself ten times, a hundred times? You're looking for followers?—Look for *zeros!*—

15

Posthumous human beings—like me, for example—are understood worse than timely ones, but they are *listened to* better. More accurately: we are never understood—and *that's* the source of our authority . . .

16

Among women.—"Truth? Oh, you don't know truth! Isn't it an assault on all our *pudeurs* [modesties]?"—

17

This is an artist as I like my artists, simple in his needs: he really wants only two things, his bread and his art—*panem et* Circen . . .[11]

18

Those who don't know how to put their will into things at least put a *meaning* into them: that is, they have faith that a will is already in things (principle of "faith").

19

How's that? You've chosen virtue and the puffed-up chest, but at the same time you look askance at the advantages of those who have no scruples?—But when one embraces virtue, one *renounces* "advantages" . . . (Posted on an anti-Semite's front door.)

11. "Bread and Circe"—a pun on *panem et circenses*, "bread and circuses." Juvenal accuses the decadent Romans of wanting only bread and circuses in *Satires* X, 81. In the *Odyssey* Circe is an enchantress who turns men into beasts.

20

The perfect woman commits literature as she commits a little sin: as an experiment, in passing, looking around to see if someone is noticing, and to see to it *that* someone notices . . .[12]

21

To get into all kinds of situations where no fake virtues are allowed, where instead, like the tightrope walker on his rope, you either slip or you stand—or you get away . . .

22

"Evil people don't have songs."[13]—How is it that the Russians have songs?

23

"German spirit": for the last eighteen years a *contradictio in adjecto.*[14]

24

Looking for beginnings turns you into a crab. Historians look backwards; they end up *believing* backwards too.

25

Contentment even protects you against catching cold. Has a woman who knew she was well-dressed ever caught cold?—I'm imagining a case where she was hardly dressed at all.

12. The original draft of this passage continues: "it is well known how well a small spot of decay and brown corruption suits the perfect woman—and even more so how all literary composition works on women, as retrospective question marks about all earlier feminine *pudeurs* [decency]."

13. A popular saying based on the poem "Die Gesänge" ("The Songs"), by Johann Gottfried Seume (1763–1810). This entry was extracted from a longer paragraph that reads, in part: "Russian music brings to light with moving simplicity the soul of those at the bottom of society . . . But how is it then that the ruling class of Russia is not represented by its music? Is it enough to say, 'Evil people don't have songs'?"

14. "A contradiction in terms." The reference is to Bismarck's institution of the *Reich*, or German Empire, in 1871. For Nietzsche's view of the *Reich*, see especially "What the Germans Are Missing," below.

26

I distrust all systematizers and stay out of their way. The will to a system is a lack of integrity.

27

Women are taken to be deep—why? Because with them, one never gets to the bottom of things. Women aren't even shallow.

28

If a woman has masculine virtues, it's enough to make you run away from her; and if she has no masculine virtues, away she runs herself.

29

"How much there once was for conscience to chew on! What good teeth it had!—And today? What's it missing?"—A dentist's question.

30

One rarely commits only one overhasty act. With the first, one always does too much. For this very reason, one usually commits still another—and this time, one does too little . . .

31

A worm squirms when it's stepped on. That's prudent. In that way it reduces the probability of being stepped on again. In the language of morality: *humility*.—

32

There is a hatred for lying and disguise which comes from a keen sense of honor; there is another such hatred which comes from cowardice, because lying is *forbidden* by a divine commandment. Too cowardly to lie . . .

33

How little it takes to make us happy! The sound of a bagpipe.—Without music, life would be an error. The German even imagines God as singing songs.[15]

34

On ne peut penser et écrire qu'assis [one can't think and write unless one is seated] (Gustave Flaubert).—Now I've got you, you nihilist! Ass-iduity[16] is the *sin* against the Holy Spirit. Only thoughts that come by *walking* have any value.

35

There are cases where we're like horses, we psychologists: we get disturbed because we see our own shadow bobbing up and down in front of us. Psychologists have to look away from *themselves* in order to see anything at all.

36

Are we immoralists doing *harm* to virtue?—Just as little as the anarchists are harming the princes. Only since the princes have been shot at have they been sitting securely on their thrones again. Moral: *one must take shots at morality.*

37

You're running *ahead?*—Are you doing so as a shepherd? Or as an exception? A third case would be the escapee . . . *First* question of conscience.

15. "The German Fatherland," a song written in 1813 by Ernst Moritz Arndt, includes the lines, "As far as the German tongue resounds / And to God in Heaven sings its songs." But the German *und Gott im Himmel Lieder singt* can also be humorously misinterpreted as "and God in Heaven sings songs."

16. *Sitzfleisch* literally means "sitting-flesh," or buttocks. Metaphorically it means assiduity, diligent effort.

38

Are you genuine, or just an actor? A representative? Or the very thing that's represented? In the end you may simply be an imitation of an actor . . . *Second* question of conscience.

39

The disillusioned one speaks.—I looked for great human beings, but all I ever found were the *apes* of their ideals.

40

Are you one who looks on? Or one who lends a hand?—Or one who looks away, turns aside . . . *Third* question of conscience.

41

Do you want to go along? Or go ahead? Or go on your own? . . . One has to know *what* one wills and *that* one wills.—*Fourth* question of conscience.

42

Those were steps for me; I climbed up over them—that's why I had to pass over them. But they thought I wanted to settle down on them . . .

43

What difference does it make if *I* am right in the end! I *am* much too right.[17] —And whoever laughs best today also laughs last.

44

Formula for my happiness: a yes, a no, a straight line, a *goal* . . .

17. German idioms allow Nietzsche to make a small pun. He literally writes, "What difference does it make if *I* retain the right! I *have* too much right."

The Problem of Socrates

1

The wisest sages of all times have reached the same judgment about life: *it's worthless* . . . Always and everywhere we have heard the same sound coming from their mouths—a sound full of doubt, full of melancholy, full of fatigue with life, full of hostility to life. Even Socrates said, as he died, "Living—that means being sick a long time. I owe a rooster to the savior Asclepius."[18] Even Socrates had had enough.—What does that *demonstrate*? What does that *indicate*?—In the past one would have said (—oh, one has said it, and loud enough, and especially our pessimists!): "There must be something true here, in any case! The *consensus sapientium* [agreement of the wise] demonstrates the truth."—Will we still speak this way today? *May* we do so? "There must be something *sick* here, in any case"—that's *our* answer: these wisest sages of all times, one should take a close look at them first! Had they all become unsteady on their legs, maybe? Late? Shaky? *Décadents*?[19] Does wisdom maybe appear on Earth as a scavenger bird, excited by a little scent of rotting meat? . . .

2

In my own case this disrespectful thought, that the great sages are *declining types*, first occurred to me precisely in regard to an instance where learned and unlearned prejudice most strongly opposes it: I recognized Socrates and Plato as symptoms of decay, as instruments of the Greek dissolution, as pseudo-Greek, as anti-Greek (*Birth of Tragedy*, 1872). That *consensus sapientium*—this I grasped better and better—dem-

18. Asclepius was the god of medicine. The second sentence within quotation marks is based on Socrates' last words according to Plato, *Phaedo* 118a; the first sentence is Nietzsche's interpretation of Socrates' last words. For another reflection on the death of Socrates, see *The Gay Science*, §340.

19. Nietzsche's regular use of the French words *décadence* and *décadent* expresses his respect for many psychological and sociological ideas current in the France of his day: see §4 of "What the Germans Are Missing," below.

onstrates least of all that they were right about what they agreed on. Instead, it demonstrates that they themselves, these wisest ones, were somehow in *physiological* agreement, so that they took the same negative stance toward life—and *had* to take it.

Judgments, value judgments about life, for or against, can in the final analysis never be true; they have value only as symptoms, they can be considered only as symptoms—in themselves, such judgments are stupidities. One absolutely must reach out and try to grasp this astounding *finesse*, *that the value of life cannot be assessed*. Not by the living, since they are parties to the dispute; in fact, they are the objects of contention, and not the judges—and not by the dead, for another reason.—Thus, when philosophers see a problem in the *value* of life, this even amounts to an objection to them, a question mark attached to their wisdom, an unwisdom.—What? And all these great sages—are we saying they weren't only *décadents*, but they weren't even wise to begin with?—But here I come back to the problem of Socrates.

3

Socrates belonged, in his origins, to the lowest folk: Socrates was rabble. We know, we can still see for ourselves, how ugly he was. But ugliness, which in itself is an objection, was among the Greeks virtually a refutation. Was Socrates Greek in the first place? Ugliness is often enough the expression of interbreeding, of a development *thwarted* by interbreeding. In other cases it appears as a development in *decline*. Forensic anthropologists tell us that the typical criminal is ugly: *monstrum in fronte, monstrum in animo* [monster in the face, monster in the soul]. But the criminal is a *décadent*. Was Socrates a typical criminal?—At any rate this wouldn't contradict that well-known judgment of a physiognomist which sounded so offensive to Socrates' friends. A visitor who knew about faces, when he passed through Athens, said to Socrates' face that he *was* a *monstrum*—that he contained all bad vices and cravings within him. And Socrates simply answered: "You know me, sir!"[20] —

20. Nietzsche's story about Socrates and the physiognomist, which he continues in §9 below, is based on Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* IV, 37, 80. In Cicero, Socrates replies that vices are innate to him (*insita*).

4

Socrates' *décadence* is indicated not only by his admittedly depraved and anarchic instincts, but also by the overdevelopment of the logical and that *rickety nastiness* that characterizes him. And let's not forget those auditory hallucinations which have been interpreted in religious terms as "Socrates' *daimonion* [divine sign]."[21] Everything about him is exaggerated, *buffo* [comical], a caricature; at the same time, everything is covert, reticent, subterranean.—I am trying to grasp the idiosyncrasy that is the source of that Socratic equation: reason = virtue = happiness—the most bizarre equation that there is, and one which in particular has all the instincts of the older Hellenes against it.

5

With Socrates, Greek taste takes a turn in favor of dialectic. What is really happening there? Primarily, a *noble* taste is thereby defeated; with dialectic, the rabble rises to the top. Before Socrates, dialectical manners were rejected in good society. They were taken to be bad manners, they were a compromising exposure. The youth were warned against them. And all such presentation of one's reasons was mistrusted. Respectable things, like respectable people, just don't carry their reasons around on their sleeves like that. Showing your whole hand is improper. Whatever has to get itself proved in advance isn't worth much. Wherever authority is still considered good form, so that one does not "give reasons" but commands, the dialectician is a sort of clown: people laugh at him, they don't take him seriously.—Socrates was the clown who *got people to take him seriously*: what really happened there?—

6

Dialectic is chosen only as a last resort. It's well known that it creates mistrust, that it is not very convincing. Nothing can be wiped away more easily than a dialectician's effect: this is proven by the experience of every gathering where people speak. It can only be *self-defense* in the hands of those who don't have any other weapons. One needs to get one's rights by *force*; otherwise, one makes no use of it. This is why the Jews were dialecticians; Reynard the Fox was one: what? And Socrates was one too?—

21. See, for example, Plato, *Euthyphro* 3b and *Apology* 31c–d.

7

—Is Socrates' irony an expression of revolt? Of the rabble's *ressentiment*?[22] Does he, as one of the oppressed, relish his own ferocity in the knife-thrusts of the syllogism? Does he take *revenge* on the nobles whom he fascinates?—As a dialectician, one has a merciless instrument at hand; one can play the tyrant with it; one compromises by conquering. The dialectician lays on his opponent the burden of proving that he is not an idiot: he infuriates, and at the same time he paralyzes. The dialectician *disempowers* the intellect of his opponent.—What? Is dialectic just a form of *revenge* in Socrates?

8

I have made it understandable how Socrates could be repulsive. Now it's all the more necessary to explain the *fact* that he was fascinating.—The first point is that he discovered a new kind of *agon* [contest], that in this contest he served as the first fencing master for the noble circles of Athens. He fascinated by stimulating the combative drive of the Hellenes—he introduced a variant into the wrestling match between young men and youths. Socrates was also a great *erotic*.[23]

9

But Socrates surmised even more. He saw *past* his noble Athenians; he grasped that *his* case, his idiosyncratic case, already wasn't exceptional. The same kind of degeneration was silently preparing itself everywhere: the old Athens was coming to an end.—And Socrates understood that all the world had *need* of him—his means, his cure, his personal device for self-preservation . . . Everywhere, the instincts were in anarchy; everywhere, people were five steps away from excess; the *monstrum in animo* was the general threat. "The drives want to play the tyrant; we have to invent a stronger *counter-tyrant*" . . .

22. Resentful vengefulness. Nietzsche develops this concept at length in *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887). For more on *ressentiment*, see below, "Raids of an Untimely Man," §3, and "What I Owe to the Ancients," §4.

23. For Socrates' claim to be an expert in things erotic, see Plato, *Lysis* 204c, *Symposium* 177d and 212b, and *Phaedrus* 257a.

When that physiognomist exposed to Socrates who he was, a cave full of all bad cravings, the great ironist allowed himself another word that gives us the key to him. "That's true," he said, "but I became the master of them all."[24] *How* did Socrates become master of *himself*?—His case was at bottom only the extreme case, only the most striking example of what began at that time to be the general crisis: the fact that no one was master of himself anymore, that the instincts were turning *against* each other. He was fascinating as this extreme case—his fearsome ugliness displayed him as such to every eye. He was even more fascinating, of course, as an answer, as a solution, as the semblance of a *cure* for this case.—

10

When one finds it necessary to make a tyrant out of *reason*, as Socrates did, then there must be no small danger that something else should play the tyrant. At that time rationality was surmised to be a *rescuer*; neither Socrates nor his "sick patients" were rational by free choice—it was *de rigueur*, it was their *last* resort. The fanaticism with which all Greek speculation throws itself at rationality betrays a situation of emergency: they were in danger, they had to make *this* choice: either to be destroyed, or—to be *absurdly rational* . . .

The moralism of the Greek philosophers from Plato onward is the result of a pathological condition; likewise their admiration for dialectic. Reason=virtue=happiness simply means: we have to imitate Socrates and produce a permanent *daylight* against the dark desires—the daylight of reason. We have to be cunning, sharp, clear at all costs: every acquiescence to the instincts, to the unconscious, leads *downward* . . .

11

I have made it understandable how Socrates was fascinating: he seemed to be a doctor, a savior. Is it necessary to go on and point out the error which lay in his belief in "rationality at all costs"?—It is a self-deception on the part of philosophers and moralists to think that they can escape from *décadence* merely by making war against it. Escape is beyond their strength: for what they choose as a means, as salvation, is itself just another expression of *décadence*—they *alter* its expression, they don't do

24. Socrates "said that he had cast [his vices] out by reason": Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* IV, 37, 80.

away with it itself. Socrates was a misunderstanding; *the whole morality of improvement, Christian morality included, was a misunderstanding* . . . The most glaring daylight, rationality at all costs, a life clear, cold, careful, aware, without instinct, in resistance to the instincts, was itself just a sickness, another sickness—and not at all a way back to "virtue," to "health," to happiness . . . To *have* to fight the instincts—that is the formula for *décadence*. As long as life *is ascending*, happiness is the same as instinct.—

12

—Did he even grasp this himself, this cleverest of all self-outwitters? Did he tell himself this in the end, in the *wisdom* of his courage in the face of death? . . . Socrates *wanted* to die: not Athens, but *he* gave himself the poison cup, he forced Athens to give him the poison cup . . . "Socrates is no doctor," he said to himself softly, "death is the only doctor here . . . Socrates himself has just been sick for a long time . . ."

"Reason" in Philosophy

1

You ask me what's idiosyncratic about philosophers? . . . There is, for instance, their lack of a sense of history, their hatred for the very notion of becoming, their Egyptianism. They think they're *honoring* a thing if they de-historicize it, see it *sub specie aeterni*[25]—if they make a mummy out of it. Everything that philosophers have handled, for thousands of years now, has been conceptual mummies; nothing real escaped their hands alive. They kill and stuff whatever they worship, these gentlemen who idolize concepts—they endanger the life of whatever they worship. For them, death, change, and age, like reproduction and growth, are objections—refutations, even. Whatever is does not *become*; whatever becomes *is* not . . .

Now, they all believe, desperately even, in what *is*. But since they can't get it into their clutches, they look for reasons why it's being withheld from them. "There has to be an illusion, a deception at work that prevents us from perceiving what *is*; where's the deceiver?"—"We've got the deceiver!" they cry happily, "it's sensation! These senses, *which are so immoral anyway*, deceive us about the *true* world. Moral: free yourself from the senses' deceit, from becoming, from history, from the lie—history is nothing but belief in the senses, belief in the lie. Moral: say no to everything that lends credence to the senses, to all the rest of humanity; all that is just 'the masses.' Be a philosopher, be a mummy, portray monotono-theism with a gravedigger's pantomime!—And above all, away with the *body*, this pathetic *idée fixe* [obsession] of the senses, afflicted with every logical error there is, refuted, even impossible—although it has the nerve to behave as if it were real!" . . .

2

I set aside with great respect the name of *Heraclitus*. While the rest of the mass of philosophers were rejecting the testimony of their senses because the senses displayed plurality and change, he rejected the testimony of the senses because they displayed things as if they had duration

25. "In its eternal aspect"—an expression used by Spinoza (*Ethics*, Part V, Propositions 22–23, 29).

and unity. Even Heraclitus did not do justice to the senses. They do not lie either in the way the Eleatics[26] thought or in the way that he thought—they do not lie at all. What we *make* of their testimony is what first introduces the lie, for example, the lie of unity, the lie of thinghood, of substance, of duration . . . "Reason" is what causes us to falsify the testimony of the senses. Insofar as the senses display becoming, passing away, and change, they do not lie . . . But Heraclitus will always be in the right for saying that being is an empty fiction. The "apparent" world is the only world: the "true world" is just *added to it by a lie* . . .

3

—And what fine tools of observation we have in our senses! This nose, for instance, of which no philosopher has yet spoken with admiration and gratitude, is in fact the most delicate instrument at our disposal: it can register minimal differences in motion which even the spectroscope fails to register. The extent to which we possess science today is precisely the extent to which we have decided to *accept* the testimony of the senses—and learned to sharpen them, arm them, and think them through to their end. The rest is an abortion and not-yet-science: that is, metaphysics, theology, psychology, epistemology. *Or* it is formal science, a theory of signs, like logic and that applied logic, mathematics. In these formal sciences, reality makes no appearance at all, not even as a problem; nor is there any hint of the question of what value such a convention of signs has in the first place.—

4

The *other* idiosyncrasy of philosophers is no less dangerous: it consists in confusing what is first with what is last. They posit what comes at the end—unfortunately, for it should never come at all!—the "highest concepts," that is, the most universal, the emptiest concepts, the final wisp of evaporating reality—these they posit at the beginning *as* the beginning. This, again, just expresses their way of honoring something: the higher is not *permitted* to grow out of the lower, is not *permitted* to have grown at all . . .

26. Followers of Parmenides of Elea (ca. 475 B.C.), who asserted that what is, is unchangeable, uniform, unitary, and indivisible. Becoming, as displayed by the senses, is thus pure illusion or non-being.

Moral: everything of the first rank has to be *causa sui* [caused by itself]. Origination from something else counts as an objection that casts doubt on the value of what has thus originated. All the supreme values are of the first rank, all the highest concepts, what *is*, the unconditioned, the good, the true, the perfect—all this cannot have become, and *must* consequently be *causa sui*. But none of this can be at odds with itself either, it can't contradict itself . . . That's where they get their stupendous concept "God" . . . The last, the thinnest, the emptiest is posited as the first, as a cause in itself, as *ens realissimum* [the most real being] . . . To think that humanity has had to take seriously the brain diseases of sickly web-spinners!—And it has paid dearly for having done so! . . .

5

—Finally, let's present the different way in which *we* (I politely say we . . .) view the problem of error and illusion. It used to be that one took alteration, change, becoming in general as a proof of illusion, as a sign that something must be there, leading us astray. Today, in contrast, it is precisely to the extent that we are compelled by the prejudice of reason to posit unity, identity, duration, substance, cause, thinghood, being, that we see ourselves, as it were, entangled in error, *forced* into error; so sure are we, on the basis of a rigorous self-examination, that it is *here* that the error lies.

This case is just like that of the motions of the great star: in that case, error has our eyes as its constant advocates, whereas in the first case, its advocate is our *language*. In its origin, language belongs to the time of the most rudimentary type of psychology: we encounter a crude set of fetishes when we become conscious of the basic presuppositions of the metaphysics of language—or, to put it plainly, *reason*. *Reason* sees actors and actions everywhere: it believes in the will as an absolute cause; it believes in the "I," in the I as being, in the I as a substance, and *projects* its belief in the I-substance onto all things—that's how it first *creates* the concept "thing" . . . Being is thought into things everywhere as a cause, is *imputed* to things; from the conception "I" there follows the derivative concept "being" . . . At the beginning there stands the great and fatal error of thinking that the will is something *effective*—that will is an *ability* . . . Today we know that it is just a word . . .[27]

27. For further reflections on the will and being, see, for example, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, First Essay, §13, and below, "The Four Great Errors," §3.

Much, much later, in a world that was more enlightened by a thousandfold, *certitude*, subjective *certainty* in manipulating the categories of reason, entered the startled consciousness of the philosophers: they concluded that these categories could not come from experience—all experience stands in contradiction to them, after all. *So where did they come from?*—And in India, as in Greece, they made the same mistake: "We must already have been at home in a higher world at one time"—(instead of *in a far lower one*, which would have been the truth!)—"we must have been divine, *since* we have reason!" . . .

In fact, nothing up to now has been more naively persuasive than the error of being, as it was formulated by the Eleatics, for instance: after all, it has on its side every word, every sentence we speak!—Even the opponents of the Eleatics fell prey to the seduction of their concept of being: this happened to Democritus, among others, when he invented his *atom* . . .[28] "Reason" in language: oh, what a tricky old woman she is! I'm afraid we're not rid of God because we still believe in grammar . . .

6

You will be thankful to me if I condense such an essential and new insight into four theses: I thus make it easier to understand, and I dare you to contradict it.

First proposition. The grounds on which "this" world has been called apparent are instead grounds for its reality—*another* kind of reality is absolutely indemonstrable.

Second proposition. The distinguishing marks which have been given to the "true being" of things are the distinguishing marks of nonbeing, of *nothingness*—the "true world" has been constructed by contradicting the actual world: this "true world" is in fact an apparent world, insofar as it is just a *moral-optical* illusion.

Third proposition. It makes no sense whatsoever to tell fictional stories about "another" world than this one, as long as the instinct to slander, trivialize, and look down upon life is not powerful within us: in that case, we *revenge* ourselves on life with the phantasmagoria of "another," "better" life.

Fourth proposition. Dividing the world into a "true" and an "apparent" world, whether in the style of Christianity or in the style of Kant (a *sneaky*

28. Democritus (ca. 460–370 B.C.) claimed that the world consisted of being and non-being, or atoms (indivisible units) and the void.

Christian to the end),[29] is merely a move inspired by *décadence*—a symptom of *declining* life . . . The fact that the artist prizes appearance over reality is no objection to this proposition. For "appearance" here means reality *once again*, but in the form of a selection, an emphasis, a correction . . . Tragic artists are *not* pessimists—in fact, they say *yes* to everything questionable and terrible itself, they are *Dionysian* . . .

29. On Kant's distinction between "appearances" and "things in themselves" and Nietzsche's view of the relation of Kant to Christianity, see below, "How the 'True World' Finally Became a Fiction."

How the "True World" Finally Became a Fiction

History of an Error

1. The true world, attainable for the wise, the devout, the virtuous—they live in it, *they are it.*

   (Oldest form of the idea, relatively clever, simple, convincing. Paraphrase of the assertion, "I, Plato, *am* the truth.")

2. The true world, unattainable for now, but promised to the wise, the devout, the virtuous ("to the sinner who does penance").

   (Progress of the idea: it becomes more refined, more devious, more mystifying—*it becomes woman*, it becomes Christian . . .)

3. The true world, unattainable, unprovable, unpromisable, but a consolation, an obligation, an imperative, merely by virtue of being thought.

   (The old sun basically, but glimpsed through fog and skepticism; the idea become sublime, pallid, Nordic, Königsbergian.[30])

4. The true world—unattainable? In any case, unattained. And if it is unattained, it is also *unknown*. And hence it is not consoling, redeeming, or obligating either; to what could something unknown obligate us? . . .

   (Gray dawn. First yawnings of reason. Rooster's crow of positivism.)

5. The "true world"—an idea with no use anymore, no longer even obligating—an idea become useless, superfluous, *hence* a refuted idea: let's do away with it!

   (Bright day; breakfast; return of *bon sens* [good sense] and cheerfulness; Plato blushes; pandemonium of all free spirits.)

30. An allusion to Kant, who lived all his life in Königsberg, on the Baltic Sea. For Kant, it is impossible for us to know about "things in themselves"—including God, free will, and an immortal soul; however, rational morality obliges us to "postulate" such things.

6. We have done away with the true world: what world is left over? The apparent one, maybe? . . . But no! *Along with the true world, we have also done away with the apparent!*

   (Midday; moment of the shortest shadow; end of the longest error; high point of humanity; INCIPIT ZARATHUSTRA.[31])

31. "Here begins Zarathustra." This phrase echoes several passages in Nietzsche's earlier works. The title of the last section (§342) of the original edition of *The Gay Science* (1882) is *Incipit tragoedia* ("here begins the tragedy"). The text of this section is equivalent to the opening of Nietzsche's next book, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. In §1 of the preface to the second edition of *The Gay Science* (1887), Nietzsche suggests that *incipit parodia* ("here begins the parody") may also be an appropriate motto.

Morality as Anti-Nature

1

All passions have a time when they are nothing but fatal, when they drag their victim down with the heaviness of their stupidity—and a later, much later time when they marry the spirit, they "spiritualize" themselves.[32] It used to be that on account of the stupidity in passion, one made war against passion itself: one conspired to destroy it—all the old moral monsters are of one mind on this point, "*il faut tuer les passions*" ["the passions must be killed"]. The best-known formula for this is in the New Testament, in that Sermon on the Mount in which, by the way, things are not contemplated *from a height* at all. For instance, there it is said with reference to sexuality, "if your eye offends you, pluck it out."[33] Fortunately, no Christian acts according to this prescription. To *destroy* the passions and desires, merely in order to protect oneself against their stupidity and the disagreeable consequences of their stupidity, seems to us today to be itself an acute form of stupidity. We no longer admire dentists who *pull out* teeth so that they won't hurt anymore . . .

But on the other hand, it's only fair to concede that on the soil from which Christianity grew, the concept of "*spiritualizing* the passions" was simply inconceivable. After all, the early Church fought, as is known, *against* the "intellectuals," on behalf of those who were "poor in spirit":[34] how could one expect the Church to wage an intelligent war against passion?—The Church fights passion by cutting it out, in every sense; its practice, its "therapy" is *castration*. It never asks, "How does one spiritualize, beautify, deify a desire?"—its discipline has always emphasized eradication (eradication of sensuality, pride, the ambition to rule, covetousness, vengefulness).—But ripping out the passions by the root means ripping out life by the root; the practice of the Church is *an enemy to life* . . .

32. On the word *Geist* ("spirit"), see above, "Epigrams and Arrows," §6. To *vergeistigen* ("spiritualize") something is to integrate it into the higher, more refined levels of human consciousness.

33. Matt. 5:29.

34. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven": Matt. 5:3.

2

The same means, castration, eradication, is instinctively chosen in the struggle against a desire by those who are too weak-willed, too degenerate to moderate their own desire: by those natures who need La Trappe,[35] to use a metaphor (and not to use one), some ultimate declaration of war, an *abyss* between themselves and a passion. Radical means are indispensable only for degenerates; having a weak will, or more precisely, being incapable of *not* reacting to a stimulus, is itself just another form of degeneration. Radical enmity, enmity to the death against sensuality, is always a symptom that repays reflection: it justifies one's suspicions about the general condition of one who goes to this kind of extreme.—

By the way, this enmity, this hatred reaches its peak only when such natures no longer have enough stamina even for the radical therapy, for the repudiation of their "devil." Survey the whole history of priests and philosophers, and artists too: the most poisonous words against the senses have *not* come from the impotent, *not* even from the ascetics. They have come from the impossible ascetics, from those who were in need of being ascetics . . .

3

The spiritualization of sensuality is known as *love*: it is a great triumph over Christianity. Another triumph is our spiritualization of *enmity*. It consists in a deep grasp of the value of having enemies: in short, it is a way of acting and drawing conclusions that is the reverse of what people used to do. In every age, the Church wanted its enemies to be destroyed; we, we immoralists and anti-Christians, see our own advantage in the Church's continued existence . . . In the political sphere, too, enmity has now become more spiritual—much more clever, much more reflective, much more *considerate*. Almost every party grasps that its own interest, its own self-preservation, depends on the opposing party's not losing its strength; the same applies to politics on the grand scale. Above all, a new creation, such as the new *Reich*,[36] needs enemies more than it needs friends; only in opposition does it feel that it is necessary, only in opposition does it *become* necessary . . .

35. La Trappe was the original abbey of the highly disciplined Trappist monks. *Trappe* literally means a trapdoor, metaphorically a trap or trick.

36. The new German Empire, proclaimed by Bismarck in 1871.

We behave no differently as regards the "inner enemy": here too we have spiritualized enmity, here too we have realized its *value*. One is *fruitful* only at the price of being rich in oppositions; one remains *young* only under the condition that the soul not slacken, not yearn for peace . . . Nothing has become more alien to us than that former object of desire, "peace in the soul," the *Christian* object of desire; nothing makes us less envious than the morality-cow and the fat contentment of good conscience. One has relinquished *great* life when one relinquishes war . . .

In many cases, of course, "peace in the soul" is just a misunderstanding—something *else* which simply doesn't know how to call itself by a more honest name. Without delay and without prejudice, here are a couple of cases. For instance, "peace in the soul" can be a rich animality, gently radiating into the moral (or the religious) realm. Or the beginning of fatigue, the first shadow cast by the evening, every kind of evening. Or a sign that the air is humid, that south winds are on their way. Or unconscious thankfulness for good digestion (sometimes called "love of humanity"). Or the growing calm of the convalescent to whom all things taste new, and who is awaiting . . . Or the condition that follows a powerful gratification of our dominant passion, the good feeling of a rare satisfaction. Or the senile feebleness of our will, our desires, our vices. Or laziness, convinced by vanity to dress itself up in morality. Or the arrival of a certainty, even a terrible certainty, after a long, suspenseful period of being tortured by uncertainty. Or the expression of ripeness and mastery in the midst of doing, creating, working, willing—unhurried breathing, the *attained* "freedom of the will" . . . *Twilight of the Idols*: who knows? Maybe this, too, is just a kind of "peace in the soul."[37]

4

—I put a principle into a formula. All naturalism in morality, that is, all *healthy* morality, is ruled by an instinct of life—some decree of life is fulfilled by a particular canon of "shall" and "shall not," some restriction and hostility on life's path is thereby shoved aside. *Anti-natural* morality, that is, almost every morality that has been taught, honored, and preached up to now, instead turns precisely *against* the instincts of life—it is a sometimes hidden, sometimes loud and bold *condemnation* of these instincts. By saying, "God looks into the heart,"[38] it says no to the lowest

37. This last remark makes more sense if we replace *Twilight of the Idols* with the original title of this book, *A Psychologist's Idleness*.

38. Luke 16:15.

and highest desires of life, and takes God to be *life's enemy* . . . The saint in whom God takes delight is the ideal eunuch . . . Life ends where the "kingdom of God" *begins* . . .

5

Given that one has grasped the sacrilege of such a revolt against life, like the revolt that has become nearly sacrosanct in Christian morality, one has, fortunately, grasped something else as well: the uselessness, illusiveness, absurdity, and *mendacity* of such a revolt. A condemnation of life by one who is alive is, in the end, just a symptom of a particular kind of life: this does not at all raise the question of whether the condemnation is justified or unjustified. One would have to occupy a position *outside* life, and on the other hand to know it as well as one, as many, as all who have lived it, in order to be allowed even to touch upon the problem of the *value* of life: these are reasons enough to grasp that, for us, this problem is an inaccessible problem. When we speak of values, we speak under the inspiration, under the optics of life: life itself is forcing us to posit values, life itself is valuing by means of us, *when* we posit values . . .

It follows from this that even that *anti-natural morality* that takes God to be the antithesis and condemnation of life is just one of life's value judgments.—A judgment made by *which* life? *Which* kind of life?—But I already gave the answer: declining, weakened, tired, and condemned life. Morality as it has been understood up to now—as it was finally formulated once again by Schopenhauer,[39] as "negation of the will to live"—is the *décadence-instinct* itself, making itself into an imperative. "*Perish!*" it says—it is the condemnation decreed by the condemned . . .

6

Finally, let's consider how naive it is in general to say, "Human beings *should* be such and such!" Reality shows us a captivating treasury of types, the exuberance of an evanescent play and alteration of forms. And some pathetic bystander of a moralist says to all this, "No! Human beings should be *different*"? . . . He even knows *how* human beings should be, this

39. Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860): pessimistic German philosopher who had a great influence on the young Nietzsche. In his maturity, Nietzsche often criticizes Schopenhauer. See especially "Raids of an Untimely Man," §§21–22, below.

sanctimonious sniveler; he paints himself on the wall and pronounces, "*ecce homo!*" . . .[40]

But even if the moralist just turns to the individual and says, "*You* should be such and such!" he doesn't stop making himself ridiculous. The individual is a slice of fate both before and after, one more law, one more necessity for everything that is coming and will be. To say to the individual, "change yourself," means insisting that everything should change, even retroactively . . . And there really have been consistent moralists; they wanted human beings to be different, namely virtuous, they wanted them made in their own image, namely sanctimonious. To this end, they said *no* to the world! No small lunacy! No modest sort of immodesty! . . .

Morality, insofar as it *condemns* on its own grounds, and *not* from the point of view of life's perspectives and objectives, is a specific error for which one should have no sympathy, an *idiosyncrasy of degenerates* which has done an unspeakable amount of harm! . . . In contrast, we others, we immoralists, have opened our hearts wide to every form of understanding, comprehending, *approving*. We do not easily negate, we seek our honor in being those who *affirm*. Our eyes have been opened more and more to that economy that needs and knows how to use all that the holy craziness of the priest, the *sick* reason in the priest, rejects—that economy in the law of life that draws its advantage even from the repulsive species of the sanctimonious, the priest, the virtuous.—*What* advantage?—But we ourselves, we immoralists, are the answer here . . .

40. "Behold the man" (the words Pontius Pilate used to refer to Jesus, according to John 19:5)—but also, "behold man," behold what it is to be human. Nietzsche himself uses *Ecce Homo* as the title of his summation of his own life and works (written in 1888, published in 1908).

The Four Great Errors

1

Error of confusing cause and effect.—There is no error more dangerous than *confusing the effect with the cause*: I call it the genuine corruption of reason. Nevertheless, this error is one of humanity's oldest and most contemporary customs: it has even been made sacred among us, it bears the name of "religion" and "morality." *Every* statement formulated by religion and morality contains it; priests and moral lawgivers are the ones who originated this corruption of reason.—

Let me take an example. Everyone knows the book by the famous Cornaro where he promotes his skimpy diet as a prescription for a long, happy—and virtuous—life.[41] Few books have been read so widely; even today, it's printed by the thousands of copies every year in England. I have no doubt that hardly any book (with the exception of the Bible, as is only fair) has done as much damage, has *shortened* as many lives as this curiosity which was so well-meaning. The reason: confusing the effect with the cause. The honorable Italian saw in his diet the *cause* of his long life, whereas in fact, the prerequisites for his long life—extraordinary metabolic slowness, low expenditure of energy—were the cause of his skimpy diet. He was not at liberty to eat a little *or* a lot, his frugality was *not* "freely willed": he got sick if he ate more. But for anyone who's not a cold fish, it not only does good but also is necessary to eat *properly.* Scholars of *our* day, with their rapid expenditure of nervous energy, would destroy themselves if they followed Cornaro's regimen. *Crede experto* [believe the one with experience].—

2

The most general formula that lies at the basis of every religion and morality is, "Do such and such, don't do such and such—that will make you happy! Or else . . ." Every morality, every religion *is* this imperative—I call it the great original sin of reason, the *immortal unreason.* In my mouth, this formula changes into its opposite—*first* example of my "revaluation of all values": well-constituted people, "happy" ones, *have*

41. *Discourses on the Sober Life* (1558), by Luigi Cornaro (1475–1566). Nietzsche owned a German translation of this book.

to do certain acts and instinctively shrink away from other acts; they import the orderliness which is evident in their physiology into their relations to people and things. In a formula: their virtue is the *effect* of their happiness . . . Long life and many offspring are *not* the reward of virtue; instead, virtue itself is that slow metabolism that, among other things, also has a long life, many offspring, and, in short, *Cornarism* as its consequence.—

The Church and morality say, "A race, a people is destroyed by vice and luxury." My *reconstituted* reason says: when a people is perishing, physiologically degenerating, the *effects* of this are vice and luxury (that is, the need for stronger and stronger, more and more frequent stimuli, the kind of stimuli that are familiar to every exhausted nature). This young man gets prematurely pale and flabby. His friends say this is due to such and such a sickness. I say: the fact *that* he got sick, *that* he did not resist the sickness, was already the effect of an impoverished life, an inherited exhaustion. The newspaper reader says: this party is destroying itself by making such a mistake. My *higher* politics says: a party that makes such mistakes is over—it no longer has sure instincts.

Every mistake, in every sense, is the effect of degenerate instincts, of a disintegrated will: this virtually defines the *bad*. Everything *good* is instinct—and consequently is easy, necessary, free. Exertion is an objection, the *god* is typically different from the hero (in my language: *light* feet are the first attribute of godliness).[42]

3

Error of a false causality.—In every age we have believed that we know what a cause is: but where did we get our knowledge, or more precisely, our belief that we have knowledge about this? From the realm of the famous "internal facts," none of which has up to now proved to be factual. We believed that we ourselves were causal in the act of willing; there, at least, we thought that we were *catching causality in the act*. Likewise, we never doubted that all the *antecedentia* [antecedents] of an action, its causes, were to be sought in consciousness, and could be discovered there if we looked for them—discovered as "motives": otherwise, the actor would not have been free *for* the action, responsible *for* it. Finally, who would have disputed the claim that a thought is caused? That the "I" causes the

42. Cf. *The Case of Wagner*, §1: "'What is good is light; whatever is godly moves on delicate feet': first proposition of my aesthetics."

thought? . . . Of these three "internal facts" which seemed to vouch for causality, the first and most convincing is the "fact" of *will as cause*; the conception of a consciousness ("mind" [*"Geist"*]) as cause, and still later of the "I" (the "subject") as cause were merely born later, after causality had been firmly established by the will as given, as an *empirical fact* . . .

In the meantime, we have thought better of this. Today we don't believe a word of all that anymore. The "internal world" is full of optical illusions and mirages: the will is one of them. The will no longer moves anything, so it no longer explains anything either—it just accompanies events, and it can even be absent. The so-called "motive": another error. Just a surface phenomenon of consciousness, an accessory to the act, which conceals the *antecedentia* of an act rather than representing them. And as for the "I"! That has become a fable, a fiction, a play on words: it has completely and utterly ceased to think, to feel, and to will! . . . What's the consequence of this? There aren't any mental causes at all! All the supposed empirical evidence for them has gone to hell! *That's* the consequence!—

And we had made a fine misuse of this "evidence," we had *created* the world on that basis as a world of causes, a world of wills, a world of minds. The oldest and most long-standing psychology was at work here, and this is all it did: for it, all happening was a doing, all doing the effect of a willing; for it, the world became a multitude of doers, a doer (a "subject") was imputed to everything that happened. Human beings projected their three "internal facts," the objects of their firmest belief—will, mind, "I"—beyond themselves; they originally derived the concept of being from the concept "I," they posited "things" as existing in their own image, according to their concept of the "I" as a cause. No wonder that they later rediscovered in things only *what they had put into them!*—The thing itself, to say it once again, the concept of a thing is just a reflex of the belief in the "I" as a cause . . . And even your atom, my dear mechanists and physicists—how much error, how much rudimentary psychology is left over in your atom!—Not to mention the "thing in itself," the metaphysicians' *horrendum pudendum* [horrible, shameful thing]! The error of mind as cause confused with reality! And made into the measure of reality! And called *God!*—

4

Error of imaginary causes.—I'll begin with dreams: a particular sensation, for instance, a sensation due to a distant cannon shot, has a cause

imputed to it afterwards (often a whole little novel in which precisely the dreamer is the protagonist). In the meantime, the sensation persists in a kind of resonance: it waits, as it were, until the drive to find causes allows it to come into the foreground—not as an accident anymore, but as "meaning." The cannon shot shows up in a *causal* way, and time seems to flow backwards. What comes later, the motivation, is experienced first, often with a hundred details that flash by like lightning; the shot *follows* . . . What has happened? The representations *generated* by a certain state of affairs were misunderstood as the cause of this state of affairs.—

In fact, we do just the same thing when we're awake. Most of our general feelings—every sort of inhibition, pressure, tension, explosion in the play and counterplay of the organs, and in particular the state of the *nervus sympathicus* [sympathetic nervous system]—arouse our drive to find causes: we want to have a *reason* for feeling that we're in *such and such* a state—a bad state or a good state. It's never enough for us just to determine the mere fact *that* we find ourselves in such and such a state: we admit this fact—become *conscious* of it—only *if* we've given it some kind of motivation.—Memory, which comes into play in such cases without our knowing it, calls up earlier states of the same kind, and the causal interpretations that are rooted in them—but *not* their causation. Of course, memory also calls up the belief that the representations, the accompanying occurrences in consciousness, were the causes. In this way there arises a *habituation* to a particular interpretation of causes that actually inhibits and even excludes an *investigation* of the cause.

5

A psychological explanation of this error.—Tracing something unfamiliar back to something familiar alleviates us, calms us, pacifies us, and in addition provides a feeling of power. The unfamiliar brings with it danger, unrest, and care—our first instinct is to *do away* with these painful conditions. First principle: some explanation is better than none. Since at bottom all we want is to free ourselves from oppressive representations, we aren't exactly strict about the means of freeing ourselves from them: the first representation that serves to explain the unfamiliar as familiar is so beneficial that we "take it to be true." Proof of *pleasure* ("strength") as criterion of truth.[43] —

43. As in his foreword, Nietzsche alludes to the biblical expression "proof of strength" (I Cor. 2:4).

Thus, the drive to find causes is conditioned and aroused by the feeling of fear. Whenever possible, the "why?" should not so much provide the cause for its own sake, but instead provide a *type of cause*—a relaxing, liberating, alleviating cause. The fact that something already *familiar*, something we have experienced, something inscribed in memory is posited as the cause, is the first consequence of this requirement. The new, the unexperienced, the alien, is excluded as a cause.—So we not only look for some type of explanation as the cause, but we *single out* and *favor* a certain type of explanation, the type that eliminates the feeling of the alien, new, and unexperienced, as fast and as often as possible—the most *customary* explanations.—

Consequence: one kind of cause-positing becomes more and more prevalent, concentrates itself into a system, and finally comes to the fore as *dominant*, that is, as simply *excluding* any *other* causes and explanations.—The banker thinks right away about "business," the Christian about "sin," the girl about her love.

6

The entire realm of morality and religion belongs under this concept of imaginary causes.—"Explanation" of the *unpleasant* general feelings. These feelings are due to beings that are our enemies (evil spirits: the most famous case—misunderstanding of hysterics as witches). They are due to unacceptable actions (physical discomfort gets saddled with the feeling of "sin," of "sinfulness"—one always finds reasons to be dissatisfied with oneself). They are punishments, payment for something that we shouldn't have done, that we shouldn't have *been*. (Impudently generalized by Schopenhauer into a statement in which morality appears as what it is, as something that really poisons and despises life: "every great pain, be it bodily or spiritual, expresses what we deserve, for it could not come to us if we did not deserve it."—*The World as Will and Representation*, II, 666.[44]) They are the effects of thoughtless actions that turned out badly (the emotions, the senses, are posited as a cause, as "responsible"; physiological crises are interpreted as "deserved" with the help of *other* crises).—

"Explanation" of the *pleasant* general feelings. These feelings are due

44. Nietzsche cites the 1863 Frauenstädt edition of Schopenhauer's masterwork. See Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, tr. E. F. J. Payne (New York: Dover, 1966), vol. II, p. 580. In this passage Schopenhauer goes on to claim that "Christianity also looks at our existence in this light."

to trust in God. They are due to our awareness of good actions (the so-called "good conscience," a physiological condition that sometimes looks so much like a good digestion that it might be confused with it). They are due to the successful outcome of our projects (a naive fallacy: the successful outcome of a project doesn't create any pleasant general feelings for a hypochondriac or a Pascal[45]). They are due to faith, love, hope—the Christian virtues.[46]—

In truth, all these supposed explanations are *derivative* states and translations, so to speak, of feelings of pleasure or displeasure into a false dialect: one is in a hopeful state *because* the basic physiological feeling is once again strong and rich; one trusts in God *because* the feeling of fullness and strength gives one calm.—Morality and religion totally belong to the *psychology of error*: in every single case, cause and effect are confused; or truth is confused with the effect of what is *believed* to be true; or a state of consciousness is confused with the causation of this state.

7

Error of free will.—Today we have no sympathy anymore for the concept of "free will": we know only too well what it is—the most disreputable of all the theologians' tricks, designed to make humanity "responsible" in the theologians' sense, that is, *to make it dependent on them* . . . Here I am simply offering the psychology of all making-responsible.—Wherever responsibilities are sought, what tends to be doing the seeking is the instinct of *wanting to punish and rule.* One has stripped becoming of its innocence when some state of being-such-and-such is traced back to will, to intentions, to acts: the doctrine of the will was essentially invented for purposes of punishment, that is, for purposes of *wanting to find people guilty.* All the old psychology, the psychology of will, is predicated on the fact that its originators, the priests in the elites of ancient communities, wanted to create a *right* for themselves to inflict punishments—or wanted to create a right for God to do so . . . Human beings were thought to be "free" so that they could be ruled, so that they could be punished—so that they could become *guilty*: consequently, every action *had* to be thought of as willed, the origin of every action *had* to be thought to lie in consciousness (and thus the *most fundamental* act of counterfeiting *in psy-*

45. In his *Pensées*, Blaise Pascal (1623–1662) stresses the fragility and wretchedness of human life.

46. See I Cor. 13:13.

chologicis [in psychological matters] was itself made into the principle of psychology . . .). Today, when we have started in the *opposite* direction, when we immoralists are trying with all our strength to get the concepts of guilt and punishment back out of the world, and to purge psychology, history, nature, social institutions, and sanctions of these concepts, there is in our eyes no opposition more radical than that of the theologians, who, with the concept of the "moral order of the world," go on infecting the innocence of becoming with "punishment" and "guilt." Christianity is a metaphysics of the hangman . . .

8

What can be *our* doctrine alone?—That nobody *gives* human beings their qualities, neither God, nor society, nor their parents and ancestors, nor *they themselves* (the nonsense of this last notion we are rejecting was taught by Kant as "intelligible freedom," and maybe was already taught by Plato as well).[47] *Nobody* is responsible for being here in the first place, for being constituted in such and such a way, for being in these circumstances, in this environment. The fatality of our essence cannot be separated from the fatality of all that was and will be. We are *not* the consequence of a special intention, a will, a goal; we are *not* being used in an attempt to reach an "ideal of humanity," or an "ideal of happiness," or an "ideal of morality"—it is absurd to want to *divert* our essence towards some goal. *We* have invented the concept "goal": in reality, goals are *absent* . . .

One is necessary, one is a piece of destiny, one belongs to the whole, one *is* in the whole.—There is nothing that could rule, measure, compare, judge our being, for that would mean ruling, measuring, comparing, and judging the whole . . . *But there is nothing outside the whole!*—That nobody is made responsible anymore, that no way of being may be traced back to a *causa prima* [first cause], that the world is not a unity

47. According to Kant, we can know only the sensible world of appearances (the world of material objects in causal interaction), in which our actions, like the movements of material objects, seem to be determined by factors beyond our control. We must assume, however, that in the "intelligible" world of things in themselves, we are perfectly autonomous beings who freely choose our actions. (The term "intelligible" does not mean knowable, but only thinkable.) See e.g. *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, §3. For a Platonic passage in which Socrates ascribes his actions not to his body, but to his own opinion of what is good, see *Phaedo* 98b–99b.

either as sensorium[48] or as "spirit," *only this is the great liberation*—in this way only, the *innocence* of becoming is restored . . . The concept "God" was up to now the greatest *objection* against existence . . . We deny God, and in denying God we deny responsibility[49]: only *thus* do we redeem the world.

48. Usually this word refers to the sense organs as a whole, but Nietzsche may mean a totality of sense-perceptions.

49. Literally, "and we deny responsibility in God."

Those Who "Improve" Humanity

1

My demand on philosophers is well-known: that they place themselves *beyond* good and evil—that they put the illusion of moral judgment *beneath* them. This demand follows from an insight which was formulated for the first time by me: *that there are no moral facts at all.* Moral judgments have this in common with religious ones: they believe in realities that are unreal. Morality is just an interpretation of certain phenomena, or speaking more precisely, a *mis*interpretation. Moral judgments, like religious ones, belong to a level of ignorance at which the very concept of the real, the distinction between real and imaginary, is still absent, so that "truth" at this level refers to all sorts of things which today we call "fantasies." Thus, moral judgments can never be taken literally: literally, they always contain nothing but nonsense. But they are *semiotically* invaluable all the same: they reveal, at least to those who are in the know, the most valuable realities of cultures and inner states that did not *know* enough to "understand" themselves. Morality is just a sign language, just a symptomatology: you already have to know *what* it's all about in order to get any use out of it.

2

A first, completely provisional example. People have always wanted to "improve" human beings: this, above all, was called morality. But hidden under this same word is a completely different tendency. Both the *taming* of the human beast and the *breeding* of a particular human species have been called "improvement": only this zoological terminology can express the realities—naturally, realities of which the typical "improver," the priest, knows nothing and *wants* to know nothing . . .

To call the taming of an animal its "improvement" sounds almost like a joke to our ears. Anyone who knows what happens in menageries has doubts about whether any beast gets "improved" there. The beast gets weakened, it is made less dangerous, and through the depressing feeling of fear, through pain, through wounds and hunger, it becomes a *sickly* beast.—It is no different with the tamed human being whom the priest

has "improved." In the early Middle Ages, when the Church was in fact a menagerie first and foremost, the most beautiful exemplars of the "blond beast" were hunted down everywhere—for example, the noble Teutons were "improved."[50] But what did such a "improved" Teuton look like, once he had been lured into the cloister? Like a caricature of a human being, like an abortion: he had become a "sinner," he was stuck in a cage, imprisoned among all kinds of awful concepts . . . There he lay now, sick, wretched, with ill will towards himself; full of hate against the impulses to live, full of distrust for everything that was still strong and happy. In short, a "Christian" . . .

In physiological terms: in a struggle with a beast, making it sick *can* be the only means of making it weak. The Church understood that: it *corrupted* human beings, it weakened them—but it claimed to have "improved" them . . .

3

Let's turn to the other case of so-called morality, the case of the *breeding* of a particular race and type. The most magnificent example is provided by Indian morality, which in the form of the "Law of Manu"[51] was sanctioned as religion. This law sets the task of breeding no fewer than four races at once: a priestly race, a fighting race, a race of merchants and farmers, and finally a race of servants, the shudras. Obviously we are no longer among animal tamers here: a type of human being a hundred

50. Nietzsche introduces the expression "blond beast" in *On the Genealogy of Morals*, First Essay, §11. He probably has a lion in mind, and his expression refers not only to blond "Aryans," but to any strong, untamed, warlike people.

51. *The Laws of Manu* is an important Hindu text that sets forth, among other things, the religious duties of kings and caste regulations; it is now believed to have been composed between 200 B.C. and A.D. 100. Nietzsche's source for this text is Louis Jacolliot's *Les législateurs religieux: Manou—Moïse—Mahomet* (1876). In a letter of May 31, 1888, to Peter Gast, Nietzsche writes that he has found "a great lesson in a French translation of the *Laws of Manu* . . . This absolutely Aryan achievement, a priestly codex based on the Vedas, the system of castes and a very ancient tradition—not pessimist, although always priestly—completes my ideas on religion in the most remarkable manner." He relates the *Laws of Manu* to Plato, Chinese thought, and medieval European thought, and proposes that the Jews, as a "chandala" race (see next note), learned from their masters the "principles on which a clergy could organize a people and establish its power." For a further discussion of the *Laws of Manu*, see *The Anti-Christ*, §§57–58.

times more gentle and reasonable is the prerequisite for even conceiving of such a breeding plan. We let out a sigh of relief as we step from the Christian air of sickness and dungeons into this healthier, higher, *broader* world. How pathetic the "New Testament" is in comparison to Manu, how bad it smells!—

But this organization, too, needed to be *frightening*—not in struggle with a beast this time, but with its *own* antithesis, with the nonbred human being, the mishmash human being, the chandala.[52] And once again, it had no other means of making its antithesis harmless and weak than to make it *sick*—it was the struggle with the "great mass." There may be nothing more contrary to our sensibility than *these* safety measures of Indian morality. The third edict, for example (*Avadana-Shastra* I), the edict "on unclean vegetables," commands that the only nourishment allowed to the chandala must be garlic and onions, in consideration of the fact that the holy writ forbids that they be brought grain or seed-bearing fruits, or that they be given *water* or fire. The same edict declares that the water they need may be taken neither from rivers nor springs nor ponds, but only from the entries to swamps and from hollows made by animals' hooves. Furthermore, the chandalas are forbidden to wash their clothes or *to wash themselves*, for the water which is provided to them as a favor may be used only to quench their thirst. Finally, it is forbidden for the shudra women to attend chandala women in birth, and similarly even for chandala women themselves to *attend each other* in birth . . .

—The success of such policing of sanitation was not long in coming: murderous plagues, horrible sexually transmitted diseases, and consequently the "law of the knife," prescribing circumcision for the male children and the removal of the inner labia for the females.—Manu himself says: "The chandalas are the fruit of adultery, incest and crime" (this is the *necessary* consequence of the concept of breeding). "For clothing they shall have nothing but rags from corpses; for dishes, broken pots; for ornament, old iron; for worship, nothing but the evil spirits; they shall wander without rest from one place to the next. It is forbidden to them to write from left to right or to use their right hand in writing: the use of the right hand and the left-to-right is reserved exclusively for the *virtuous*, for the people of *race*."—

52. A chandala is defined in *The Laws of Manu* as a child of a man from the shudra caste and a woman from the priestly (Brahmin) caste. More generally, a chandala is an outcaste or untouchable.

4

These provisions are instructive enough: in them we have, on the one hand, *Aryan* humanity, completely pure and primordial—we learn that the concept of "pure blood" is the very opposite of an innocuous concept.[53] On the other hand, it becomes clear in *which* people hatred, chandala hatred against this "humanity" became eternal, where it became religion, became *genius* . . . From this point of view, the Gospels are a document of utmost importance; the Book of Enoch, even more so.[54] —Christianity, which springs from a Jewish root and is understandable only as a growth on this soil, represents the *countermovement* to every morality of breeding, of race, of privilege—it is the *anti-Aryan* religion par excellence: Christianity as the revaluation of all Aryan values, the triumph of chandala values, the gospel preached to the poor, the lowly, the general rebellion of all the oppressed, the miserable, the failures, the unfortunates, against "race"—the immortal chandala vengeance as a *religion of love* . . .

5

The morality of *breeding* and the morality of *taming* are perfectly worthy of each other in the means they employ: we may posit as a supreme principle that in order to *make* morality, one must have the unconditional will to its opposite. This is the great, *uncanny* problem which I have pursued the farthest: the psychology of those who "improve" humanity. A small and basically modest fact first gave me access to this problem: the so-called *pia fraus* [pious fraud], the inheritance of all philosophers and priests who have "improved" humanity. Neither Manu nor Plato nor Confucius, nor the Jewish and Christian teachers, have ever doubted their

53. Whatever Nietzsche may mean by "Aryan," he wishes to distinguish his own position from the anti-Semitism he finds around him. For instance, in March 1887 he responds to Theodor Fritsch, the editor of the *Antisemitic Correspondence* and a friend of his sister and brother-in-law, by objecting to "this awful desire that dilettantes have to offer their opinion on the value of people and races . . . the constant and absurd falsifications and tidying up of the vague notions 'German,' 'Semitic,' 'Aryan,' 'Christian'—all this could in the end make me seriously angry . . ." (*Sämtliche Briefe*, ed. Colli and Montinari, VIII, p. 51). This letter and the one cited above in note 51 appear to be the only two occurrences in Nietzsche's correspondence of the adjective "Aryan."

54. The Book of Enoch, one of the Pseudepigrapha of the Hebrew Bible, describes a series of apocalyptic and cosmological visions.

right to lie. They haven't doubted that they had *very different rights* as well . . . To put it in a formula, one could say: *all* the means by which humanity was to have been made moral up to now were *immoral* from the bottom up.—

What the Germans Are Missing

1

Among Germans today, just *having* spirit[55] is not enough: you also have to *take* it, *take it upon yourself* to take it . . .

Maybe I know the Germans; maybe I'm even allowed to tell them a couple of truths. The new Germany[56] represents a great quantity of inherited and instilled ability, so that for a while it is allowed to spend its piled-up store of strength, and even to be a spendthrift. It is *not* a high culture that has become master with the new Germany, much less a delicate taste, a noble "beauty" of the instincts; instead, it is virtues more *manly* than any other European country can show. A lot of fortitude and self-respect, a lot of sureness in social interaction and in the reciprocity of duties, a lot of diligence, a lot of endurance—and an inherited restraint which needs to be goaded rather than braked. Let me add that here one still obeys without being humiliated by obedience . . . And no one despises his opponent . . .

You can see that I want to be fair to the Germans: I wouldn't like to be untrue to myself in this—so I also have to raise my objection to them. One pays a high price for coming to power: power *stupefies* . . . The Germans—they were once called the nation of thinkers: are they still thinking today at all?—The Germans are bored with the spirit now, the Germans mistrust the spirit now, politics swallows up all seriousness about really spiritual things.—*Deutschland, Deutschland über alles*[57]: I'm afraid that was the end of German philosophy . . . "Are there German philosophers? Are there German poets? Are there any *good* German books?" I'm asked when I go abroad. I blush, but with the bravery that's typical of me even in hopeless cases, I answer: "Yes: *Bismarck!*"—Could I even admit what books are read today? . . . Damned instinct of mediocrity!—

55. On the word *Geist*, see above, "Epigrams and Arrows," §6.

56. Bismarck's German Empire, established in 1871.

57. "Germany, Germany above all": title of best-known poem by A. H. Hoffmann von Fallersleben (1841), used as the national anthem since 1922.

2

—What the German spirit *could* be—who hasn't had melancholy thoughts about that! But this people has voluntarily stupefied itself for almost a thousand years: nowhere have the two great European narcotics, alcohol and Christianity, been abused more viciously. Recently they've gotten still another narcotic, which is enough on its own to give the death-blow to all refined and keen suppleness of the spirit: music, our constipated, constipating German music.—

How much tiresome heaviness, lameness, humidity, dressing-gown stupor—how much *beer* there is in the German intellect! How can it possibly be that young men who devote their existence to the most spiritual goals don't feel in themselves the first instinct of spirituality, *the spirit's instinct of self-preservation*—and drink beer? . . . The alcoholism of scholarly youths may not call their scholarliness into question—one can even be a great scholar without any spirit—but it's still a problem in every other respect.—Is there anywhere you wouldn't find the gentle degeneration that beer brings about in the spirit? I once put my finger on such a degeneration, in a case that has almost become famous—the degeneration of our foremost German free spirit, the *clever* David Strauss, into the author of a beerhall gospel and "new faith" . . . It wasn't for nothing that he'd made his vow to the "lovely brunette" in verses—fidelity till death . . .[58]

3

—I was talking about the German spirit: about how it's getting coarser, how it's getting shallower. Is that enough?—At bottom it's something completely different that scares me: the way German seriousness, German depth, German *passion* in spiritual things are deteriorating more and more. The fervor has changed, not just the intellectuality.—Here and there I come in contact with German universities: what an atmosphere prevails among their scholars, what a barren spirituality that has grown

58. David Strauss (1808–1874): controversial author who argued in his *Life of Jesus* (1835) that Christianity was based on myths, and proposed in *The Old and the New Faith* (1872) that Christianity had to be replaced with a "new faith" based on art and scientific knowledge. Nietzsche criticizes Strauss for accepting the modern myth of progress in "David Strauss, The Confessor and Writer," the first of his *Untimely Meditations* (1873). The "lovely brunette" is beer.

self-satisfied and lukewarm! It would be a deep misunderstanding to hold up German science as an objection to me on this point—and furthermore, it would be proof that one hadn't read a single word I have written. For seventeen years I have not tired of shedding light on the *de-spiritualizing* influence of our contemporary science business. The burdensome serfdom to which the immense range of the sciences condemns every individual today is the main reason why natures with fuller, richer, *deeper* constitutions can no longer find any suitable education *or educators.* Nothing makes our culture suffer *more* than the oversupply of arrogant loafers and fragments of humanity; our universities, *despite* themselves, are really the greenhouses for this sort of stunting of spiritual instincts. And all of Europe already has some idea of this—the grandiose politics don't fool anyone . . . More and more, Germany is becoming the *flatlands* of Europe.—

I am still *looking* for a German with whom *I* could be serious—and how much more for one with whom I might be cheerful!—*Twilight of the Idols*: ah, who today could grasp from *what sort of seriousness* a hermit is recovering here![59] —Our cheerfulness is what is hardest to understand about us . . .

4

Let's size it up: not only is it obvious that German culture is in decline, but there is also no lack of a sufficient reason for this decline. You can't ultimately spend more than you have—that's true of individuals, it's true of peoples. If you spend yourself on power, on grandiose politics, on economics, world trade, parliaments, military interests—if you give away in *this* direction the quantity of understanding, seriousness, will and self-overcoming that you *are*, then this quantity isn't available in the other direction. Culture and the state—let's not fool ourselves about this—are antagonists: the "cultured state"[60] is just a modern idea. One lives off the other, one prospers at the expense of the other. All the great ages of culture are ages of decline, politically speaking: what is great in the cultural sense has been unpolitical, even *anti-political* . . . Goethe's heart opened

59. As in §3 of "Morality as Anti-Nature," the remark makes more sense if we substitute the original title of this book, *A Psychologist's Idleness*.

60. *Kultur-Staat*: a common German expression for a country that possesses higher culture.

up at the phenomenon of Napoleon—it *closed* up at the "Wars of Liberation" . . .[61]

At the very moment when Germany emerges as a great power, France achieves new importance as a *cultural power.* A lot of new seriousness, a lot of new spiritual *passion* has already emigrated to Paris. The question of pessimism, for example, the question of Wagner, virtually all psychological and artistic questions are considered there in an incomparably more refined and profound way than in Germany—the Germans are simply *incapable* of this kind of seriousness.—In the history of European culture, the rise of the "*Reich*" means one thing above all: a *shift of the center of gravity.* It's already known everywhere that in what really counts—and what really counts is still culture—the Germans are no longer worth considering. We're asked: can you show us even a single spirit who *makes a difference* to Europe? In the way your Goethe, your Hegel, your Heinrich Heine, your Schopenhauer did?—There is no end of amazement at the fact that there is not a single German philosopher anymore.—

5

The whole system of higher education in Germany has lost what is most important: the *end*, as well as the *means* to the end. The fact that education, *cultivation*[62] is itself the goal—and *not* "the *Reich*"—that this goal requires *educators*—and *not* prep-school[63] teachers and university scholars—this has been forgotten . . . We need educators *who are themselves educated*, elevated, noble spirits who prove themselves at every moment, prove themselves by what they say and what they keep quiet, cultured spirits grown ripe and *sweet—not* the scholarly boors that prep schools and universities offer as "higher wet nurses" to the youth today. Not counting some most exceptional exceptions, the educators *are missing*, the *first* prerequisite for education is missing: *that* is why German culture is in decline.—One of those rarest exceptions of all is my honorable

61. Goethe met Napoleon at the Congress of Erfurt in 1803 and kept aloof from the anti-Napoleonic Wars of Liberation in 1813. For more on Goethe, see especially "Raids of an Untimely Man," §§49–51, below.

62. *Bildung*: the formation of a human being into a mature, refined, and cultured whole.

63. The word translated "prep school" in this section is *Gymnasium*, a form of secondary school that provides nine years of rigorous preparation for university studies. The "higher schools" are secondary schools in general.

friend Jacob Burckhardt, in Basel: to him, above all, Basel owes its preeminence in the humanities.[64]—

What the "higher schools" of Germany actually achieve is a brutal breaking-in, with the purpose of making a huge number of young men usable, *exploitable* for service to the state with the least possible waste of time. "Higher education" and the *huge number*—that's contradictory to begin with. Higher education always belongs to the exception: one must be privileged in order to have the right to such a high privilege. No great, no beautiful thing can ever be a common possession: *pulchrum est paucorum hominum* [the beautiful belongs to the few].—

What is *causing* the decline of German culture? The fact that "higher education" is not a *prerogative* anymore—the democratism of a "cultivation" that has become "common," become *commonplace* . . . Let's not forget that military privileges[65] formally require the *overuse* of the higher schools, that is, their ruination.—Nobody is free anymore in today's Germany to give his children a noble education: our "higher" schools are all geared towards the most questionable mediocrity in their teachers, in their teaching plans, in their teaching goals. And everything is dominated by an indecent haste, as if something were spoiled when a young man, twenty-three years of age, isn't "done" yet, doesn't yet know an answer to the "main question": *which* profession, *which* calling?—Human beings of a higher type, if I may say so, don't like "callings," precisely because they know that they are called . . . They have time, they take their time, they don't think at all about getting "done"—at the age of thirty, when it comes to high culture, one is a beginner, a child.—Our overfilled prep schools, our overloaded, stupefied prep-school teachers are a scandal: to defend these conditions, as the professors at Heidelberg recently did—for this, one may have *motivations*—but reasons there are none.

6

—In order not to be untrue to my type, which is a *yes-saying* type and deals in contradictions and criticism only indirectly, only unwillingly, I

64. The well-known cultural historian Burckhardt (1818–1897) was Nietzsche's colleague when Nietzsche taught philology at the University of Basel from 1869 to 1879. Nietzsche made it a point of pride to send the first printed copy of *Twilight of the Idols* to Burckhardt. On Burckhardt, see also below, "What I Owe to the Ancients," §4.

65. Exemptions from military service accorded to students.

will set forth right away the three tasks for which educators are required. One must learn to *see*, one must learn to *think*, one must learn to *speak* and *write*. The goal of all three tasks is a noble culture.—

To learn to *see*—to accustom the eye to composure, to patience, to letting things come to it; to put off judgment, to learn to walk around all sides of the individual case and comprehend it from all sides. That is the *first* preliminary schooling in spirituality: *not* to react to a stimulus right away, but to keep in check the instinct to restrict and exclude. Learning to *see*, as I understand it, is almost what is unphilosophically termed willpower: what is essential here is precisely *not* to "will," to be *able* to put off a decision. All unspirituality, all commonness is based on the inability to resist a stimulus—one *has* to react, one follows every impulse. In many cases, such a compulsion is already sickliness, decline, a symptom of exhaustion—almost everything that unphilosophical coarseness calls vice is simply this physiological inability *not* to react.—

A useful application of having learned to see: one will have become, as a *learner* in general, slow, suspicious, and resistant. It will be with a hostile composure that one will let strange *new* things of every sort make their initial approach—one will draw one's hand back from them. Leaving all one's doors open, submissively flopping belly-down before every little fact, a constant readiness to jump in and interfere, to *plunge into* other people and other things, in short, the celebrated "objectivity" of modern times is bad taste, is *ignoble* par excellence.—

7

Learning to *think*: there is no concept of this in our schools anymore. At the universities themselves, even among real scholars of philosophy, logic as theory, as practice, as *craft* is starting to die out. Read German books: not even the most remote recollection of the fact that thinking needs a technique, a plan of study, a will to mastery—that thinking wants to be learned as dancing wants to be learned, *as* a kind of dancing . . . Who among Germans still knows from experience that refined shudder which *light feet* in spiritual matters send through all one's muscles?—Wooden clumsiness in spiritual behavior, grasping with a coarsely grabbing hand—that is so German that foreigners take it for the essence of Germany as such. The German has no *fingers* for nuances . . . The mere fact that the Germans have been able to put up with their philosophers, especially that most misshapen concept-cripple there ever was, the *great* Kant, gives you a pretty good idea of German grace.—For we cannot subtract

dancing in any form from *noble education*, the ability to dance with feet, with concepts, with words: need I add that one must also be able to dance with the *pen*—that one must learn to *write?*—But at this point, I would become a complete riddle for German readers . . .

Raids of an Untimely Man

1

My impossible ones.—*Seneca*: or virtue's bullfighter.[66] —*Rousseau*: or the return to nature *in impuribus naturalibus* [in natural uncleanliness].[67] —*Schiller*: or the moral trumpeter of Säckingen.[68] —*Dante*: or the hyena that *composes poetry* in graves.[69] —*Kant*: or "cant" as intelligible character.[70] —*Victor Hugo*: or the lighthouse at the sea of senselessness.[71] —*Liszt*: or the school of velocity—in running after women.[72] —*George Sand*: or *lactea*

66. Seneca (ca. 4 B.C.–ca. A.D.65): Roman Stoic essayist and author of bloody tragedies, born in Spain.

67. Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778): highly influential philosopher and novelist who denounced existing civilization and praised "the noble savage." On Rousseau, see also §48 below.

68. Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller (1759–1805): influential German dramatist, poet, and historian. *The Trumpeter of Säckingen* (1854), by Joseph von Scheffel (1826–1886), is a humorous story in verse that was turned into an opera by Viktor Nessler (1841–1890). On Schiller, see also §16 below.

69. Dante Alighieri (1265–1321): author of *The Divine Comedy*, the famous poem about the afterlife.

70. Kant's family was believed (erroneously) to have descended from a Scottish "Cant" family; here Nietzsche uses the English word "cant." "Intelligible character" in Kant refers to the subject as a perfectly autonomous thing in itself, as opposed to empirical character, or the observable personality as it appears in space and time (*Critique of Pure Reason* A546–554/B574–582, *Critique of Practical Reason* Ak. 97). For a related remark on Kant see above, "The Four Great Errors," §8.

71. Victor Hugo (1802–1885): famous French poet and novelist. Although Nietzsche's quip may sound like praise, he usually denounces Hugo as an inauthentic and pompous Romantic, a literary counterpart to Wagner. Here Nietzsche may be alluding to Hugo's period of exile on an island, or to his theological ideas, which present God as an ocean of light and love.

72. Franz Liszt (1811–1886): the composer and renowned virtuoso pianist had a number of unconventional relationships with women. From 1835 to 1839 he lived with the Comtesse d'Agoult; one of their three children, Cosima (1837–1930), eventually became the wife of Richard Wagner (1813–1883). Both Richard and Cosima Wagner were important influences on the young Nietzsche, but he later repudiated the Wagnerian aesthetic and world view (see e.g. §30 below). "The School of Velocity" is the title of a famous exercise book for the piano by Carl Czerny.

ubertas [milky abundance]—in our own language, the dairy cow with the "beautiful style."[73]—*Michelet*: or enthusiasm that rips off its jacket.[74]—*Carlyle*: or pessimism as undigested lunch.[75]—*John Stuart Mill*: or clarity as an insult.[76]—*The Goncourt brothers*: or the two Ajaxes in battle with Homer—music by Offenbach.[77]—*Zola*: or "the joy of stinking."[78]—

2

Renan.[79]—Theology, or the corruption of reason by "original sin" (Christianity). Evidence: Renan, who as soon as he risks a yes or no of a more general sort, misses the point with embarrassing regularity. For instance, he'd like to unite *la science* and *la noblesse* [science and nobility]; but *la science* belongs to democracy, that's just a palpable fact. With no small ambition, he wants to represent an aristocracy of the spirit: but at the same time, he falls on his knees before the opposite doctrine, the *évangile des humbles* [gospel of the humble]—and not just his knees . . . what use is all your free-thinking, your modernity, your mockery and squirrely flexibility if in your guts you're still a Christian, a Catholic, and even a priest! Renan has his clever means of seduction, just like a Jesuit or

73. George Sand (pseudonym of Amandine Dupin, Baronne Dudevant, 1804–1876): prolific French novelist. On Sand, see also §6 below.

74. Jules Michelet (1798–1874): French historian, author of monumental histories of France and of the French Revolution, known for his passionate and patriotic style.

75. Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881): Scottish Romantic essayist who advocated heroic authoritarianism. On Carlyle, see also §12 below.

76. John Stuart Mill (1806–1873): influential English utilitarian and empiricist philosopher.

77. Edmond (1822–1896) and Jules (1830–1870) de Goncourt: French novelists. Ajax: legendary Greek warrior celebrated in Homer's *Iliad*. Jacques Offenbach (1819–1890): composer of comic operas. In their *Journal* entry for October 22, 1866, the Goncourts declare that they prefer Hugo to Homer. On the Goncourts, see also §7 below.

78. Émile Zola (1840–1902): French naturalist novelist who described the ugly conditions of working-class life.

79. Ernest Renan (1823–1892): originally trained for the priesthood, Renan abandoned the church to become a rationalist historian specializing in Judaism and Christianity. He was the author of an anti-supernatural *Life of Jesus* (1863) and of philosophical dialogues.

father confessor; his spirituality isn't free of the fat priestly smirk—like all priests, he is dangerous only when he loves. No one is his equal in life-threatening adoration . . . This spirit of Renan, a spirit that *enervates*, is one more disaster for poor, sick France with its sick will.—

3

Sainte-Beuve.[80] —Nothing manly about him; full of petty anger against all manly spirits. Roams around, refined, curious, bored, prying—a female at bottom, with a female thirst for revenge and female sensuality. As a psychologist, a genius at *médisance* [malicious gossip]; inexhaustibly rich in means for this; no one understands better how to mix poison in his praise. Plebeian in his most basic instincts, and related to Rousseau's *ressentiment*: *consequently* a romantic—for underneath all *romantisme*, Rousseau's instinct for revenge is grunting and grasping.[81] A revolutionary, but kept pretty well in check by fear. Has no freedom in the face of anything strong (public opinion, the academy, the court, even Port-Royal).[82] Embittered against everything great in human beings and in things, against everything that believes in itself. Enough of a poet and semi-female to experience greatness as power; always squirming, like the proverbial worm, because he always feels stepped on. As a critic, without standards, stability, or backbone, with the cosmopolitan libertine's taste for diversity, but without the courage even to admit his own *libertinage*. As a historian, without philosophy, without the *power* of philosophical vision—so he turns down the task of judging in every important matter, holding up "objectivity" as his mask. He behaves differently when it comes to every question in which the highest court of appeal is a refined, experienced taste: there he really has the courage for himself, takes pleasure in himself—there he is a *master*.—In some respects, a forerunner of Baudelaire.[83] —

80. Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve (1804–1869), French literary critic and historian.

81. On *ressentiment*, see above, "The Problem of Socrates," §7, and below, "What I Owe to the Ancients," §4.

82. The center of the Jansenists, who held that all salvation is an unmerited gift to sinful human beings. Sainte-Beuve was the author of a history of Jansenism.

83. Charles Baudelaire (1821–1867): renowned French symbolist poet and critic. Sainte-Beuve and Baudelaire were correspondents, and Nietzsche had explored their relation in Sainte-Beuve's *Cahiers* (1876), a copy of which he owned.

4

The *Imitatio Christi*[84] is one of those books I can't hold in my hands without being physically repelled: it gives off a *parfum* [perfume] of the Eternal Feminine[85] for which one has to be French—or a Wagnerian . . . This holy man has a way of talking about love that makes even Parisian women curious.—I'm told that that *cleverest* of Jesuits, Auguste Comte, who wanted to lead the French to Rome by the *detour* of science, was inspired by this book.[86] I believe it: "the religion of the heart" . . .

5

G. Eliot.[87]—They've gotten rid of the Christian God, and now they think they have to hold onto Christian morality all the more: that's *English* logic, we don't want to blame it on little moral females *à la* Eliot. In England, for every little emancipation from theology, you have to make yourself respectable again as a moral fanatic in the most frightening way. Over there, that's the *penance* one pays.—

Things are different for the rest of us. If you give up Christian faith, you pull the *right* to Christian morality out from under your feet. This morality is simply *not* self-evident: one has to bring this point home again and again, despite the English dimwits. Christianity is a system, a view of things that is conceived as a connected *whole*. If you break off a major concept from it, faith in God, you break up the whole as well: there are no necessities left to hold onto anymore. Christianity presupposes that human beings do not know, *cannot* know, what is good and evil for them: they believe in God, who is the only one who knows it. Christian morality is a commandment; its origin is transcendent; it is beyond all criticism, all right to criticism; it is true only if God is truth—it stands and falls with faith in God.—

84. *The Imitation of Christ*: a work of mystical asceticism by Thomas à Kempis (1379–1471).

85. *Das Ewig-Weibliche*: a well-known expression from the final scene of Goethe's *Faust*, Part II.

86. Auguste Comte (1798–1857): French positivist philosopher and social theorist for whom humanity was the proper object of religious devotion.

87. George Eliot (pseudonym of Mary Ann Evans, 1819–1880): the well-known English novelist was also the translator of Ludwig Feuerbach's anti-religious *The Essence of Christianity* and David Strauss' secular *Life of Jesus* (on Strauss, see above, "What the Germans Are Missing," §2).

If the English actually believe they know on their own, "intuitively," what is good and evil, if they consequently think they no longer need Christianity as a guarantee of morality, this itself is just the *consequence* of the domination of Christian value judgments, and an expression of the *strength* and *depth* of this domination: so that the origin of English morality has been forgotten, so that the highly conditional status of its right to exist is no longer sensed. For the English, morality is not yet a problem . . .

6

George Sand.—I read the first *Lettres d'un voyageur*[88]: like everything that stems from Rousseau, false, contrived, full of hot air, overdone. I can't stand this motley wallpaper style, any more than the vulgar ambition to have generous feelings. Of course, what's worst is this female flirtation with manly things, with the manners of rude boys.—How cold she must have been in all this, this insufferable authoress! She wound herself up like a clock—and wrote . . . Cold, like Hugo, like Balzac, like all romantics as soon as they wrote poetry! And how pleased with herself she must have been as she lay there, this fertile writing-cow, who had something German in the bad sense about her, just like Rousseau himself, her master, and who became possible anyway only with the decline of French taste!—But Renan worships her . . .

7

Morality for psychologists.—Don't do tabloid psychology![89] Never observe *in order* to observe! That leads to a false perspective, squinting, stilted, and overdone. Experiencing because you *want* to experience—that doesn't work. You *mustn't* look at yourself during an experience; every such look becomes the "evil eye." A born psychologist instinctively avoids seeing in order to see; the same goes for the born painter. He never works "from nature"—he trusts his instinct, his *camera obscura*,[90] to sift

88. *A Traveler's Letters* (1837).

89. *Kolportage-Psychologie*: literally, the sort of psychology that is sold door to door. The term has the connotations of cheap sensationalism and needless prying that tabloid newspapers have today.

90. An enclosure with a small opening in one side, through which light enters and forms an image on the opposite side. (A photographic camera is built around a *camera obscura*.)

through and express the "case," "nature," the "experience." . . . The *universal* is what first comes into his consciousness, the conclusion, the result: he is not familiar with that willful process of abstracting from the individual case.—

What happens if you do otherwise? For example, if you do tabloid psychology in the manner of Parisian *romanciers* [novelists] great and small? *That* approach lies in wait for reality, so to speak; *that* approach brings home a handful of curiosities every evening . . . But just look at what comes of this in the end—a pile of scribbles, a mosaic at best, in any case something added together, something restless, with loud colors. The worst in this genre is what the Goncourts produce: they can't put together three sentences that don't simply pain the eye, the *psychologist's* eye.—

Nature, in the judgment of an artist, is not a model. It exaggerates, it distorts, it leaves gaps. Nature is *chance*. Studying "from nature" seems like a bad sign to me: it betrays submission, weakness, fatalism—lying in the dust like this in front of *petits faits* [petty facts] is unworthy of a *complete* artist. To see *what is*—that's typical of a different kind of spirit, the *anti-artistic*, the factual kind. One must know *who* one is . . .

8

Towards a psychology of the artist.—For there to be art, for there to be any aesthetic activity and observation, one physiological prerequisite is indispensable: *intoxication*.[91] Intoxication must already have heightened the sensitivity of the whole machine: otherwise, no art will be forthcoming. All kinds of intoxication, as different as their causes may be, have this power: above all, the intoxication of sexual excitement, that oldest and most primordial form of intoxication. Likewise the intoxication that follows all great cravings, all strong emotions; the intoxication of the festival, of the competition, of daredevilry, of victory, of every extreme commotion; the intoxication of cruelty; the intoxication of destruction; intoxication due to certain meteorological influences, such as the intoxication of spring; or under the influence of narcotics; finally, the intoxication of the will, the intoxication of an overloaded and swollen will.—

What is essential in intoxication is the feeling of increased strength and fullness. This feeling leads us to donate to things, to *make* them take from us, to force ourselves on them—this process is called *idealizing*. Let's get

91. *Rausch*: this word (compare the English "rush") could also be translated as frenzy, ecstasy, rapture, or transport.

rid of a prejudice at this point: idealizing does *not* consist, as is commonly thought, in taking away or subtracting what is small and incidental. Instead, what is decisive is an immense drive to *bring out* the principal traits, so that the others disappear in the process.

9

In this state, your own fullness leads you to enrich everything: whatever you see, whatever you will, you see as swollen, packed, vigorous, overloaded with strength. In this state you transform things until they are mirrors of your own power—until they reflect your perfection. This *necessity* to transform things into perfection is—art. Even everything that you are not turns into self-enjoyment; in art, human beings enjoy themselves as perfection.—

It would be permissible to imagine an opposite state, a species of instinctive anti-artistry—a way of being that would impoverish all things, thin them down, make them tubercular. And in fact, history is rich in such anti-artists, such people with starved lives—who necessarily have to clutch at things, emaciate them, make them *thinner.* For example, this is the case with the genuine Christian, Pascal for example: there just *is no such thing* as a Christian who is also an artist . . . I hope no one will be childish and bring up Raphael as an objection to me, or some homeopathic nineteenth-century Christians: Raphael said yes, Raphael *did* yes, and consequently Raphael was no Christian . . .

10

What is the meaning of the opposed concepts *Apollinian* and *Dionysian* which I introduced into aesthetics, both taken as kinds of intoxication?[92] —

Apollinian intoxication keeps the eye excited, above all, so that it gets the power of vision. The painter, the sculptor, the epic poet are visionaries par excellence. In the Dionysian state, however, the whole system of emotions is excited and intensified: so it vents all its means of expression at once and brings out the power of representing, imitating, transfiguring, transforming, every sort of mimicry and acting, all at once. The essential

92. In *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), §§1–2, Nietzsche presents intoxication as the force behind "Dionysian" art—but assigns "Apollinian" art to the world of dreams, rather than the realm of intoxication.

thing is always how easy the metamorphosis is, the incapacity *not* to react (much as with certain hysterics, who also jump into *any* role at the least provocation). For Dionysian human beings, it is impossible not to understand any suggestion; they never overlook a sign of emotion, they have the instinct for understanding and guessing the answer in the highest degree, just as they possess the highest degree of the art of communication. They penetrate every skin, every emotion; they constantly transform themselves.—

Music, as we understand it today, is also a total excitation and discharge of the emotions, but it is just the leftover of a much fuller expressive world of emotion, a mere *residue* of Dionysian histrionics. In order to make music possible as a separate art, we have immobilized a number of senses, the muscular sense above all (relatively, at least: for all rhythm still appeals to our muscles to a certain degree), so that people no longer immediately imitate and represent with their bodies everything they feel. Nevertheless, *that* is the truly Dionysian normal state, or at least the primordial state; music is the specialization of this state, a specialization which has been achieved slowly, at the expense of the most closely related faculties.

11

The actor, the mime, the dancer, the musician, the lyric poet are fundamentally related in their instincts and are intrinsically one, but they have gradually been specialized and separated from each other—even to the point of contradicting each other. The lyric poet remained united the longest to the musician; the actor, to the dancer.—

The *architect* represents neither a Dionysian nor an Apollinian state: here is the great act of will, the will that moves mountains, the intoxication of great will which longs for art. The most powerful people have always inspired architects; the architect was always susceptible to the influence of power. In a building, pride is supposed to make itself visible, victory over heaviness, the will to power; architecture is a kind of oratory of power in forms, sometimes persuading or even flattering, sometimes simply commanding. The highest feeling of power and sureness finds expression in that which has a *grand style*. Power which needs no additional proof; which disdains to please anyone; which does not easily give answers; which is unaware of any witnesses to it; which lives without any consciousness that anything contradicts it; which rests in *itself*, fatalistically, a law among laws: *that* speaks of itself in the grand style.—

12

I read the life of Thomas Carlyle, this unwitting and unwilling farce, this heroic-moralistic interpretation of dyspeptic states.—Carlyle, a man of strong words and attitudes, a rhetorician by *necessity*, who is constantly irritated by the longing for a strong faith *and* the feeling of his own incapacity for it (in this, a typical romantic!). The longing for a strong faith is *not* proof of a strong faith, to the contrary. *If one has* a strong faith, one can afford the beautiful luxury of skepticism: one is sure enough, secure enough, constrained enough for it. Carlyle deafens something in himself with the *fortissimo* of the honors he pays to people of strong faith and with his fury against those who are less single-minded: he *needs* noise. A constant, passionate *dishonesty* with himself—that's what is proper to him, that's what makes him be and remain interesting.—Of course, in England he's admired precisely on account of his honesty . . . Well, that's English; and considering that the English are the people of consummate "cant,"[93] it's not only understandable but even fitting. At bottom, Carlyle is an English atheist who makes it a point of honor *not* to be one.

13

Emerson.[94]—Much more enlightened, venturesome, complex, refined than Carlyle; above all, happier . . . The sort of man who instinctively feeds only on ambrosia, who leaves behind whatever is indigestible in things. In comparison to Carlyle, a man of taste.—Carlyle, who loved him very much, nevertheless said of him: "he does not give *us* enough to chew on"—which he may have been right to say, but not to Emerson's disadvantage.—Emerson has that good-natured and brilliant cheerfulness that deters all seriousness; he simply does not know how old he already is and how young he will still be—he could say of himself, in the words of Lope de Vega, "*yo me sucedo a mi mismo*."[95] His spirit always finds reasons to be content and even thankful; and on occasion he approaches the cheerful transcendence of that worthy man who came back from an amorous tryst

93. Nietzsche uses the English word.

94. Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882): the American transcendentalist essayist and poet maintained a long friendship with Carlyle. Emerson was consistently one of Nietzsche's favorite writers.

95. "I am my own successor." Lope de Vega (1562–1635): prolific and well-known Spanish poet and dramatist.

tamquam re bene gesta [as if the deed had been well done]. "*Ut desint vires,*" he said thankfully, "*tamen est laudanda voluptas.*"[96]—

14

Anti-Darwin.—As for the famous "struggle for *life*," for the time being it seems to me more asserted than proved. It happens, but as the exception; the overall aspect of life is *not* a state of need and hunger, but instead, wealth, bounty, even absurd squandering—where there is struggle, it is a struggle for *power* . . . One should not confuse Malthus with nature.[97] —

But supposing that there is such a struggle—and in fact, it does happen—its result is unfortunately the opposite of what Darwin's school wants, maybe the opposite of what one *might* want along with the Darwinians: for it occurs at the expense of the strong, the privileged, the happy exceptions. Species do *not* grow more perfect: the weak become the masters of the strong, again and again—because they are the great majority, and also *cleverer* . . . Darwin forgot intelligence [*Geist*] (that's English for you!), *the weak have more intelligence* . . . One has to need intelligence in order to get intelligence—one loses it if one no longer needs it. Anyone who has strength gets rid of intelligence ("Let it go!" they think today in Germany, "the *Reich* will still be ours" . . .[98]). By intelligence, as you can see, I understand caution, patience, stealth, deception, great self-control, and all "mimicry"[99] (a large part of so-called virtue belongs in the last category).

15

Casuistry of psychologists.—There's someone who knows human beings: what is his real purpose in studying them? He wants to get little

96. "Though the power is lacking, the lust is to be praised." The original saying (Ovid, *Epistulae Ex Ponto* III, 4, 79) has "will" (*voluntas*) rather than "lust" (*voluptas*).

97. Thomas Malthus (1766–1834): English economist known for his view that population tends to increase faster than its means of sustenance. His views influenced Darwin's formulation of the principle of natural selection.

98. A quotation from Luther's famous hymn "A Mighty Fortress is Our God"—where *Reich* refers to the kingdom of heaven, rather than to the German Empire, and "it" is the things of this world.

99. Nietzsche uses the English word. Mimicry is an important type of evolutionary adaptation in which one species imitates another.

advantages over them, or big ones—he's a politician! . . . That one over there also knows human beings; and you say he's not in it for himself at all, that he's a great "impersonal" type. Take a closer look! Maybe he wants an even *worse* advantage: to feel superior to humanity, to be able to look down on it, not to confuse himself with it anymore. This "impersonal" type *despises* human beings: and the first type is the more humane species, whatever appearances may say. At least he puts himself on a par with humans, he puts himself *amidst* them . . .

16

The *psychological tact* of the Germans seems to me to be called into question by a whole series of cases which my modesty prevents me from tallying up. But one case gives me an especially great opportunity to prove my thesis: I hold a grudge against the Germans for making such a mistake about Kant and his "backdoor philosophy," as I call it—that was *not* the paradigm of intellectual integrity.—The other thing I can't stand to hear is the notorious "and": the Germans say "Goethe *and* Schiller"—I'm afraid they even say "Schiller and Goethe" . . . Don't they *know* this Schiller yet?[100] —There are even worse "ands"; with my own ears, although only among university professors, I have heard "Schopenhauer *and* Hartmann"[101] . . .

17

The most spiritual human beings, if we suppose that they are the most courageous, also experience by far the most painful tragedies: but for this very reason they honor life, because it opposes them with all the force of its opposition.

18

On the "intellectual conscience."—Nothing seems more rare to me today than genuine hypocrisy. I strongly suspect that this plant can't stand the

100. On Schiller, see also §1 above. On Goethe, see also §§49–51 below.

101. For Nietzsche's views on Schopenhauer, see e.g. §§21–22 below. Eduard von Hartmann (1842–1906): German systematizing philosopher, author of the massive *Philosophy of the Unconscious* (1869). For Nietzsche's view of Hartmann, see §9 of "On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life" (the second of his *Untimely Meditations*, written in 1873).

gentle air of our culture. Hypocrisy belongs to the ages of strong faith, when even if you were *forced* to display a different faith, you didn't let go of the faith you had. Today, one lets it go; or, even more frequently, one piles yet another faith on top of the first—in any case, one remains *honest*. Without a doubt, today it's possible to have a much greater number of convictions than ever before—possible, in other words allowed, in other words *harmless.* This is the origin of tolerance for oneself.—

Tolerance for oneself permits one to have several convictions: these convictions live comfortably with each other—they take care, as the whole world does today, not to compromise themselves. How do we compromise ourselves today? By being consistent. By going in a straight line. By meaning fewer than five things at once. By being authentic . . . I'm really afraid that modern humanity is simply too comfortable for certain vices: so these are just dying out. Everything evil that is due to a strong will—and maybe there is nothing evil without strength of will—degenerates, in our lukewarm air, into virtue . . . The few hypocrites I have met were imitating hypocrisy: they, like almost every tenth person today, were actors.—

19

Beautiful and ugly.—Nothing is more conditional, or let's say more *constrained*, than our feeling of beauty. Anyone who wanted to conceive of it apart from human beings' pleasure in themselves would immediately lose all ground to stand on. The "beautiful in itself" is just words, not even a concept. In the beautiful, humanity posits itself as the standard of perfection; in special cases, it worships itself in the beautiful. A species simply *cannot* do anything except say yes to itself alone like this. Its *most basic* instinct, the instinct of self-preservation and self-expansion, still shines through in such sublimities. Humanity believes that the world itself is piled with beauty—we *forget* that we are beauty's cause. We alone have endowed the world with beauty—alas, only with a very human, all-too-human beauty . . .

At bottom, human beings mirror themselves in things; they consider anything beautiful if it casts their image back to them: the judgment "beautiful" is the *vanity of their species* . . . For a little suspicion may whisper into the skeptic's ear: is the world really beautified by the mere fact that human beings take it to be beautiful? They've *humanized* it: that's all. But nothing, nothing at all guarantees to us that we, of all things, should serve as the model for the beautiful. Do any of us know what we look like in the eyes of a higher judge of taste? Outrageous, maybe? Maybe even

funny? Maybe a little arbitrary? . . . "Oh divine Dionysus, why are you pulling my ears?" Ariadne once asked her philosophical lover in one of those famous dialogues on Naxos.[102] "I find a sort of humor in your ears, Ariadne: why aren't they even longer?"

20

Nothing is beautiful, only the human being is beautiful: on this bit of naiveté rests all aesthetics, this is its *first* truth. Let's immediately add its second: nothing is as ugly as a human being in the process of *degeneration*—and that sets the limit of the domain of aesthetic judgment.—Physiologically speaking, everything ugly weakens and oppresses human beings. It reminds them of decline, danger, powerlessness; it actually makes them lose strength. You can measure the effect of the ugly with a dynamometer. Whenever human beings are depressed, they sense that something "ugly" is nearby. Their feeling of power, their will to power, their courage, their pride—it all falls with the ugly and rises with the beautiful . . .

In the one case as in the other *we draw a single conclusion*; the premises for this conclusion are piled up massively in our instincts. The ugly is understood as a signal and symptom of degeneration: whatever recalls degeneration, be it ever so remotely, causes the judgment "ugly" in us. Every sign of exhaustion, of heaviness, of age, of fatigue, every sort of unfreedom, such as a cramp or paralysis—above all, the smell, color, and shape of dissolution, of putrefaction, even if it is thinned out all the way into a symbol—all this provokes the same reaction, the value judgment "ugly." Here, a feeling of *hatred* leaps forth: whom do human beings hate here? But there is no doubt: they hate *the decline of their type*. Here, they hate from out of the deepest instincts of their species; in this hatred there

102. In Greek mythology, Ariadne helped Theseus escape from the Labyrinth which held the Minotaur. Theseus then took Ariadne with him, but left her on the island of Naxos, where the god Dionysus found her and married her. Here, Nietzsche is alluding to writings of his own on the theme of Dionysus and Ariadne—writings which were not "famous" at all, but were still unpublished at the time of the appearance of *Twilight of the Idols* in 1888. In "Ariadne's Lament," a poem from Nietzsche's *Dionysus Dithyrambs*, Dionysus says, "Be clever, Ariadne! . . . / You have small ears, you have my ears: / let a clever word into them!— / Must one not hate oneself before loving oneself? . . . / *I am your labyrinth* . . ." For another example of Nietzsche's use of Dionysus and Ariadne, see *Beyond Good and Evil*, §295.

is horror, caution, depth, a far-seeing look—it is the deepest hatred that there is. And on its account, art is *deep* . . .

21

Schopenhauer.—Schopenhauer, the last German worth considering (who is a *European* event like Goethe, like Hegel, like Heinrich Heine, and *not* just a local, "national" event), is for all psychologists a case of the first rank: namely, as a wickedly ingenious attempt to enlist, in the service of a nihilistic devaluation of life as a whole, precisely the counterexamples, the great self-affirmations of the "will to life," the forms of exuberant life. One after the other, he interpreted *art*, heroism, genius, beauty, great sympathy, knowledge, the will to truth, tragedy, as phenomena that followed from "negation," or from the need for negation of the "will"—the greatest act of psychological counterfeiting in history, with the exception of Christianity. Considered more closely, in this he is just the heir of the Christian interpretation: it's just that he knew how to *sanction* even what had been *rejected* by Christianity, the great cultural facts of humanity—sanction them in a Christian, that is, a nihilistic sense (that is, as paths to "salvation," as prefiguring "salvation," as stimulants of the need for "salvation" . . .).

22

Let me take a particular case. Schopenhauer speaks of *beauty* with a melancholy ardor—why, in the last analysis? Because he sees in it a *bridge* on which one goes farther, or gets the thirst to go farther . . . For him, beauty is momentary salvation from the "will"—and it entices us to eternal salvation . . . He prizes art especially as a savior from the "focal point of the will," from sexuality—in beauty, he sees the *negation* of the reproductive drive . . .

You amazing saint! Someone is contradicting you—I'm afraid it's nature. For what's the *purpose* of beauty anyway—beauty in tones, colors, smells, rhythmic movement in nature? What does beauty *bring out?*—Fortunately, a philosopher also contradicts him. No less an authority than the divine Plato (as Schopenhauer himself calls him) maintains a different proposition: that all beauty stimulates reproduction—that this is precisely its own proper effect, from the lowest sensuality to the highest spirituality . . .[103]

103. See Plato, *Symposium* 206b–207a.

23

Plato goes farther. He says, with an innocence for which one has to be a Greek and not a "Christian," that there would be no Platonic philosophy at all if there weren't such beautiful youths in Athens: it was the sight of them that first set the philosopher's soul into an erotic flurry and gave it no peace until it could plant the seed of all lofty things in such beautiful soil.[104] Another amazing saint!—You can't believe your ears, assuming that you trust Plato at all in the first place. At least you catch on that in Athens they philosophized *differently*, above all, publicly. Nothing is less Greek than the conceptual web-spinning of a hermit, *amor intellectualis dei* in Spinoza's style.[105] Philosophy in Plato's style would be better defined as an erotic competition, as a development and internalization of the old competitive gymnastics and of its *prerequisites* . . . What finally grew out of this philosophical eroticism of Plato? A new art form of the Greek *agon* [competition]: dialectic.—

I will also recall, *against* Schopenhauer and to Plato's credit, that all the higher culture and literature of *classical* France also grew on the soil of sexual interest. You can search everywhere in this culture for gallantry, sensuality, sexual competition, "woman"—and you will never search in vain . . .

24

L'art pour l'art [art for art's sake].—The battle against purpose in art is always a battle against the *moralizing* tendency in art, against art's subordination to morality. *L'art pour l'art* means: "to hell with morality!"—

But even this hostility betrays the overpowering force of prejudice. If we exclude the purpose of moral preaching and improving humanity from art, it by no means follows that art in general is purposeless, aimless, meaningless, in short, *l'art pour l'art*—a worm that bites its own tail. "Better no purpose at all than a moral purpose!"—so speaks mere passion. A psychologist asks, in contrast: what does all art do? Doesn't it praise? Doesn't it ennoble? Doesn't it select? Doesn't it promote? In all of this, it *strengthens* or *weakens* certain valuations . . . Is this just a side effect? An

104. See Plato, *Phaedrus* 251a–252e and *Symposium* 208e–209c. (In neither of these dialogues does Plato speak directly; his Socrates expresses these views, and in the *Symposium* Socrates ascribes them to the priestess Diotima.)

105. "Intellectual love of God": the mind's love for God, which is a manifestation of God's infinite self-love. See Spinoza, *Ethics*, Part V, Propositions 33, 35–37.

accident? Something in which the instinct of the artist plays no part? Or isn't it, instead, the prerequisite for the artist's *capabilities* . . .? Is the artist's most basic instinct directed at art, or instead at the meaning of art, at *life*? At *something desirable in life*?—Art is the great stimulant to life: how could one understand it as purposeless, as aimless, as *l'art pour l'art*?—

There is one question left over. Art also brings to light a lot that is ugly, hard, and questionable about life—doesn't it seem to spoil life in this way?—And in fact, there have been philosophers who gave it this meaning: "liberation from the will" is what Schopenhauer taught as the entire aim of art, and "creating a mood of resignation" is what he honored as the great utility of tragedy.—

But this—as I already indicated—is a pessimist's perspective and the "evil eye": one has to appeal to the artists themselves. *What do tragic artists communicate about themselves?* Isn't it precisely a condition of *fearlessness* in the face of the frightening and questionable things that they show us?—This condition itself is something desirable; whoever knows it honors it with the highest honors. He communicates it, he *has* to communicate it, as long as he is an artist, a genius at communication. Bravery and freedom of feeling in the face of a powerful enemy, a sublime catastrophe, a horrifying problem—this *victorious* condition is what tragic artists select, what they ennoble. In the face of tragedy, the warlike part of our souls celebrates its saturnalia; whoever is used to suffering, who seeks out suffering, the *heroic* human being exalts his existence with tragedy—to him alone does the tragedian present this cup of sweetest cruelty.—

25

Getting along with people, keeping an open house in one's heart—that's liberal, but nothing more than liberal. You can recognize hearts that are capable of *noble* hospitality by their many curtained windows and closed shutters: they keep their best rooms empty. But why?—Because they are waiting for guests that one does *not* "get along with" . . .

26

We no longer think highly enough of ourselves when we communicate. Our real experiences aren't chattery at all. They couldn't communicate if they wanted to. That means that there are no words for them. When we have words for something, we've already gone beyond it. In all speaking there is a grain of contempt. Language, so it seems, was invented only for

what is mediocre, common, communicable. In language, speakers *vulgarize* themselves right away.—From a morality for deaf-mutes and other philosophers.[106]

27

"This picture is enchantingly beautiful!"[107] . . . The literature-woman, dissatisfied, agitated, barren in her heart and innards, always listening with painful curiosity to the imperative which whispers, out of the depths of her constitution, "*aut liberi aut libri*" [either children or books]: the literature-woman, cultured enough to understand the voice of nature, even if it speaks Latin, but still lazy enough, enough of a goose, to say secretly to herself in French, "*je me verrai, je me lirai, je m'extasierai et je dirai: Possible, que j'aie eu tant d'esprit?*" . . .[108]

28

The "impersonal" ones get a turn to speak.—"Nothing is easier for us than being wise, patient, superior. We drip with the oil of considerateness and sympathy, we have justice to the point of absurdity, we excuse everything. For this very reason, we should be a bit stricter with ourselves; for this very reason we should, from time to time, *cultivate* a little emotion for ourselves, a little vice of an emotion. It may be a bitter pill, and in each other's company we may laugh at how it makes us look. But what's the use! We have no other way left to overcome ourselves: that is *our* asceticism, *our* penance" . . . *Becoming personal*—the virtue of the "impersonal" . . .

29

From a doctoral exam.—

"What is the task of all higher education?"—To make human beings into machines.—

106. For a more extended reflection on this topic, see *The Gay Science*, §354.

107. A line from Mozart's opera *The Magic Flute*, Act I, Scene 3.

108. "I will look at myself, I will read myself, I will fall into a rapture, and I will say: is it possible that I should have had so much wit?"—a quotation from a letter of September 18, 1769, from Ferdinando Galiani (1728–1787) to Louise d'Épinay (1726–1783). Galiani was an economist, d'Épinay a writer; both were active in Parisian intellectual circles. Here Galiani is begging d'Épinay to return a manuscript to him.

"What is the means to this end?"—They must learn to be bored.—

"How is this achieved?"—Through the concept of duty.—

"Who is the model for this?"—The philologists: they teach us how to *cram*.—

"Who is the perfect human being?"—The civil servant.—

"Which philosophy provides the supreme formula for the civil servant?"—The philosophy of Kant: the civil servant as thing in itself established as a judge over the civil servant as appearance.[109] —

30

The right to stupidity.—The tired, slowly breathing worker with the good-natured expression, who lets things go their own way: this typical figure who in this age of work (*and* of the "*Reich*"!) is found in every social class, lays claim today even to *art*, including books, newspapers above all—not to mention the beauties of nature, Italy . . . The evening man, whose "wild instincts have fallen asleep," as Faust puts it,[110] requires summer resorts, beaches, glaciers, Bayreuth . . . In such ages, art has a right to *pure foolishness*—as a sort of vacation for spirit, wit, and mind.[111] Wagner understood this. *Pure foolishness* is refreshing . . .

31

Another dietary problem.—The means by which Julius Caesar protected himself against sickliness and headaches: immense marches, the simplest form of life, uninterrupted outdoor living, constant toil[112] — these, broadly speaking, are the general preservative regulations that protect one from the extreme vulnerability of that subtle machine, working under the highest pressure, known as genius.—

109. Nietzsche plays with Kant's frequent distinction between appearances, or things insofar as they can be experienced by us, and things in themselves, or things as they may be apart from all possible experience.

110. Goethe, *Faust*, Part I, Scene 3.

111. Wagner referred to his character Parsifal as a "pure fool" (but meant a chaste fool, rather than a complete fool). Bayreuth is the home of Wagnerian opera.

112. Nietzsche is almost quoting Plutarch's *Life of Caesar* XVII, 3.

32

The immoralist speaks.—Nothing is *more* contrary to a philosopher's taste than human beings, *insofar as they wish* . . . If a philosopher sees them only in action, even if these most courageous, most cunning, most resilient animals are lost in labyrinths of distress, how worthy of admiration they seem! They are even inspiring . . . But the philosopher despises the wishing human being, as well as the human being that is "to be wished for"—and all wishes in general, all human *ideals.* If philosophers could be nihilists, it would be because they find nothingness behind all human ideals. Or not even nothingness—but only what is worthy of nothing, what is absurd, sick, cowardly, weary, all kinds of dregs from the *emptied* cup of human life . . .

Human beings, who are so worthy of honor in reality—how is it that they deserve no respect insofar as they wish? Must they atone for being so capable as a reality? Must they balance their activity, the strain on the head and the will that all activity involves, by stretching their limbs in the realm of the imaginary and absurd?—The history of humanity's wishes was up to now its *partie honteuse*[113]: one should beware of reading in it too long. What justifies humanity is its reality—it will justify it eternally. How much more valuable is the actual human being, compared with any merely wished-for, dreamed-up, stinking lie of a human being? With any *ideal* human being? . . . And only the ideal human being is contrary to the philosopher's taste.

33

The natural value of egoism.—The value of selfishness is equivalent to the physiological value of the one who has it: its value can be very great, or it can be worthless and contemptible. All individuals can be viewed in terms of whether they represent the ascending or the descending line of life. Once we have settled this question, we have a criterion for the value of their selfishness.

If they represent the ascending line, their value is in fact extraordinary—and for the sake of life as a whole, which with them takes a step *forward*, one may take extreme care to obtain and preserve the optimum conditions for them. After all, the single one, the "individual," as understood by both the masses and the philosopher up to now, is an error: the

113. Pudenda—literally, "the shameful part."

individual is nothing in himself, not an atom, not a "link in the chain," nothing merely inherited from before—he himself is still the entire, *unitary* human lineage leading up to him . . .

If individuals represent the descending development, decline, chronic degeneration, sickliness (in general, sicknesses are already phenomena that follow from decline, and *not* its causes), then they are of little value, and it is only fair that they should *take away* as little as possible from those who have turned out well. They are nothing but their parasites . . .

34

Christian and anarchist.—When the anarchist, as the mouthpiece of the *declining* levels of society, insists on "right," "justice," "equal rights" with such beautiful indignation, he is just acting under the pressure of his lack of culture, which cannot grasp *why* he really suffers, *what* he is poor in—in life . . .

A drive to find causes is powerful in him: it must be somebody's fault that he's feeling bad . . . Even his "beautiful indignation" does him good; all poor devils like to whine—it gives them a little thrill of power. Even complaints, the act of complaining, can give life the charm on account of which one can stand to live it: there is a subtle dose of *revenge* in every complaint; one blames those who are different for one's own feeling bad, and in certain circumstances even being bad, as if they were guilty of an injustice, a *prohibited* privilege. "If I'm a lowlife, you should be one too": on this logic, revolutions are built.—

Complaining is never good for anything; it comes from weakness. Whether one ascribes one's feeling bad to others or to *oneself*—the socialist does the former, the Christian, for example, the latter—makes no real difference. What is common to both and, let us add, what is *unworthy*, is that it should be someone's *fault* that one is suffering—in short, that the sufferer prescribes the honey of revenge as a cure for his own suffering. The objects of this need for revenge as a need for *pleasure* are just the incidental causes: the sufferer finds causes everywhere for venting his petty vengefulness—and if he's a Christian, to say it once again, he finds them in *himself* . . .

The Christian and the anarchist—both are *décadents*.—Even when the Christian condemns, slanders, and dirties the "*world*," he does so from the same instincts that lead the socialist worker to condemn, slander, and dirty *society*: even the "Last Judgment" is still the sweet comfort of revenge—the revolution which the socialist worker is also awaiting, just

thought of as a little more remote . . . The "Beyond" itself—what is a Beyond for, if it's not a means of dirtying *this* world?[114] . . .

35

Critique of the morality of décadence.—An "altruistic" morality—a morality in which selfishness *wastes away*—is a bad sign under any circumstances. This applies to individuals, and it especially applies to peoples. What is best is missing when selfishness starts to be missing. To choose instinctively what is harmful to *oneself*, to be *enticed* by "disinterested" motives, is virtually the formula for *décadence*. "Not to seek one's *own* advantage"—that's just the moral fig leaf for a totally different state of affairs, namely a physiological one: "I don't know how to *find* my own advantage anymore" . . .

Dissolution of the instincts! It's all over for human beings when they become altruistic.—Instead of naively saying, "*I'm* not worth anything anymore," the lie of morality says in the mouth of the *décadent*: "Nothing is worth anything—*life* isn't worth anything" . . . Such a judgment is always a great danger, it has an infectious effect—throughout the unwholesome soil of society it soon spawns a tropical conceptual vegetation, sometimes as religion (Christianity), sometimes as philosophy (Schopenhauerism). Under certain circumstances the fumes of such a poisonous vegetation, born from putrescence, poison *life* itself, even for thousands of years . . .

36

Morality for doctors.—The sick person is a parasite on society. In a certain condition, living any longer is improper. Vegetating on, in cowardly dependence on doctors and treatments, once the meaning of life, the *right* to life has been lost, should incur the profound contempt of society. Furthermore, doctors should be the ones to convey this contempt—not prescriptions, but every day a new dose of *disgust* with their patients . . . To create a new responsibility, the responsibility of the doctor, in all cases in which the highest interest of life, of *ascending* life, demands that *degenerating* life be shoved under and shoved aside with no mercy whatsoever—for

114. For another discussion of the Christian and the anarchist, see *The Anti-Christ*, §§57–58.

example, as regards the right to reproduce, the right to be born, the right to life . . .

To die proudly when it is not possible to live proudly anymore. Death, chosen of one's own free will, death at the right time, with brightness and cheer, done in the midst of children and witnesses, so that it is still really possible to take one's leave, when the one taking leave *is still there*, with a real assessment of what one has achieved and willed, a *summation* of life—all the opposite of the pitiful and appalling comedy that Christianity has made of the hour of death. One should never forget that Christianity abused the weakness of the dying for the sake of conscience-rape, and abused the manner of death itself for making value judgments on the person and the past!—

What is necessary here above all, in spite of all cowardly prejudice, is to establish the correct, that is, the physiological evaluation of so-called *natural* death—which ultimately is just another "unnatural" death, a suicide. One never perishes at the hand of anyone but oneself. Natural death is just death under the most contemptible conditions, an unfree death, a death at the *wrong* time, the death of a coward. Out of love for *life*, one should want a different death: free, conscious, without accidents, without surprises . . .

Finally, a recommendation for those gentlemen the pessimists and other *décadents.* It is not up to us to prevent ourselves from being born, but we can make up for this mistake—for sometimes it is a mistake. When one *does away* with oneself, one does the most honorable thing there is: it almost earns one the right to live . . . Society—what am I saying!—*life* itself gains more advantage from suicide than from any "life" of renunciation, anemia and other virtues—one has freed the others from the sight of one, one has freed life from an *objection* . . . Pessimism *pur, vert* [pure and raw] *is first proved* by the self-refutation of the pessimist gentlemen: one must go a step farther in one's logic, and not just negate life with "will and representation," as Schopenhauer did—one must *first negate Schopenhauer himself* . . .

Pessimism, by the way, as infectious as it may be, still does not increase the sickliness of an age, of a species as a whole: it is the expression of this sickliness. One succumbs to it as one succumbs to cholera: one already has to be morbidly enough disposed to it. Pessimism itself produces not a single *décadent* more; I recall the statistical finding that the years in which cholera rages are no different from other years in the total number of cases of death.

37

Whether we have become more moral.—As was to be expected, against my concept of "beyond good and evil" has been launched the whole *ferocity* of moral stupefaction that, as is well known, counts as morality itself in Germany; I could tell some nice stories about this. Above all, I was told to reflect on the "undeniable superiority" of our age in ethical judgment, the real *progress* we have made in this area: a Cesare Borgia[115] (they said), in comparison to *us*, absolutely cannot be held up as a "higher human being," as a sort of *overman*,[116] in the way I do . . . A Swiss editor at the *Bund* went so far as to "understand" the meaning of my work, not without expressing his respect for such courageous daring, to be that I was demanding the abolition of all decent feelings. Much obliged![117] —I allow myself, in reply, to pose the question of *whether we have really become more moral*. The fact that the whole world thinks so is already an objection to this claim . . .

We moderns, very tender, very easily wounded, giving and receiving consideration in a hundred ways, actually imagine that this tender humanity that we represent, this unanimity we have *achieved* in considerateness, in helpfulness, in mutual trust, is a positive step forward, and that in this we have advanced far beyond the people of the Renaissance. But this is how every age thinks—this is how it *has* to think. Certainly we couldn't put ourselves into Renaissance conditions, or even think ourselves into them: our nerves couldn't stand that reality, not to speak of our muscles. But this inability isn't evidence of any progress, just of a different and later constitution, a weaker, more tender, more easily wounded constitution, which necessarily gives rise to a *considerate* morality. If we thought away our tenderness and lateness, our physiological elderliness, then our morality of "humanization" would also immediately lose its value—in itself, no morality has value—it would even invite our scorn. And on the other hand, let's not doubt that we moderns, with our thickly padded humanity that doesn't want to knock against any stone, would be a comedy at which the contemporaries of Cesare Borgia would laugh them-

115. Cesare Borgia (1475–1507): duke of Romagna, celebrated by Machiavelli in *The Prince* for his ruthless tactics. Nietzsche describes Cesare Borgia as a healthy predator in *Beyond Good and Evil*, §197.

116. *Übermensch*. This is the only mention in *Twilight of the Idols* of this concept, which Nietzsche develops at greatest length in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.

117. *Sehr verbunden!*—a pun on the name of the newspaper. The editor in question was Josef Viktor Widmann, whose review appeared in 1886.

selves to death. In fact, we are eminently and involuntarily funny, with our modern "virtues" . . .

The amputation of our hostile, untrustworthy instincts—and that is what our "progress" comes down to—is just one of the consequences of the general amputation of *vitality*: it costs a hundred times more trouble and care to preserve such a dependent and late existence. So people help each other out, so each is the patient to a certain degree, and each is the nurse. That is then called "virtue"—among people who still knew a different sort of life, fuller, more extravagant, more overflowing, it would have been called something else, "cowardice" maybe, "pitifulness," "old ladies' morality" . . .

Our ethical softening—this is my claim, this is my *innovation*, if you will—is a consequence of decline; ethical hardness and awfulness can, in contrast, be the consequence of a surplus of life. For then, a lot can be dared, a lot can be demanded, a lot can also be *wasted*. What was then the spice of life would be *poison* for us . . .

To be indifferent—this, too, is a form of strength—for this we are also too old, too late: our morality of compassion, which I was the first to warn us about, what one could call *l'impressionisme morale*, is just another expression of the physiological hyperexcitability that typifies everything *décadent*.[118] That movement that has tried to use Schopenhauer's *morality of pity* to present itself as scientific—a very unsuccessful attempt!—is the genuine movement of *décadence* in morality, and as such it is deeply affiliated with Christian morality. Strong ages, *noble* cultures see in pity, in "loving one's neighbor," in a lack of self and of self-esteem, something contemptible.—

Ages are to be measured according to their *positive forces*—and thus that ever so extravagant and dangerous age of the Renaissance proves to be the last *great* age, and we, we moderns with our timid concern for ourselves and love of our neighbor, with our virtues of work, humility, propriety, scientific thought—hoarding, economical, mechanical—prove to be a *weak* age . . . Our virtues are conditioned, are *demanded* by our weakness . . .

"Equality," a certain actually growing similarity of which the theory of "equal rights" is just an expression, belongs essentially to decline: the gulf between one human being and another, between class and class; the multiplicity of types; the will to be oneself, to distinguish oneself—what I call the *pathos of distance* is typical of every *strong* age. The tension, the exten-

118. See above, "What the Germans Are Missing," §6.

sion between the extremes is getting smaller and smaller today—the extremes themselves are shrinking down to similarity in the end . . .

All our political theories *and* our constitutions, absolutely not excluding the "German *Reich*," are implications, necessary consequences of decline; the unconscious effect of *décadence* has become dominant, even in the ideals of particular sciences. My continuing objection to all sociology in England and France is that it knows only the *decaying forms* of society from its own experience, and with perfect naiveté takes its own decaying instincts as the *norm* for sociological value judgments. *Declining* life, the waning of all organizing, that is, separating forces, forces that open gulfs, that rank some above and some below, is formulated in today's sociology as an *ideal* . . .

Our socialists are *décadents*, but Mr. Herbert Spencer is also a *décadent*[119]—he sees something desirable in the triumph of altruism! . . .

38

My concept of freedom.—Sometimes the value of a thing lies not in what we get by means of it, but in what we pay for it—what it *costs* us. I offer an example. Liberal institutions stop being liberal as soon as they have been established: from that point forward, there is nothing that harms freedom more severely and fundamentally than liberal institutions. After all, we know *what* they bring about: they undermine the will to power, they are the leveling of mountain and valley elevated into a morality, they make people small, cowardly, and pleasure-loving—with liberal institutions, the herd animal is victorious every time. Liberalism: in other words, *herd-animalization* . . .

The same institutions bring about completely different effects as long as they are still being fought for; then, in fact, they promote freedom in a powerful way. Considered more closely, it is war that brings about these effects, the war *for* liberal institutions, which, as war, lets the *illiberal* instincts persist. And war educates for freedom. For what is freedom? Having the will to responsibility for oneself. Maintaining the distance that separates us. Becoming indifferent to trouble, hardships, deprivation, even to life. Being ready to sacrifice people to one's cause, not excluding oneself. Freedom means that the manly instincts, the instincts that cele-

119. Herbert Spencer (1820–1903): English philosopher, advocate of "social Darwinism." In *The Gay Science*, §373, Nietzsche denounces what he calls Spencer's "reconciliation of 'egoism and altruism'" at greater length.

brate war and winning, dominate other instincts, for example the instinct for "happiness." The human being who has *become free*, not to mention the *spirit* that has become free, steps all over the contemptible sort of well-being dreamt of by grocers, Christians, cows, women, Englishmen, and other democrats. The free human being is a *warrior*.—

What is the measure of freedom, in individuals and in peoples? The measure is the resistance that must be overcome, the trouble it costs to stay *on top*. One would have to look for the highest type of free human beings wherever the highest resistance is constantly being overcome: five steps away from tyranny, right on the brink of the danger of servitude. This is true psychologically, if one conceives of the "tyrant" here as inexorable and terrible instincts that demand to be countered with the maximum of authority and self-discipline—the most beautiful type is Julius Caesar; it is also true politically, just take a walk through history. The peoples who were worth something, who *became* worthy, never became worthy under liberal institutions: *great danger* made them into something that deserves respect, danger, which first teaches us to get to know the means at our disposal, our virtues, our defense and weapons, our own *spirit*—danger, which *forces* us to be strong . . .

First principle: one must need to be strong; otherwise, one never becomes strong.—Those great greenhouses for the strong, the strongest sort of human being there has ever been, the aristocratic communities such as Rome and Venice, understood freedom precisely in the sense in which I understand the word freedom: as something that one has and *does not* have, that one *wills* to have, that one *conquers* . . .

39

Critique of modernity.—Our institutions are good for nothing anymore: everyone agrees on this. But that is not their fault, it's *ours*. Now that we have lost all the instincts from which institutions grow, we are losing institutions altogether, because *we* are no good for them anymore. Democracy was always the declining form of organizational force: in *Human, All Too Human* (I, §472) I already characterized modern democracy and all democratic halfway measures, such as the "German *Reich*," as a *decaying form of the state*. In order for institutions to exist, there has to be a kind of will, instinct, imperative, anti-liberal to the point of malice: the will to tradition, to authority, to responsibility for centuries to come, to the *solidarity* of chains of generations forwards and backwards *in infinitum*. If this will is there, something like the *imperium Romanum* [Roman Empire] is

founded—or like Russia, the *only* power that has physical endurance today, that can wait, that can still promise something—Russia, the antithesis of the pathetic European petty-state nonsense and nervousness which with the foundation of the German *Reich* has reached a critical condition . . .

The entire West no longer has those instincts from which institutions grow, from which a *future* grows: possibly nothing goes more against the grain of its "modern spirit" than this. One lives for the moment, one lives very quickly—one lives very irresponsibly: this is exactly what one calls "freedom." What *makes* institutions into institutions is despised, hated, rejected: one thinks one is in danger of a new slavery whenever the word "authority" is merely uttered. This is how far *décadence* goes in the value-instincts of our politicians, our political parties: *they instinctively prefer* what dissolves them, what makes the end come faster . . .

A case in point: *modern marriage*. Obviously modern marriage has lost all rationality: but this is an objection not to marriage, but to modernity. The rationality of marriage—it lay in the exclusive legal responsibility of the husband: this is what gave marriage its center of gravity, while today it limps on both legs. The rationality of marriage—it lay in its indissolubility in principle: this is how it got a tone of voice which, as opposed to the accident of feeling, passion, and the moment, knew how to *make itself heard*. It lay, likewise, in the responsibility of families for selecting mates. With our growing indulgence for marrying for *love*, we have eliminated the very foundation of marriage, that which first *makes* an institution out of it. An institution is never, ever founded on an idiosyncrasy; marriage, as I said, is *not* founded on "love"—it is founded on the sex drive, on the drive for property (woman and child as property), on the *drive for domination* which constantly organizes the smallest unit of domination, the family—a drive which *needs* children and descendants in order to preserve an achieved amount of power, influence, and wealth even on the physiological level, in order to prepare long-lasting tasks, instinctive solidarity between centuries. Marriage as an institution already contains the affirmation of the greatest, most enduring form of organization: if society itself cannot *vouch* for itself as a whole up to the most remote generations, then marriage has no meaning at all.—Modern marriage has *lost* its meaning—consequently, we are getting rid of it.—

40

The question of the working class.—The stupidity—at bottom, the degeneration of the instincts—which is today the cause of *all* stupidi-

ties lies in the fact that there is a question of the working class. There are certain things *one does not ask about*: primary imperative of instinct.—I just can't see what one wants to do with the European worker now that one has made a question out of him. He is doing far too well not to ask more questions, step by step, not to ask questions less modestly. After all, he has the great mass on his side. The hope is now completely gone that a modest and self-sufficient sort of human being, a Chinese type, could build itself up into a class here: and this would have been rational, it would virtually have been a necessity. What has one done?—Everything to nip in the bud the very prerequisites for this development—through the most irresponsible thoughtlessness, one has destroyed the very basis of the instincts thanks to which a worker becomes possible as a class, becomes possible for *himself*. One has made the worker eligible for military service, one has given him the right to unionize, the right to vote: so no wonder that today the worker already experiences his existence as a crisis (expressed morally, as *injustice*). But what does one *will*? I ask once again. If one wills an end, one must also will the means: if one wills to have slaves, one is a fool to educate them to be masters.—

41

"The freedom I *don't* mean . . ."[120]—In times like ours, depending on one's instincts is just another disaster. These instincts contradict and disturb each other, mutually destroy each other; I already defined *modernity* as a physiological self-contradiction. Rationality in education would demand that at least one of these systems of instinct be *paralyzed*, pinned under an iron pressure, in order to allow a different one to gain its forces, to become strong, to become master. Today, one would have to make individuals possible by *paring them down*: possible, that is, *whole* . . . What happens is the reverse: the demand for independence, for free development, for *laisser aller* [letting go] is raised with the most insistence precisely by those for whom no bridle *would be too severe*—this is the case *in politicis* [in political matters], this is the case in art. But that is a symptom of *décadence*: our modern concept of "freedom" is another proof of the degeneration of the instincts.—

120. A play on "the freedom I mean," the first line of the poem "Freedom" (1813) by Max von Schenkendorf (1783–1817).

42

Where faith is needed.—Nothing is more rare among moralists and saints than integrity. They may say the opposite, they may even *believe* it: for if faith is more useful, more effective, more convincing than *conscious* hypocrisy, then right away, hypocrisy instinctively turns into *innocence*—first rule for understanding great saints. Among the philosophers, too, another kind of saint, it's essential to their whole trade that they allow only a certain kind of truths: namely, those for which their trade is *publicly* authorized—in Kantian language, truths of *practical* reason. They know what they *have* to prove, and in this they are practical—they recognize each other by the fact that they agree on the "truths."—"Thou shalt not lie"—in plain language: *watch out*, Mr. Philosopher, and don't tell the truth . . .

43

Whispered into the conservatives' ear.—This is what was unknown earlier and is known today, or could be known today—a *reversion*, a reversal in any sense or to any degree is completely impossible. We physiologists, at least, know this. But all priests and moralists have believed in such a thing—they *wanted* to bring humanity back, *wind* it back to an *earlier* measure of virtue. Morality was always a Procrustean bed. Even the politicians have imitated the preachers of virtue in this: even today there are parties whose dream and goal is for everything to do a *crab-walk*. But no one is free to be a crab. It's no use: one *must* go forwards, that is to say, *further, step by step, into décadence* (this is *my* definition of modern "progress" . . .). One can *hinder* this development, and in this way block up the degeneration, gather it up, make it more vehement and *sudden*: more than that one cannot do.—

44

My concept of genius.—Great men, like great ages, are explosives in which an immense force has been piled up; their prerequisite is always, historically and physiologically, that things have long been gathered up, piled up, saved, and preserved for them—that for a long time, no explosion has taken place. When the tension in the mass has grown too great, the most casual stimulus is enough to call "genius," the "deed," the great destiny into the world. What difference does environment make then, or the age, the "spirit of the age," or "public opinion"!—

Take the case of Napoleon. The France of the Revolution, and pre-revolutionary France even more, would have brought forth the type opposite to Napoleon's type: it *did* bring it forth, in fact. And because Napoleon was *different*, the heir of a stronger, longer, older civilization than the one that was going up in smoke in France, he became the master there, he *was* master only there. Great human beings are necessary, the age in which they appear is accidental; the fact that they almost always become masters of their age is simply due to the fact that they are stronger, that they are older, that things have been gathered up longer for them. The relation of a genius to his age is like the relation between strong and weak, or between old and young: the age is always relatively much younger, thinner, more immature, less secure, more childish.—

The fact that the French opinion on these questions is today *very different* (the German, too, but this is irrelevant), the fact that over there the theory of the milieu, a real neurotic's theory, has become sacrosanct and virtually scientific, and has its believers even among the physiologists—this "doesn't smell good," this leads one to sad reflections.—In England, too, they understand things no differently, but no one will bother with that. For the Englishman there are only two available ways to deal with the genius and the "great man": either *democratically*, in the style of Buckle, or *religiously*, in the style of Carlyle.[121] —

The *danger* that lies in great human beings and ages is extraordinary; exhaustion of every sort, sterility follows upon their heels. The great human being is an end; the great age, such as the Renaissance, is an end. The genius—in work, in deed—is necessarily a spendthrift: his greatness lies in the fact that *he spends himself* . . . The instinct of self-preservation is suspended, as it were; the overpowering pressure of the forces that are flowing out forbids the genius every such care and precaution. One calls this "self-sacrifice"; one praises the "heroism" of the genius in his indifference to his own good, his devotion to an idea, a great cause, a fatherland—all a misunderstanding . . . He flows out, he overflows, he uses himself up, he doesn't spare himself—fatally, disastrously, involuntarily, just as a river breaks out of its banks involuntarily. But because one owes so much to such explosives, one has also given them many gifts in return,

121. Henry Thomas Buckle (1821–1862): positivist historian, author of *History of Civilization in England* (1856–1861), who argued that history obeyed mental and physical laws which could be discovered through the scientific analysis of facts. On Carlyle, see §1 and §12 above.

for example, a sort of *higher morality* . . . For this is the way of human gratitude: it *misunderstands* its benefactors.—

45

The criminal and what is akin to him.—The criminal type is the type of the strong human being under unfavorable conditions, a strong human being who has been made sick. He lacks the wilderness, a certain freer and more dangerous nature and form of existence, in which everything that is a weapon and a defense in the instincts of the strong *has a right to be*. His *virtues* are banned by society; the most lively drives he was born with have been entangled right away with depressing emotions, with suspicion, fear, dishonor. But this is virtually the *recipe* for physiological degeneration. Anyone who has to do in secret what he can do best, what he would most like to do—with drawn-out suspense, caution, slyness—becomes anemic. And since he always reaps only danger, persecution, and disaster from his instincts, even his feelings turn against these instincts—he feels they are fatal. It is society, our tame, mediocre, castrated society, in which a natural human being, who comes from the mountains or from seafaring adventures, necessarily degenerates into a criminal. Or almost necessarily: for there are cases where such a person proves to be stronger than the society—the Corsican Napoleon is the most famous case.

For the problem that faces us here, the testimony of Dostoyevsky is useful—Dostoyevsky, the only psychologist, by the way, from whom I had something to learn: he is one of the finest strokes of luck in my life, even more than my discovery of Stendhal. This *deep* human being, who had the right ten times over not to think much of the superficial Germans, lived for a long time among Siberian convicts, really serious criminals, for whom there could be no return to society. And the impression they made on him was not at all what he had expected—he perceived them as carved from about the best, hardest, and most valuable wood that grows anywhere on Russian soil.[122]

Let us generalize the case of the criminal: let us think of natures who, for some reason, are deprived of public approval, who know that they are not perceived as beneficial, as useful—that chandala feeling of not count-

122. See Dostoyevsky's *The House of the Dead* (1860). After discovering Dostoyevsky in January, 1887, Nietzsche mentions him thirteen times in correspondence over the next two years, always favorably and often enthusiastically.

ing as an equal, but of being excluded, unworthy, a source of impurity. All such natures have a subterranean tint to their thoughts and deeds; with them, everything turns paler than with those on whose existence daylight shines. But almost all forms of existence that we single out for praise today once lived in this semi-sepulchral atmosphere: the scientific character, the artiste, the genius, the free spirit, the actor, the merchant, the great explorer . . . As long as the *priest* was taken as the highest type, *every* valuable sort of human being was devalued . . . The time is coming—I promise—when the priest will be taken as the *lowest* type, as *our* chandala, as the most mendacious, most improper sort of human being . . .

I draw your attention to the fact that even today, under the mildest ethical regime that has ever held sway on earth, or at least in Europe, every deviation, every long, all too long stay *underneath*, every unusual, untransparent form of existence approaches that type which is perfected in the criminal. All renewers of the spirit bear the sallow and fatalistic sign of the chandala on their forehead sometime: *not* because they are thus perceived, but because they themselves feel the terrible gap that separates them from everything that is conventional and honored. Almost all geniuses know as one of their developmental stages the "Catilinarian existence," a feeling of hate, vengefulness and rebellion against everything that already *is*, that no longer *becomes* . . . Catiline—the form of *every* Caesar's pre-existence.[123] —

46

Here the view is free.[124] —It can be elevation of the soul when a philosopher is silent; a philosopher's self-contradiction can be love; a lying politeness is possible in a knower. It has been said, not without subtlety: *il est indigne des grands coeurs de répandre le trouble qu'ils ressentent* [it is unworthy of great hearts to share the distress that they feel]. One must simply add that having no fear *of what is most unworthy* can also be greatness of soul. A woman who loves sacrifices her honor; a knower who "loves" may sacrifice his humanity; a god who loved became a Jew . . .

123. Catiline (ca. 108–62 B.C.): Roman officer who organized a major conspiracy in 63 B.C. He is the target of a famous accusatory oration by Cicero. Julius Caesar (100 or 102–44 B.C.) may have been involved in the Catilinarian conspiracy before attaining renown as general and dictator.

124. A line from the last scene of Goethe's *Faust*, Part II.

47

Beauty no accident.—Even the beauty of a race or family, its charm and grace in all its demeanor, has to be worked for: just like genius, it is the final result of the accumulated work of generations. One must have made great sacrifices to good taste, one must have done a lot against one's will for the sake of good taste, and left a lot undone—the seventeenth century in France is admirable in both respects—one must have used good taste as a principle in choosing one's society, location, dress, sexual satisfaction, one must have preferred beauty to advantage, custom, opinion, sloth. Supreme guideline: one must not "let oneself go," not even when one is by oneself.—

Good things are extraordinarily expensive: and there is an invariable law that those who *have* them are not those who *earn* them. Everything good is an inheritance: whatever is not inherited is imperfect, is just a start . . .

In Athens at the time of Cicero, who expresses his surprise at this fact, the men and youths were by far superior to the women in beauty. But what work and effort the male sex had demanded of itself for centuries there in the service of beauty!—For one must not be mistaken about the method here: merely training one's feelings and thoughts is worth practically nil (here lies the great misunderstanding in German education, which is completely illusory): first one must convince the *body*. Keeping a meaningful and select demeanor strictly in place, being committed to live only with people who do not "let themselves go"—this is fully enough to become meaningful and select: in two or three generations, everything has already been *internalized*. It is decisive for the lot of a people and of humanity that one begin culture at the *right place—not* in the "soul" (as was the fatal superstition of the priests and semi-priests): the right place is the body, demeanor, diet, physiology, and the *rest* is a consequence . . . For this reason, the Greeks are still the *first cultural event* of history—they knew, they *did*, what was needed. Christianity, which despised the body, is the greatest misfortune of humanity up to now.—

48

Progress in my sense.—Even I speak of a "return to nature," although it is really not going back, but *coming up*—up into high, free, even terrible nature and naturalness, a nature that plays with great tasks, is *allowed* to play . . . To put it in a *metaphor*: Napoleon was a piece of "return to

nature," as I understand it (for example, *in rebus tacticis* [in tactics], and even more, as military men know, in strategy).—

But Rousseau—what did *he* really want to go back to? Rousseau, this first modern human being, an idealist and a lowlife in a *single* person; who needed moral "worth" in order to stand the sight of himself; sick with unbridled sloth and unbridled self-loathing. This abortion, too, which camped out on the doorstep of the new age, wanted a "return to nature"—what, I ask once again, did Rousseau want to go back to?—

I hate Rousseau even *in* the Revolution: it is the expression in world history of this combination of idealist and lowlife. The bloody farce in which this revolution played itself out, its "immorality," makes little difference to me: what I hate is its Rousseauian *morality*—the so-called "truths" of the Revolution, through which it still has an effect, and persuades everything superficial and mediocre to join its side. The doctrine of equality! . . . But there is no more poisonous poison: for it *seems* to be preached by justice itself, while in fact it is the *end* of justice . . . "Equal for equals, unequal for unequals"—*that* would be the true voice of justice. And its consequence: "Never make unequals equal."—The fact that this doctrine of equality was surrounded by such horrors and blood has given this "modern idea" par excellence a sort of glory and radiance, so that the Revolution as a *spectacle* has seduced even the noblest of spirits. But that is ultimately no reason to respect it any more.—I see only one who perceived it as it must be perceived, with *nausea*—Goethe.

49

Goethe—not a German event, but a European one: a great attempt to overcome the eighteenth century by a return to nature, by coming *up* to the naturalness of the Renaissance, a sort of self-overcoming on the part of that century.—He carried its strongest instincts in him: sentimentality, idolatry of nature, the anti-historical, idealistic, unrealistic, and revolutionary instincts (the last is just a form of the unrealistic). He availed himself of history, natural science, antiquity, Spinoza as well, and above all, practical activity; he surrounded himself with all sorts of well-defined horizons; he did not detach himself from life, but put himself into it; he was not faint-hearted, and took as much as possible upon himself, above himself, into himself. What he wanted was *totality*; he fought against the separation of reason, sensation, emotion, and will (preached with the most horrifying scholasticism by *Kant*, the antipodes of Goethe); he disciplined himself into wholeness, he *created* himself . . .

Goethe was, in the midst of an unrealistically minded age, a convinced realist: he said yes to everything that was akin to him in this—he had no greater experience than that *ens realissimum*[125] called Napoleon. Goethe conceived of a human being who was strong, highly cultivated, skilled in everything bodily, with self-control and self-respect—a human being who is allowed to dare to accept the entire scope and wealth of naturalness, who is strong enough for this freedom; a tolerant human being, not out of weakness but out of strength, because he knows how to use to his own advantage even what would make an average nature perish; the human being for whom nothing is forbidden anymore, with the exception of *weakness*, whether it be called vice or virtue . . . Such a spirit who has *become free* stands with a glad and trusting fatalism in the midst of the universe, with a *faith* that only the particular is to be rejected, that as a whole, everything redeems and affirms itself—such a spirit *does not negate anymore* . . . But such a faith is the highest of all possible faiths: I have baptized it with the name of *Dionysus*.—

50

One could say that, in a certain sense, the nineteenth century has *also* striven for everything that Goethe as a person strove for: universal understanding and approval, letting everything come close, a bold realism, a respect for everything factual. How is it that the total result of all this is no Goethe, but a chaos, a nihilistic sigh, complete cluelessness, an instinct of exhaustion that *in praxi* [in practice] constantly impels us *to reach back to the eighteenth century*? (For example, in the form of emotional romanticism, altruism and hyper-sentimentality, feminism in taste, socialism in politics.) Isn't the nineteenth century, especially at its end, just a stronger, *cruder* eighteenth century, that is, a century of *décadence*? So that Goethe was, not only for Germany but for all of Europe, just an interruption, a beautiful "in vain"?—But one misunderstands great human beings when one looks at them from the petty perspective of public utility. The fact that one knows no way of getting any use out of them *may itself be part of their greatness* . . .

125. "Most real being"—a term normally applied only to God. On Goethe and Napoleon, see also above, "What the Germans Are Missing," §4. In manuscript, Nietzsche writes that Goethe's "complement is Napoleon (to a lesser degree, Frederick the Great), who takes over the struggle against the eighteenth century."

51

Goethe is the last German I respect. He would have perceived three things that I perceive—we also understand each other regarding the "cross" . . .[126]

I am often asked why I write in *German* at all: nowhere am I read more poorly than in the fatherland. But who knows, in the end, whether I even *want* to be read today?—To create things on which time will try its teeth to no avail; to be concerned in form, *in substance* with a little immortality—I was never humble enough to demand less of myself. The aphorism, the pithy saying, of which I am the first master among Germans, are the forms of "eternity"; my ambition is to say in ten sentences what everyone else says in a book—what everyone else does *not* say in a book . . .

I have given humanity the deepest book that it possesses, my *Zarathustra*; I will shortly give it the most independent.—

126. In *Venetian Epigrams* 66, Goethe says he cannot stand "tobacco smoke, bedbugs and garlic and †."

What I Owe to the Ancients

1

In closing, a word about that world to which I have sought access, to which I may have found a new access—the ancient world. My taste, which is perhaps the opposite of a tolerant taste, is far from saying yes wholesale, even when it comes to the ancients: it doesn't like to say yes at all, it prefers to say no, and what it likes best is saying nothing at all . . . This applies to entire cultures, it applies to books—it also applies to places and landscapes.

Ultimately it is a very small number of ancient books that count in my life; the most famous are not among them. My feeling for style, for the epigram as a style, awoke almost instantly when I came into contact with Sallust.[127] I have not forgotten the amazement of my honored teacher Corssen when he had to give the very top grade to the worst of his Latin students—I had finished in one blow. Concise, severe, founded on as much substance as possible, with a cold spite for the "beautiful word" and the "beautiful feeling"—I discovered myself in this. One will recognize in me, even in my *Zarathustra*, a very earnest ambition for the *Roman* style, for the "*aere perennius*"[128] in style.—

It was no different upon my first contact with Horace. To this day I have never derived as much artistic delight from any poet as I got right away from a Horatian ode. In certain languages, what is attained here is not even *desirable.* This mosaic of words in which every word pours out its force as sound, as place, as concept, to the right and to the left and over the whole, this minimum in the range and number of signs, this maximum in the energy of the signs which is thus achieved—all that is Roman, and, if one wishes to believe me, *noble* par excellence. All remaining verse is, as compared to this, something too popular—just emotional verbosity . . .

2

To the Greeks I owe no impressions that are comparably strong. And, to come right out and say it, they *cannot* be for us what the Romans are.

127. Sallust (86–34 B.C.): Roman historian and politician.

128. More lasting than bronze. "I have erected a monument more lasting than bronze" (i.e., my poetry): Horace, *Odes* III, 30.

One does not *learn* from the Greeks—their way is too alien, and also too fluid, to have an imperative effect, a "classical" effect. Who would ever have learned to write from a Greek! Who would ever have learned it *without* the Romans! . . .

Please don't bring up Plato as an objection to me. In relation to Plato I am fundamentally a skeptic, and I was always incapable of joining in the admiration for Plato the *artist* which is traditional among scholars. In this case, I ultimately have on my side the most refined arbiters of taste among the ancients themselves. It seems to me that Plato mixes all the stylistic forms together, and thus he is one of the *first décadents* in style: he has something similar on his conscience to what the Cynics had, who invented the *satura Menippea*.[129] In order for the Platonic dialogue, this repulsively self-satisfied and childish kind of dialectic, to exert its charm, one must never have read good French authors—for instance, Fontenelle.[130] Plato is boring.—Ultimately, my mistrust in the case of Plato reaches into the depths; I find him so divergent from all the fundamental instincts of the Hellenes, so overmoralized, such a Christian before his time—he already takes the concept "good" to be the highest concept—that in regards to the whole Plato phenomenon I would rather use the harsh expression "exalted swindle"—or, if it sounds better, idealism—than any other. We have paid dearly for the fact that this Athenian went to school with the Egyptians (or with the Jews in Egypt? . . .). In the great disaster of Christianity, Plato is that ambiguity and fascination called an "ideal" which made it possible for the nobler natures of antiquity to misunderstand themselves and to step on the *bridge* that led to the "cross" . . . And how much Plato there still is in the concept "Church," in the structure, system, and practice of the Church!—

My recreation, my predilection, my *cure* for all Platonism has always been *Thucydides.*[131] Thucydides and, maybe, Machiavelli's prince are most closely related to me by their unconditional will to fabricate nothing and to see reason in *reality—not* in "reason," and still less in "morality" . . .

129. Menippus the Cynic (first half of the third century B.C.) originated this genre, which expresses philosophical views in a humorous way, mixing verse and prose.

130. Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle (1657–1757): versatile French writer who sided with the "moderns" in the literary "quarrel of the ancients and the moderns," attacking the ancient Greeks and their imitators in France.

131. Thucydides (ca. 460–ca. 400 B.C.): Athenian historian, author of *History of the Peloponnesian War*, known for his analysis of events in terms of power struggles.

There is no cure more fundamental than Thucydides for the miserable prettification of the Greeks into an ideal, which the "classically educated" youth brings with him into life as the reward for his prep-school training. One has to turn Thucydides over line by line and read his background thoughts as clearly as his words: there are few thinkers so rich in background thoughts. In him, the *culture of the sophists*, which means the *culture of the realists*, reaches its perfect expression: this invaluable movement in the midst of the Socratic schools' moralistic and idealistic swindle, which was then breaking out on every side. Greek philosophy as the *décadence* of Greek instinct; Thucydides as the great summation, the final appearance of that strong, strict, hard factuality that was a matter of instinct for the older Hellenes. *Courage* in the face of reality is, in the final analysis, the point of difference between natures such as Thucydides and Plato. Plato is a coward in the face of reality—*consequently* he flees into the ideal; Thucydides has control over *himself*—consequently he also has control over things . . .

3

Smelling out "beautiful souls" in the Greeks, "golden means" and other perfections, admiring in them, for instance, calm in grandeur, an ideal disposition, elevated simplicity—I was protected from this "elevated simplicity," which is in the end *niaiserie allemande* [German foolishness], by the psychologist in me. I saw their strongest instinct, the will to power; I saw them tremble before the boundless force of this drive—I saw all their institutions arise from security measures, in order to make themselves safe in the face of each other's inner *explosives*. The immense internal tension then discharged itself in frightening and ruthless external hostility: the city-states ripped each other to shreds so that the citizens might, each of them, attain peace with themselves. It was necessary to be strong; danger was nearby—it lay in ambush everywhere. The wonderfully supple bodily character, the bold realism and immoralism that characterizes the Hellenes, was a *necessity*, not their "nature." It was just a consequence, it was not there from the start. And with their festivals and arts, they wanted nothing but to feel *superior*, to *show* that they were superior: these were means of glorifying themselves, and in certain circumstances, of making themselves frightening . . .

To judge the Greeks, in the German fashion, by their philosophers, to use, say, the simpleminded uprightness of the Socratic schools to eluci-

date *what* is essentially Hellenic! . . . After all, the philosophers are the *décadents* of the Greek world, the countermovement against the old, noble taste (against the combative instinct, against the polis, against the value of the race, against the authority of tradition). The Socratic virtues were preached *because* the Greeks had lost them: excitable, fearful, inconstant comedians all of them, they had a couple of reasons too many to let morality be preached at them. Not that it was any help—but big words and attitudes suit *décadents* so well . . .

4

For the sake of understanding the older, the still rich and even overflowing Hellenic instinct, I was the first to take seriously that wonderful phenomenon that bears the name of Dionysus: it is explainable only in terms of *too much* energy. Anyone who investigated the Greeks—such as that deepest living connoisseur of their culture, Jacob Burckhardt of Basel[132]—knew right away that with this, something had been achieved: Burckhardt included a special section on this phenomenon in his *Civilization of the Greeks.* If one wants to see the opposite, one should look at the almost amusing poverty of instinct of the German philologists when they come close to the Dionysian. The famous Lobeck,[133] in particular, who crept into this world of enigmas with the respectable self-assurance of a worm dried out between books, and convinced himself that being nauseatingly flippant and childish made him scientific—Lobeck made it known, sparing no pedantry, that there was really nothing to all these curiosities. Of course, the priests might have communicated to the participants in such orgies some things not devoid of value, for instance, that wine excites desire, that people can survive by eating fruit under certain circumstances, that plants bloom in the spring and wither in the fall. As for the bewildering wealth of rites, symbols, and myths of orgiastic origin with which the ancient world was quite literally overgrown, Lobeck finds an opportunity here to increase his cleverness by another notch. "The Greeks," he says (*Aglaophamus* I, 672), "when they had nothing else to do, used to laugh, jump, and race around—or, since people sometimes have

132. On Burckhardt, see also above, "What the Germans Are Missing," §5.

133. Christian August Lobeck (1781–1860), German classical philologist. His *Aglaophamus*, an investigation of the origins of Greek religion, was published in 1829.

this desire too, they sat down, wept and wailed. *Others* then came along and sought some reason for this remarkable activity. And thus, as explanations of these customs, arose those countless sagas and myths. On the other hand, one believed that this *comical behavior* which now took place on festival days also necessarily belonged to the festivities, and one took it to be an indispensable part of the worship."—

That is despicable blather, one will not take a Lobeck seriously for a single moment. We feel completely different when we test the concept "Greek" that Winckelmann[134] and Goethe developed, and find it incompatible with that element out of which Dionysian art grows—the orgiastic. In fact, I have no doubt that Goethe would have excluded anything of the sort in principle from the possibilities of the Greek soul. *Consequently, Goethe did not understand the Greeks.* For only in the Dionysian mysteries, in the psychology of the Dionysian condition, does the *fundamental fact* of the Hellenic instinct express itself—its "will to life." *What* did the Hellene procure in these mysteries? *Eternal* life, the eternal recurrence of life; the future promised and made sacred in the past; the triumphant yes to life beyond death and change; *true* life as collective survival through reproduction, through the mysteries of sexuality. Thus, for the Greeks, the *sexual* symbol was the ultimate revered symbol, the authentic, deep meaning in all ancient piety. Every element of the act of reproduction, of pregnancy and birth, awoke the highest and most festive feelings. In the teachings of the mysteries, *pain* is declared holy; the "pangs of the childbearer" make pain in general holy—all becoming and growth, everything that vouches for the future *requires* pain . . . For there to be the eternal joy of creation, for the will to life to affirm itself eternally, there *must* also eternally be the "torment of the childbearer" . . .

All this is signified by the name Dionysus: I know no higher symbolism than this *Greek* symbolism, the symbolism of the Dionysian rites. In them, the deepest instinct of life, the instinct for the future of life, for the eternity of life, is experienced religiously—the very way to life, reproduction, as the *holy way* . . . It was Christianity, on the basis of its *ressentiment against* life, that first made something unclean out of sexuality: it threw *filth* on the beginning, on the prerequisite of our life . . .[135]

134. Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717–1768): German archeologist and historian of ancient art.

135. On *ressentiment*, see above, "The Problem of Socrates," §7, and "Raids of an Untimely Man," §3.

5

The psychology of the orgiastic as an overflowing feeling of life and energy, where even pain works as a stimulant, gave me the key to the concept of the *tragic* feeling, which has been misunderstood as much by Aristotle as, especially, by our pessimists. Tragedy is so far from giving any evidence for the pessimism of the Hellenes in Schopenhauer's sense that it instead has to count as the decisive rejection of and *counterauthority* to such pessimism.[136] Saying yes to life even in its most strange and intractable problems, the will to life, celebrating its own inexhaustibility by *sacrificing* its highest types—*that* is what I called Dionysian, *that* is what I found as the bridge to the psychology of the *tragic* poet. *Not* in order to be released from terror and pity, not in order to purify oneself of a dangerous emotion through its vehement discharge—as Aristotle understood it[137]—but instead, beyond terror and pity, in order to *be oneself* the eternal joy of becoming—that joy that also includes in itself the *joy of destruction* . . . And thus I touch again upon the spot from which I first set out—*The Birth of Tragedy* was my first revaluation of all values: thus I take my stand again upon the ground from which grows my willing, my being *able*—I, the final follower of the philosopher Dionysus—I, the teacher of the eternal recurrence . . .

136. On Schopenhauer and tragedy see also above, "Raids of an Untimely Man," §21.

137. For Aristotle's claim that the function of tragedy is *katharsis*, or the "purgation" of terror and pity, see his *Poetics* VI, 1.

The Hammer Speaks

Thus Spoke Zarathustra
[Section 29 of "On the Old and the New Law Tables," in Part III]

"Why so hard!—" spoke the kitchen coals once to the diamond: "For are we not next of kin?"

Why so soft? O my brothers, I ask you thus: for are you not—my brothers?

Why so soft, so yielding and submissive? Why is there so much denial, self-denial in your hearts? So little destiny in your gazes?

And if you will not be destinies and implacable: how else could you—win with me someday?

And if your hardness will not flash and cut and cut to bits: how else could you—create with me someday?

For all creators are hard. And it must seem blessed to you to impress your hand on millennia as on wax—

—blessed to write on the will of millennia as on bronze—harder than bronze, nobler than bronze. Only what is noblest is altogether hard.

This new law table, O my brothers, I set over you: Become hard!

Index

Twilight of the Idols, which deals with what we worship and why, presents a vivid overview of many of Nietzsche's mature ideas—including his attack on Plato's Socrates and on the Platonic legacy in Western philosophy and culture—and anticipates his projected revaluation of all values. Accompanied by a fascinating Introduction by Tracy Strong, Richard Polt's new translation faithfully and beautifully renders this highly formal, even musical, late work of Nietzsche's, which Nietzsche characterized as "a very sharp, precise and quick digest of my essential philosophical heterodoxies," and which offers such an excellent introduction to his thought. Includes select bibliography, notes, and index.

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